**Describe your work and what drives you.**

In my role as Vice President of Implementations for Fidelity Investments, I provide day to day and strategic leadership to a team of Project and Program Managers and all associated client Implementation and Fee for Service projects. I am responsible for applying expert knowledge of the implementation and large project process, providing strategic direction, making decisions and solving complex problems to move our business forward while managing an integrated team of resources supporting Defined Contribution, Defined Benefit and Health & Welfare Implementation and Fee for Service projects.

I am driven by the opportunity to help others; whether it is helping a plan sponsor improve their benefit plan for their employees, whether it is helping a colleague overcome a challenge or whether it is helping a non-profit solve a problem they do not have the resources for. Without the help of others throughout my career, I would not be where I am today so I embrace the opportunity to help others.

**What was your first exposure to Pro Bono?**

Over the years, I have volunteered in countless activities at my children’s schools or within their extracurricular activities. However, my first exposure to skills-based volunteering was last spring I was selected to participate in a Common Impact project. My team was partnered with a non-profit organization that provides financial literacy and entrepreneurship to students. We worked closely with the non-profit to solve a business challenge by developing solutions and presenting the suggestions and a white paper to the non-profit’s board of directors.

**Why did you become “hooked” on Pro Bono / Skills-Based Volunteering?**

My team of nine worked with a non-profit to help them determine whether they could add services that would require a significant capital investment. After months of research, the team delivered our findings and suggestions to the non-profit’s board of directors. Their overwhelming appreciation for the work that we presented was what ‘hooked’ me on skills-based volunteering.

**What has been most rewarding about participating in a Pro Bono program?**

At the start of the initiative, I knew our efforts were for a great cause and it would feel rewarding to know that we were helping others. That proved true; it was incredibly rewarding to provide actionable input that has been implemented and is making an impact on others. Yet, I found the biggest reward was the relationships, both within my organization and with the non-profit, that were formed. I built solid, genuine connections with peers, colleagues, the non-profit and their board of directors. We were initially working on a common purpose and formed a relationship based on the experience. Yet several of those relationships have matured into trusted relationships and even friendships. Even today, more than a year after the project ended, I have regular interactions with many of those involved in the project.

**What was most challenging, in your role, about leveraging or participating in a Pro Bono program?**

Since I work with retirement plans, I went into the first internal meeting ready to dive into the non-profits 403(b) plan and was imagining the Fidelity team reviewing plan design and investment options. Within minutes of the meeting, I learned I was wrong. I was on a team with nine people from different areas of our organization, all with different backgrounds, skill sets and personalities. I learned that we would be working with a non-profit to help them determine whether they could add services that would require a significant capital investment. My first reaction was concern. I did not have experience in providing financial literacy and entrepreneurship to students. A senior leader in our organization told me this was an opportunity to stretch. I took this to heart and reminded myself of this several times throughout the project when I found myself in in unchartered territories. While stepping outside your comfort zone is uncomfortable and challenging, this experience has given me confidence that my core life and business skills will lead me to success, even when in unchartered territories.

**If someone was in your shoes, looking to get started with skills-based volunteering for the first time, what advice would you give or tool would you point them to?**

I feel extremely fortunate to work for a company that is very involved with and supports many non-profits. Companies typically support volunteer initiatives so I would suggest talking to your manager or public relations to learn about opportunities. If you are looking to volunteer outside of work, I would suggest thinking about the things that interest you most. If you love to read, talk to a local library about opportunities to get involved. If you enjoy playing baseball, possibly you can coach a little league team. When you are passionate about something, your excitement can be contagious when shared with others.