

Grassroots Giving

lifestyles

STORY BY LINDA ULRICH
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Lincoln Plating has been selected as one of the 25 best medium-sized companies to work for in America in the last three years by the Great Place to Work Institute in San Francisco.

In December 1999, Joey and Jenni Svehla's first child died at 21 weeks.

Joey Svehla's grief compelled him to take action. "I made the decision I wanted to help other premature babies since ours didn't have a chance," said Svehla, an inventory software specialist at Lincoln Plating.

He linked up with the March of Dimes and has been very involved since, supplementing the company's already existing fundraising for the organization.

Svehla, who was named March of Dimes Volunteer of the Year last year, has sold candy bars and teddy bears and organized raffles. Lincoln Plating has sponsored the starting line at the annual Walk America, and Svehla helps organize teams of walkers.

At the company's March Champions Lunch, Svehla has received donations of ground meat and other supplies. He has "flipped a burger or two" in the plant at noon, 8 p.m. and 4 a.m., raising \$6,000 each year the past two years.

It's a team effort, Svehla said. "It makes me feel good to try and raise more money for research. I'm very proud of what we've able to do."

Lincoln Plating Chairman and CEO Marc LeBaron has been very supportive of the company's fundraising activities for the March of Dimes and other charitable causes.

"We have been very fortunate, and we believe it is important to give back to the communities where Lincoln Plating people live," LeBaron said. "Lincoln Plating people are encouraged to contribute their time and resources to local giving opportunities and always

respond quickly when their help is needed. Our tradition of giving is one of the many things that make Lincoln Plating a great place to work."

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It's hard to name all the organizations that benefit from time and money donated by Lincoln Plating, the nation's largest finishing company, said Steve

Bauer, the company's communications manager. "There are so many ways we give and so many avenues."

The company's charitable contributions extend throughout the company. "It really is at the grassroots level," he said.

Often, the company's philanthropic mission is to fund organizations that benefit families and children, and education, said Candiss Kleen, public affairs manager.

Organizations that focus on the wellness and well-being of children are good candidates for Lincoln Plating's philanthropy. The company participates in many walks in addition to the March of Dimes walk, focusing on those that benefit children.

Lincoln Plating provides Junior Achievement volunteers for every class at Belmont School. The company also participates in the JA bowling fundraiser — at the most recent event, the company filled 23 bowling lanes to benefit JA.

Charitable golf outings also raise funds for good causes. Willard Community Center has received contributions of money as well as help with painting. The proceeds of the Lincoln Plating Spring Classic professional bicycle race also benefit the center.

Generally, employees are given time off with pay to do volunteer work.

"It's all done on the clock," Bauer said.

Lincoln Plating has a Community Connections Committee that helps select organizations the company supports financially. The committee's membership changes annually, and the committee meets monthly to decide which organizations will receive funding.

Although the organizations receiving funds may vary from year to year, one of the staples is the Giving Tree at Christmas. As many as 150 gifts are donated, wrapped and delivered to local area families.

"That's a huge project for Lincoln Plating, and something we really enjoy doing," Bauer said. "There is never a lack of people to deliver gifts, and it shows how our people get involved at the grassroots level." **L**



Top: Joey Svehla serves as the head cook for his annual lunch served on all three shifts to benefit the March of Dimes.

Above: The Willard Community Center benefits from all proceeds of the annual Lincoln Plating Spring Classic professional bicycle race. Left: Camille Brady, an executive assistant, is loading gifts that Lincoln Plating provides to families through its Giving Tree program. Far left: Joey Svehla was named March of Dimes Volunteer of the Year last year.

