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Suffolk Construction's Red & Blue Foundation drives employee community involvement

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Suffolk Construction is known for its dedication to the community and reputation for giving back. When working with Suffolk, clients understand they are partnering with a company that is not just focused on the bottom line but on the impact we have on surrounding cities and towns, and serving the community has never been more critical than it is today.

To provide better structure around Suffolk's national fundraising and charitable efforts, we recently launched "Red & Blue Foundation." Named after the bold colors in Suffolk's logo, the foundation focuses on making a difference in local neighborhoods by positively impacting underprivileged and under-served children, particularly through educational programs. Red & Blue Foundation also launches official volunteer programs that offer Suffolk employees greater opportunities to become involved in company-sponsored and non-company-sponsored volunteer activities.

Red & Blue Foundation has already made a significant impact on education in Suffolk's surrounding communities through raising funds, building business and government partnerships, providing resources and expertise, and launching formal volunteer efforts that improve local educational programs and institutions. Our work on behalf of the Archdiocese of Boston is a prime example of how Red & Blue Foundation is helping to improve educational services, especially for inner-city youth.

Suffolk CEO John Fish serves as president of the Archdiocese 2010 Initiative, which is focused on improving the Boston Archdiocese's Catholic school system. Fish and the Suffolk team have played integral roles in restructuring the local Catholic school system, which was suffering from decreased enrollment, outdated technology, and buildings in need of renovation. Through Red & Blue Foundation, Suffolk assisted the Archdiocese by working with local colleges to improve curriculum, developing marketing materials and strategies to help the Archdiocese drive enrollment, and serving as construction manager for the renovation of school facilities. So far, Suffolk has renovated buildings in Dorchester and Brockton and is working with the Archdiocese to prioritize future renovations. This is the true spirit of Red & Blue Foundation—“not just simply donating time and construction services, but helping to improve the whole educational experience of the Archdiocese's students.

We are also expanding Red & Blue Foundation's efforts on a national level, seeking out opportunities that benefit the community in all of its regional offices. Suffolk's Florida division holds an annual charitable golf tournament to benefit Turtle Nest Village. This past year, the Florida team raised \$75,000, more than double the amount of money raised during the prior year's tournament. Turtle Nest Village offers education and assistance in an effort to provide a safe transition for

children who are leaving foster care to live on their own. Once children turn 18, all funds and assistance are terminated, and the statistics for these young adults is staggering: 45% end up homeless, 50% are unemployed and less than 50% graduate high school. Turtle Nest Village provides temporary housing and a 24-month program that encompasses education, work readiness, life skills training and counseling.

Suffolk Mid-Atlantic recently participated in the District of Columbia Building Industry Association (DCBIA) Community Improvement Day. More than 500 volunteers from the DC construction, architecture and development community joined together to help renovate the Douglass Community Center in Southeast Washington, DC. The Douglass Community Center provides a wide variety of programs, including sports leagues, youth development, therapeutic recreation, aquatic programming, outdoor adventure, camping and child care services. Improvements included a new roof, total renovation of the bathrooms, repaving of basketball courts, new entrance features and a promenade area, installation of shade structures around the pool areas, upgrades to the kitchen and computer room, and improvements to the interior design of the center.

Now that we have launched Red & Blue Foundation officially, the company is working with the general managers from all our regional offices to seek out greater opportunities to support educational needs nationwide.

We remain committed to the community and helping those in need, particularly during these challenging economic and financial times. The launch of Red & Blue Foundation will allow us to expand our philanthropic endeavors on a nationwide level, while further solidifying Suffolk's reputation for giving back in our specific regions.

Erin Brooks is the director of the Red & Blue Foundation for Suffolk Construction, Boston.

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