

[Introduction](#)[People](#)[Community Partners](#)[Projects](#)[Communities](#)[Employees](#)[Business Partners](#)[About Us](#)[Board of Directors](#)[How to Give](#)

A Decade of Impact

10



2021

Ascend Cares Foundation
Annual Report



We are honored to celebrate 10 years of the Ascend Cares Foundation. This report looks back at a decade of giving to our communities as well as our achievements in 2021. Throughout the incredible journey from humble beginnings to a global foundation, one thing has never changed: our mission to make a difference in the lives of others.

Inside this Report:

Introduction	2
People	3
Community Partners	5
Projects	6
Communities	7
Employees	9
Business Partners	10
About Ascend Cares	11
Board of Directors	12
How to Give	13



LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

A lot can happen in ten years. What began as a pass-the-hat employee relief effort has now grown into a global foundation impacting communities around the world. Ascend Cares continues to grow and do more because of the generosity of our employees.

Every year, more volunteers work on more projects with more money invested back into our communities. Ascend Cares continues to look for ways to connect with local organizations. We completed hundreds of projects last year, ranging from spending time with seniors to restoring parks to sorting items at local food banks. Our relationships often start with small connections that grow into large scale projects.

We are a foundation that loves hands-on volunteering. Rather than just dropping off checks at a local school, you'll find us purchasing supplies, stuffing backpacks, and spending time face to face with the children as we hand them out. We enjoy building relationships with local organizations and learning how we can best support their mission to help people.

While we've done big projects in the past, we asked our partners to think bigger this year. To celebrate the foundation's 10-year anniversary, each site completed a key partner project for a local organization. These projects included building an outdoor classroom and constructing hundreds of feet of nature boardwalk for students with limited mobility.

We continued to celebrate this milestone with our first business partner event. In the history of Ascend Cares, our donations have always come from Ascend employees and a dollar-for-dollar match by the company. Now we are making our suppliers and customers a part of our organization. Our U.S. Ascend sites organized golf tournaments and successfully raised \$225,000. I believe these customer events are the next step in our foundation's fundraising.

In just 10 years, we've accomplished so much, and even more opportunities to give back are now open to us.

The future is bright for Ascend Cares. This is because of our amazing employees and the investment they've made with their time and money. Thank you for giving, serving and supporting Ascend Cares.

Tom Boggs
Chairman of Ascend Cares



People

Lynn Crear remembers the exact moment she knew she wanted to get involved with Ascend Cares. An employee on her team needed cancer treatments in Houston, so Lynn inquired about medical hardship support.

“I watched the Ascend Cares executive director handle this family’s travel arrangements, meet them at the hospital, and sit with the spouse during treatments,” Lynn says. “It was such an emotional moment to see that level of care from a company. As a leader, I knew I wanted to be part of that.”

Lynn became an active participant in Ascend Cares efforts and began to see opportunities to make a difference everywhere she looked. She has now served on the Board of Directors for multiple years. But Lynn’s story is not unique. In fact, it has been repeated hundreds of times by employees across Ascend, leading the foundation to amazing new growth year after year.

Employee leadership is the main driver of the foundation’s direction, says board member Scotty Hall. “I’m inspired by how our employees continue to shape Ascend Cares,” he says. “They don’t just volunteer, they get their families involved. They develop and lead projects, they give generously. It’s a clear reminder that our people really desire to make a difference.”

“I’m inspired by how our employees continue to shape Ascend Cares.”

Employees make a difference in smaller ways, by connecting Ascend Cares Community Impact Grants with the causes they personally care about most, and in larger ways by directing site projects with hundreds of volunteer hours and tens of thousands of dollars. In just a decade, Ascend Cares has grown from a support system for employee hardships to a thriving foundation partnering with a broad range of causes in communities around the world.

This global impact has been made possible entirely by employee leadership.

“The whole concept of what Ascend Cares can be has grown beyond our imaginations,” Lynn said. “And it’s all due to the generosity and ownership of our employees. It’s nothing short of amazing.”





People

Ten years. Thousands of volunteers. Each one with a different experience, but the same desire: to help others.



“Four years ago, I was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer. Ascend Cares and my colleagues wrapped their arms around me and helped me through that period of my life, anticipating my needs before I even knew what I needed. I was involved with Ascend Cares prior to my diagnosis, but after I recovered it became my personal mission to pour into the lives of others. My experience makes my relationship with Ascend Cares feel supercharged.”

Kenya Thompson

Kenya is a 10-year employee who helped raise the first wall of the first Habitat for Humanity home Ascend Cares constructed in 2012. She currently leads education support for Houston’s Yellowstone Academy and serves on the Ascend Cares Hardship Committee, with which she has a very special connection.



“Ascend Cares is unique – I think it’s a real differentiator among companies. Being involved gives me the chance to meet people both on and off site that I might not interact with otherwise, which I enjoy. Helping people is a big motivator for me. Getting to see people shine through their Ascend Cares volunteering has been very impactful.”

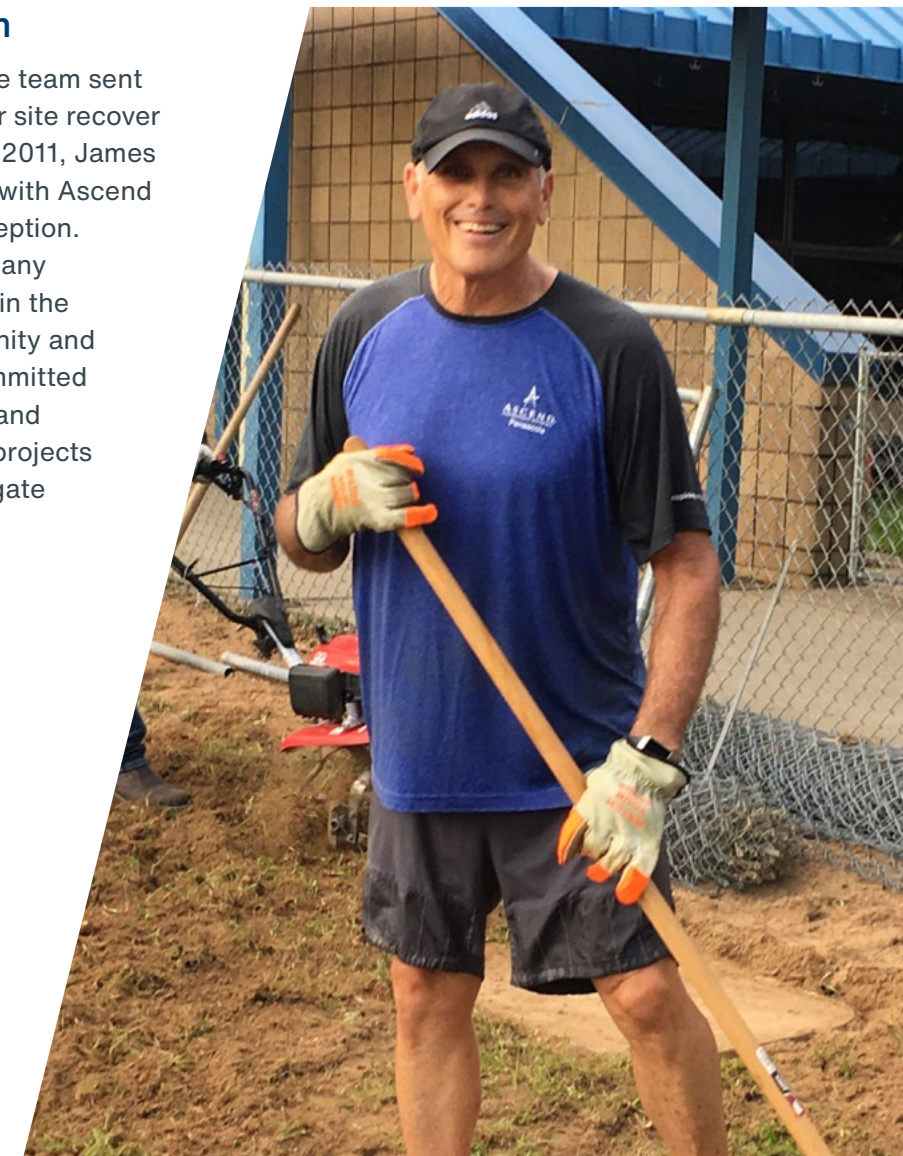
Grace Dansby

After connecting with Ascend through a college internship, Grace has now been an employee for three years. Service work and volunteering have always been important to her – she served as a tutor and mentor at an inner-city learning center prior to getting more involved with Ascend Cares. The foundation was a perfect fit, and Grace became the Decatur site leader a year ago.

“Ascend Cares has grown to have such a great structure, and that makes it easy to get involved. Our company leaders are committed, we are helping the communities at every site – you feel like you’re part of a larger cause. There are many personal benefits as well. Learning new skills, building relationships and the great feeling that comes from helping those in need are all reasons I choose to volunteer with Ascend Cares.”

James Stinson

As a member of the team sent to help the Decatur site recover from the storms in 2011, James has been involved with Ascend Cares since its inception. He is a fixture at many volunteer projects in the Pensacola community and was especially committed to the playground and nature boardwalk projects at Escambia Westgate School.





Community Partners

As our foundation has grown, so have our relationships with other nonprofit organizations. Through our first decade, Ascend Cares has partnered with hundreds of organizations in thousands of ways, all with a single goal – making a difference in the lives of people in our communities.



We are extremely grateful for the incredible amount of support we receive from Ascend Cares. The playground makes it possible for all our students to enjoy time outside and they love the double swing. When Ascend employees come on our campus, they reach out to the faculty and staff and encourage and support them. Their caring hearts and willingness to serve means as much to us as the equipment they purchased for us.

—
Cathy Rudd

Principal - Escambia Westgate School



“Ascend cares for this community. They don’t just say it – they show it.”



It is hard to adequately describe what the support from Ascend Cares has meant to Parents And Children Together (PACT). When we needed a new location for our Touch-A-Truck event, Ascend volunteered their property. What an answered prayer! This event allows PACT to raise much needed funds for child abuse prevention education in our community. Each year our programs reach 8,000-10,000 individuals. In September 2021, over 1,000 people attended the Touch-A-Truck event at Ascend’s property, raising over \$55,000.

In addition to the support of Touch-A-Truck, representatives from Ascend Cares asked us, “What do you need?” We needed cots for families to sleep on. Not only did they provide cots, but also pillows, blankets and hygiene kits for families. They asked again, “What else do you need?” We said laptops for the resource workers that at schools who work directly with families. And what did we get? Laptops and printers.

“Ascend Cares” may be your name, but to us at PACT, it is what Ascend does. Ascend cares for this community. They don’t just say it – they show it.

—
Susan Roberts

Executive Director - Parents and Children Together



Ascend Cares Foundation has become such a vital partner with Ninety Six Primary School and Greenwood District 52. They are always willing to assist whenever there is a need involving our students and staff. Ascend Cares fully funded our Outdoor Classroom project at NSPS, which provided a large outdoor space as an alternative to the traditional classroom. Other ways Ascend Cares has helped our district are through book bag drives, school supply and clothing drives, and funding positive behavior celebrations just to name a few. Having a partnership like we have built with Ascend Cares is truly a blessing.

—
Kelly Weeks

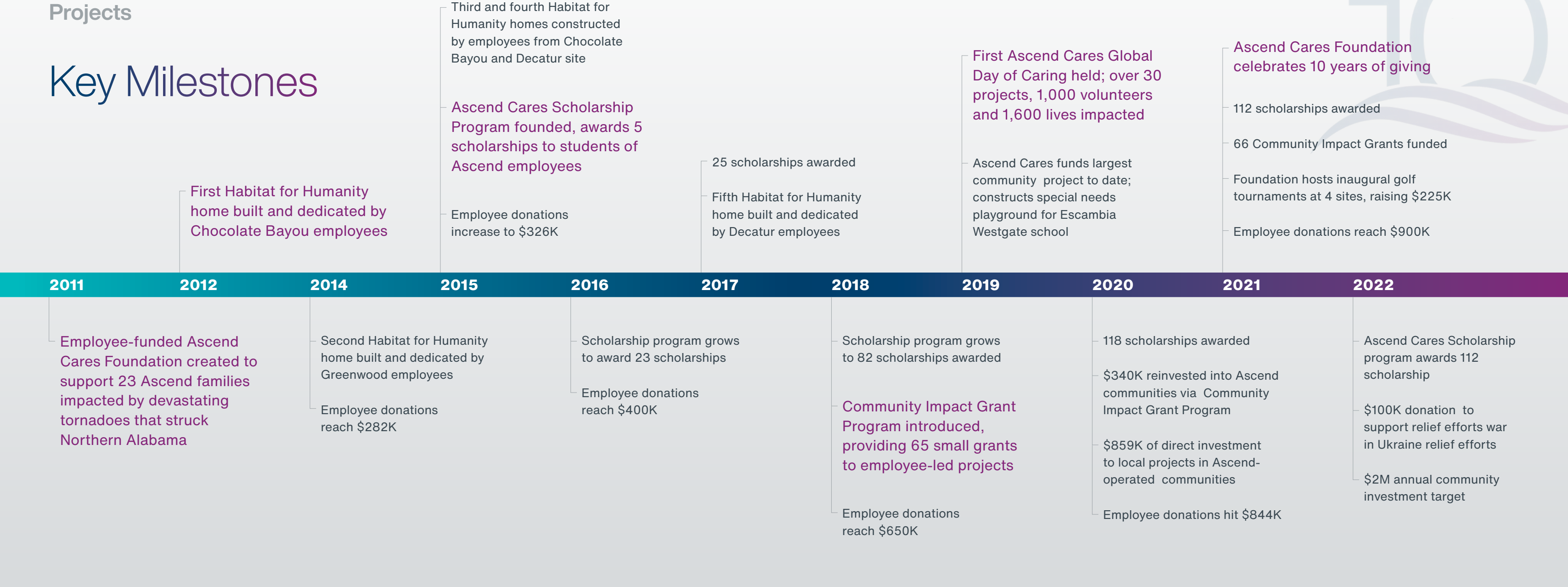
Principal - Ninety Six Primary School





Projects

Key Milestones



Hardship Grants

347

Total: \$1,012,172

Community Impact Grants

298

Total: \$859,060

Scholarships

467

Total: \$778,803

Site Projects

\$3.9M

Volunteer Hours

70,067



Communities

Staying Connected to our Communities

If we left in a clean shirt, it just wouldn't feel right. Ascend Cares volunteers arrive ready to work, whether it's planting trees at a school or cutting vegetables at a soup kitchen. When the project is finished, we leave with a few dirt stains and a feeling of accomplishment and gratitude. It's our passion and hands-on volunteering that connects us to our communities and the people in them.

Site projects can be a day of sorting food items at a local food bank or weeks dedicated to renovating an entire room at a school. We gather any materials or supplies needed, then visit the site to complete the project.



Cantonment Improvement Committee
Pensacola, FL

Being connected to our communities means we know many families struggle to put food on the table. Every week, Ascend Cares Pensacola and the [Cantonment Improvement Committee](#) partnered together at Carver Park to unload, fill bags and distribute food to those in need.



Ninety Six Primary School
Greenwood, SC

As their signature key partner project, Ascend Cares Greenwood donated \$26,400 to the [Ninety Six Primary School](#) to build an outdoor classroom. For months, volunteers worked at the school to paint and assemble interactive panels and tables. The outdoor classroom gives the school a new, fun space to keep students connected to outside learning.



Sleep in Heavenly Peace
Decatur, AL

Ascend Cares Decatur and Turner Industries joined [Sleep in Heavenly Peace](#) to build beds for children who previously were sleeping on the floor. In one day, volunteers built more than 100 beds for children in the Hartselle, Alabama area.



Kidz Harbor
Chocolate Bayou, TX

[Kidz Harbor](#) offers medical, physical, educational and psychological assistance to abused and abandoned children, and our Chocolate Bayou site has been a faithful supporter of this work in many ways for years. The site hosted a fun field day with games, awards, great food and lots of smiles for 50 children.



Elderly Daycare Center
Shanghai, China

Ascend Cares Shanghai visited the Elderly Daycare Center in Shanghai to be an encouragement to the residents. Volunteers spent time connecting with new friends, playing games, and making rice dumplings and sachets.



Forgotten Harvest
Detroit, MI

[Forgotten Harvest](#) works with grocery stores, distributors and farmers to rescue food from waste and give it to those in need. Our remote and Detroit volunteers picked more than 5,000 pounds of corn and eggplant to be shared with families in the Detroit area.



Communities

We are continually looking for new ways to make an impact. Thanks to the passion of our volunteers, Ascend Cares invested \$748,031 in more than 150 site projects in 2021. Making a positive difference in the lives of others remains our biggest reward.



Westgate School Nature Trail Pensacola

At [Escambia Westgate School](#), which serves students with intellectual and physical special needs, a nature boardwalk was decaying and could accommodate just one wheelchair at a time. More than 100 volunteers from our Pensacola site donated 900 hours over five months to construct a new nature trail. The new, wider boardwalk allows many students to enjoy a connection to nature in the woods near their school.



The Women's Home Houston

[The Women's Home](#) helps women in crisis find stability, health care and vocation. Our Houston office sponsored a movie night, made and donated Thanksgiving baskets, and sponsored women and their children for the holidays. They also sponsored the graduation ceremony and provided gifts of encouragement and empowerment to each woman completing the program.



The Family Center Foley

Volunteers from the Foley site repaired damage from Hurricane Sally at [The Family Center](#) in Robertsedale, Alabama. They constructed a new play set and replaced a wheelchair ramp. The Family Center works to strengthen families and prevent child abuse through education, serving around 6,000 individuals per year.



Villa Pardoos Tilburg

[Villa Pardoos](#) is a residence in Kaatsheuvel, Netherlands that offers a holiday respite to families with critically ill children, providing a week of special memories during a very difficult time. Ascend Cares volunteers from our Tilburg site gave mascot dolls with a personal note for the children to keep as a memento of their stay. On another visit, they volunteered to bake pancakes for the children and families during their stay.



Employees

Community Impact Grants

Community Impact Grants provide funds to nonprofit organizations our employees are personally involved in helping. These are causes employees care deeply about, and in some cases have been helping for many years. The grants provide a boost of support to some of the most meaningful connections our local sites have to our communities.



Disabled Outdoorsmen Greenwood, SC

Gary Price's grant provided fishing equipment and outdoor gear for [Disabled Outdoorsmen](#), an organization he supports that helps disabled individuals experience and enjoy the healing power of the outdoors. "My nephew and many others have gained so much hope from this program," Gary said.



Texas Special Olympics Houston, TX

More than 40 Ascend Cares volunteers pitched in to set up and operate the bocce ball tournament at the [Texas Special Olympics](#) Fall Games. Lisa Dozier's grant funded facilities and supplies for the bocce and softball tournaments, as over 300 athletes and their families enjoyed the day and the awards ceremony.



Little Sisters of the Poor Pensacola, FL

Mimi Smith and her team supported [Little Sisters of the Poor](#) in nearby Mobile, AL. The community impact grant provided over 120 care packages and many food, laundry and personal hygiene items to this group that helps thousands of poor, sick and elderly citizens along the Gulf Coast.



Wild Alabama Decatur, AL

Luciana Vergara's grant funded tools and supplies for volunteers to help clean and maintain trails in the Talladega National Forest. [Wild Alabama's](#) mission is to inspire people to enjoy and protect the state's wild places by cleaning up trash, maintaining trails and removing invasive plants.



Society of Samaritans Magnolia, TX

Community Impact Grants give our remote employees the opportunity to give back to their communities, too. Joe Menner's grant helped [Society of Samaritans](#) provide Thanksgiving meal boxes for those in need. Boxes of food and a gift certificate to purchase meat were given to 479 families in Magnolia, TX.



Business Partners

Connecting our Business with the Community

For 10 years, Ascend Cares was funded primarily through employee contributions and a dollar-for-dollar match by the company. We are proud of the amazing growth our foundation has achieved. So many opportunities to do good are now open to us that the time seemed right to invite our customers and suppliers to get involved.

For the first time in Ascend Cares' history, we held fundraising golf tournaments across our sites. Through the tournaments, we were able to connect our business partners with our mission of helping our communities.

Through the generous support of many teams from our vendors and suppliers, the Ascend Cares golf tournaments raised more than \$225,000 – the most money ever raised in a single Ascend Cares event.



But raising money during a fun day of golf certainly is not the only way our business partners are helping our mission. They routinely pitch in on projects at local sites, lending volunteers, supplies and support.

In Pensacola, **Turner Industries** employees worked on the nature boardwalk construction at Escambia Westgate School, and cafeteria supplier **Dynamic Food Service** donates to teacher appreciate lunches and fundraisers.

In Chocolate Bayou, **Herc Rentals** and **Saber Power Services** provided generators and electrical support for our work with Kids Harbor, and **Turner Industries** workers volunteer frequently on Ascend Cares projects.

Covan's Insulation and **Trades Industrial Company** donated volunteers and supplies to the Greenwood site's Community Initiatives Project. And inspired by initially helping Ascend Cares, **Geodis** launched their own day of service at the Greenwood Soup Kitchen.

Through the generous support of partners like these at each of our sites around the world, we are grateful for new ways to connect our business to the communities where we live and work.





About Ascend Cares Foundation

Our focus: Ascend Cares serves community needs in the areas of children's health and safety, education, housing, hunger and military.

The Ascend Cares Foundation is about making a difference in the lives of others. It is led by Ascend employees and supports Ascend families in their times of need, provides inspiring opportunities for community engagement and facilitates community leadership. Ascend Cares is funded mostly by donations and a company match, and every dollar contributed supports the work of the foundation.

Ascend Cares was founded in 2011 after a tornado outbreak in northern Alabama affected Ascend team members and their families near the Decatur facility. Since then, Ascend employees have made a tremendous impact on families in need and their local communities.

Programs

Community Projects

Employee-led Ascend Cares teams invest foundation dollars and volunteer hours throughout the year to support causes they are passionate about. This includes an annual Global Day of Caring where our employees and their families come together to give back by participating in projects large and small in their communities.

Hardship Grants

Employees and their families sometimes face unexpected financial burdens because of illness, natural disasters or other hardships. Ascend Cares offers financial assistance to team members facing these challenges.

Community Impact Grants

At Ascend, we believe in making a difference in the lives of others. We know many of our employees are actively engaged in our communities, and that engagement brings potential opportunities for the Ascend Cares Foundation to support the work they are doing. The foundation funds Community Impact Grants to support the personal engagement of Ascend employees in hands-on community service projects. Rather than traditional financial sponsorship, the foundation grants are made to support the employee's hands-on engagement in the project.

Community Service Scholarships

The Community Service Scholarships Program is a way for the foundation to invest in Ascend families and their students' educations. Scholarships and Community Impact Grants are awarded to dependents attending college or vocational school who have demonstrated a dedication to community service.



Board of Directors

Because of you, the Ascend Cares Foundation has made a difference in the lives of thousands of people. Your hands-on involvement and generous donations allow us to support team members through hardships and partner with local organizations to help those in our communities.

As we look forward to the next decade, we aspire to:

- / have every Ascend team member volunteer in their community
- / expand globally to support the communities where we operate and live
- / strengthen key community partner relationships and networks
- / increase opportunities to volunteer with our business partners
- / engage the next generation of volunteers through Ascend families and our key partners

Please join us on the journey to create sustainable impacts in our communities.

Key Team Members



Krissy Osborne
Houston

Kendra Bolin
Houston

Board of Directors



Rizwan Amanullah
Houston

Pramod Bengani
Chocolate Bayou

Tom Boggs
Chairman, Pensacola

Lynn Crear
Pensacola

Rachell Gold
Executive Director,
Houston

Scotty Hall
Decatur



Hal McCord
Decatur

Phil McDivitt
Houston

Andrew Ralston
Secretary, Houston

Mimi Smith
Pensacola

Michael Walters
Greenwood

Hardship Committee Members



Brandy Buford
Foley

Donya Charles
Pensacola

Grace Dansby
Decatur

Lynda Green
Chocolate Bayou

David Schwartz
Greenwood

Kenya Thompson
Houston

Site Community Team Leaders



Dina Astorga
Houston

Owen Cai
Asia

Agnieszka Otten
Tilburg

Grace Dansby
Decatur

Valerie Dansby
Greenwood

Julia Jamar
Belgium



Thu Hong Nguyen
Pensacola

Sherri Pitts
Pensacola

Deb Ramel
Detroit/Remote

Michael Schmid
Chocolate Bayou



How to Give

As a 501(c)(3) organization, Ascend Cares is funded through generous donations and company match. Contributions are tax deductible (federal tax ID #90-0709302).

Ascend employees can contribute through payroll deduction at any time. Anyone can make a donation at: ascendmaterials.com/ascendcares.

Employees can also contribute their time on projects through site team projects, Community Impact Grants and Ascend Cares committees.

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