

### **What team achievement are you most proud of?**

One of our fundamental beliefs at Microsoft is the importance of commitment to the communities in which we work. This rings true for Microsoft in Massachusetts and in the more than 190 countries around the world in which we operate.

In 2007, Microsoft made a significant investment to increase our presence in Massachusetts by opening the Microsoft New England Research & Development Center (NERD). With a mission to build a world class R&D center we set our sights on building trust and strong collaborative partnerships with a broad range of local tech, academic, and non-profit organizations based on a common set of beliefs and goals.

Today, with 1,000 passionate Microsoft employees in the Commonwealth, we have been working shoulder to shoulder with over 50 partner organizations on advancing the state of the art and addressing important issues including STEM, workforce development, supporting women in technology, fostering entrepreneurship, and ensuring underserved communities get the support they need.

Through monetary grants, software and curriculum donations, technology solutions, and countless employee volunteer hours and with support of our key partners we have together been able to positively impact tens of thousands of local individuals.

### **What are some of the team achievements that have had the most impact in the community?**

- Since the founding days of NERD we decided to share our conference and meeting spaces at no cost with both tech and non-profit organizations in order to foster learning and networking and accelerate the community's brightest ideas. To date, we have hosted over 875 events which have attracted more than 67,000 attendees. We are humbled that the community has chosen NERD as their clubhouse.
- Microsoft has taken a leadership role, in partnership with the Massachusetts Innovation & Technology Exchange (MITX) and The Commonwealth Institute (TCI) to support women in technology through the creation of *The Successful You* Women's Leadership Forum. Designed with the intent to strengthen the local women in technology network, *The Successful You* provides mid- to senior-level professional women with clear and practical tools to achieve continued success in their careers. Over 250 local women attended our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual event this November. Proceeds from the event generated \$15,000 to support Science Club for Girls' and Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts' STEM education programs.
- One of our key goals is to help the greater Boston innovation ecosystem thrive. To that end, we are a founding sponsor of MassChallenge, the world's largest startup competition, which has enabled 130+ startups to get off the ground.

These startups have attracted an impressive \$119M in outside investment and created nearly 1,000 new jobs. We have opened up our office space on our campus to house two leading startup incubators – Dogpatch Labs and TechStars. We are fully supporting these economic innovation engines through mentorship and by providing access to free Microsoft software and training through the Microsoft BizSpark program.

- Since 2003, Microsoft has donated over \$78 million in cash and free software to Massachusetts not-for-profits. In October 2011, during our annual Give Campaign, Microsoft employees donated both money and volunteer time to local not-for-profit organizations. With employee participation, we raised over \$600,000 including \$5,000 to support Easter Seals of Massachusetts.

### **What significant obstacles did you and the team have to overcome?**

Gaining trust from the local community has been one of the most significant obstacles for us to overcome. Many people questioned our motives during the early days. Why is Microsoft opening up their conference center space for free? Is Microsoft just doing this to sell more software and drive adoption of their platform? As we started to reach out to local organizations and shared our desire to make the entire tech ecosystem a better place, the barriers started to come down. People became genuinely enthusiastic about working with us. Fast forward to today... we are honored to work with so many fantastic local partners in productive relationships based on mutual trust and respect.

### **How do you and the team translate the team vision into reality?**

We strongly believe in the importance of having genuine constructive conversations to truly understand the community needs. We try not to impose our vision but rather try to be “of the community” and focus our efforts on working together towards common goals to ensure a rising tide lifts all boats.

### **How are you and the team being creative in achieving your desired results?**

One of the ways we have been able to maximize our impact in the community is by integrating a broad range of Microsoft resources. An example of this is the Kinect Dance Party we hosted in partnership with the Cambridge Boys & Girls Club and Harmonix (developers of the hit Dance Central™). Together, we planned a party where 100 local elementary and middle-school students learned how Kinect and Dance Central were created, and get a chance to learn – and dance – with the experts. For this event we were able to incorporate our employees, a business partner, a non-profit, a key product, all with the objective that both kids and adults alike would have a great time.

## **What mentor had the biggest effect on your career and on the teams' success and why?**

Our inspiration comes not just from a single person but rather from a range of individuals both inside and outside of Microsoft. Locally, there are numerous outstanding leaders who have taught us so much about the challenges and opportunities facing the local tech and non-profit communities. Each of them has inspired us in their own unique way. Here are just a few of the many people who have been tremendously helpful to us:

- Dr. Connie Chow – Executive Director, Science Club for Girls
- John Harthorne & Akhil Nigam – Founders, MassChallenge
- Tom Hopcroft – President & CEO, MassTLC
- Kirk Joslin – President and Chief Executive Officer, Easter Seals Massachusetts
- Debi Kleiman – President, MITX
- Tim Rowe – Founder and CEO, Cambridge Innovation Center and President of Kendall Square Association