



On the Water Front

February 2017 | A Message from John Balliew, P.E., President/CEO

Giving Back to our Community at El Paso Water

Our employees have embraced service as a core value here at the water utility. That's infused in our work itself, our workplace and how we interact with our customers and community.

Our commitment goes beyond providing safe, reliable drinking water. As our meter readers and service technicians go into every neighborhood in the entire city, we see some desperate living situations and understand some basic needs in our City. Our employees react – not by turning a blind eye – but by organizing fundraising initiatives to give back. El Paso Water employees raised over \$100,000 for local charities in 2016 through our annual charity of choice program and our United Way campaign.

Each year, our employees select a new charitable organization for targeted fundraising efforts and with hopes of raising public awareness of the non-profit organization's mission. The Opportunity Center for the Homeless was selected as the 2017 Charity of Choice program on Wednesday at the Public Service Board meeting.

The Opportunity Center provides multiple shelters and residential centers as well as medical services and meals for the homeless. Their newest facility – La Casa de Las Abuelitas – serves single elderly women in need and will be the focus of this year's employee giving campaign. Opportunity Center leaders said during the PSB meeting that this mission is particularly important because these women have limited means and their advanced age makes it very difficult for them to get essential services. I'm proud of our history of working with local charities, from our 30-year partnership with the United Way of El Paso to our partnerships with non-profits through the annual Charity of Choice program. Our employees deserve much credit for their generosity of time and spirit. The fundraising events are generally organized by employees in their off hours and on weekends. In addition to contributing to important causes, the employee fundraising efforts help build morale and create a sense of teamwork.

Over the last eight years, EPWater employees have increased Charity of Choice fundraising results from \$28,000 in 2009 to \$39,000 in 2016 for combined contributions of \$229,000. Our partners have included:

- Salvation Army of El Paso
- USO
- Project Vida
- AVANCE
- Arc of El Paso
- Children's Grief Center of El Paso
- Rescue Mission of El Paso
- Operation Santa Claus

As a utility family, we hope our actions will become a beacon, so that others recognize community needs and seize the opportunity to become more involved – through time or giving – to help fellow El Pasoans.

For more information on the Opportunity Center for the Homeless [click here](#).



John Martin and Aracely Lazcano with the Opportunity Center for the Homeless spoke to the PSB at the February 8 meeting.



Last year's recipient was the Salvation Army of El Paso.



On the Water Front is a publication of El Paso Water.
Contact Christina Montoya at 915.594.5596 or cmontoya@epwu.org with any comments or questions.

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