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A Partner in the Community: The SPARK Center

October 31, 2013 - Owners Developers & Managers

Community outreach is fundamental component of our organization. In addition to our continuing efforts to be good stewards of the FM industry, IFMA Boston continuously makes commitments to being a good citizen. Year in and year out, our members and volunteers give back to their local neighborhoods and communities through a wide variety of organizations and initiatives.

Since the Chapter's earliest days, one such organization that earns IFMA Boston's support is the SPARK Center. The mission of the SPARK (Supporting Parents and Resilient Kids) Center is to help Boston's highest-risk children to build brighter tomorrows. SPARK provides therapeutic, medically-specialized programs for children of all ages based on the philosophy that all children are resilient and able to take control of their futures. SPARK makes long-term investments in fragile children—helping them to believe in themselves, make healthy choices, cope with emotional problems, achieve in school and gain success as adults. Throughout the course of every calendar year, IFMA Boston helps SPARK reach its goals through fundraisers and volunteer activities. In 2013, these activities have included a children's book drive, a 50/50 raffle held at our annual Schmooze Cruise, a silent auction held at our Holiday Gala, and a retreat to the SPARK Center facility for the Chapter's 'annual day of work.

This year, I had the privilege of participating in the Chapter's annual day of work at the SPARK Center facility in Mattapan. My fellow IFMA Boston Board members, community outreach committee volunteers and I spent a work day painting and preparing a classroom for the upcoming school year. While we only played a small part in enabling the center to offer important programs to children in need, my colleagues and I were able to see our progress first hand, and knew that our efforts would make a positive impact on those enrolled in school and daycare at SPARK.

Like most charity organizations, the SPARK Center is largely reliant on donors to help keep its programs running and its resources as fresh and viable as possible. As many news stories have detailed over the past few months, these types of organizations often suffer the most as result of unfortunate circumstances such as the economic crisis, sequester and government shutdown. As we head into the fall and winter months and join together to support SPARK at the Holiday Gala, we ask that you consider our vital role in the community and join us in our efforts.

If you would like to learn more about IFMA Boston's community outreach activities, or would like to volunteer to be a part of our Community Outreach Committee, please contact Tracey Hartford (Chair - Community Outreach Committee) at tracey@windover.com.

Joe Flynn, CFM, LEED AP is the 2013 IFMA Boston president, Boston, Mass.