



nerej

Draper Laboratory

November 06, 2008 - Spotlights

The Charles Stark Draper Laboratory is an independent, non-profit, research & development laboratory serving the national interest in applied research, engineering development, technology transfer, and advanced technical education. Draper Lab develops innovative solutions for the future technology needs of the Department of Defense, NASA, and other government and industry sponsors. Work is focused in defense, geospatial, and space systems; biomedical engineering; and energy.

Draper Lab has been a part of the Cambridge community since its inception in 1932 as a part of MIT. In 1973, Draper Lab became an independent, non-profit organization and remained in Cambridge, centralizing its labs and offices from around the MIT campus to a new facility in Technology Sq. In 2001, Draper Lab decided to create the One Hampshire building at Kendall Sq. According to Kathleen Granchelli, Draper Lab director of corporate communications & community relations, "The city of Cambridge was very supportive of the project. Draper worked closely with the city's planning and community development departments, whose staff offered a rigorous critique of our proposal in the interest of obtaining the most optimal fit within the community. The execution of the build out was done to the satisfaction of both parties, and the end product is one we are all proud of. The economic benefit to Cambridge has been substantial: from construction and other services during the build and then through tax revenue from Draper and its other building occupants including Slumberger, who moved its Doll Research Center from Ridgefield, Conn. to Cambridge." Draper Lab employs more than 1,200 people, most of whom are based in Cambridge and 95 who are residents of the city. They expect modest job growth in to the future.

Being in the Cambridge for over 75 years, Draper has much invested within the business and residential community. They have been a member and part of the leadership team (board of directors) of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce for over three decades. Granchelli notes, "Our membership enables us to maintain strong ties to colleagues, be kept informed about local government and civic initiatives, and utilize this association for discussion and advocacy of issues affecting our business."

Draper's community relations program was formalized in 1983 with a primary focus to support our local community. Draper established a corporate contributions program at this time and it continues to support the Cambridge community through financial, technical, volunteer, and in-kind support to the local public schools, human service agencies, and other non-profits. Educational outreach in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education is the primary focus of our outreach. Listed below are a few representative examples of the support Draper provides to the local community:

* Draper is committed to STEM education. We employ Cambridge students during the school year and summer. This summer, for example, four students are participating in engineering internships

while another four students are working in administrative positions.

* Draper also supports the United Way MSTi (Math, Science, and Technology Initiative) and a US FIRST Robotics Team at CRLS.

* During the year Draper works with Cambridge School Volunteers, IBM, and MIT in the local KeyPal Program, an outreach program begun by Draper years ago in collaboration with Cambridge school volunteers. Through this program volunteers from Draper and those from our partner organizations exchange e-mails with students in Cambridge public schools (grade 6) during the school year and work on a couple of projects together during the year. The students learn about their adult pal's work and have an opportunity to visit the worksite and learn more about the world of work.

* When possible, Draper supports both the Cambridge fire and police departments. We participate with city departments and other area businesses in regional emergency planning initiatives. For the last four years Draper calibrated the fire department's hazardous materials equipment. In addition, our director of environmental health and safety promotes training to the department's staff in hazardous material instrumentation.

* Draper volunteers have worked with the Science Club for Girls.

* Draper has been a founder and long-time supporter of the Kendall Community Group, a partnership of three local human service agencies and the business community in the Kendall Sq. area.

Close ties with the city government is important to Draper Lab. It provides a strong means by which Draper can keep informed about the needs of the city, its residents, and non-profit organizations. Granchelli said, "This in turn enables us to make better decisions about where to invest our resources. We utilize the rich network of collaborations we have with other businesses, local universities, the local public schools, and other non-profits, to do this and to assess the effectiveness of our outreach programs."

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540