

A splendid idea

In 1991 Sorel Forge was only a whisker away from being closed down. After a spectacular restructuring, which could only be achieved because everyone spared no effort, an idea germinated in the mind of Jacques Dupuis, machinist in the rough machining department, how this success might also become a benefit for the local community.

After he had made certain that the management and the trade unions would support his idea Jacques met all white and blue collar workers in order to obtain their consent to deduct 1 Canadian dollar per week directly from their salary as a charitable donation. This system was implemented in 1996 and has yielded a total of 121,039 Canadian dollars within the first ten years. The project, which had actually been laid-out for the duration of ten years, was then extended to a second period of the same lengths, now raising a weekly contribution of 1.20 Canadian dollars. Up to now, i.e. within a period of five years and eight months, an amount of further 88,049 Canadian dollars could be distributed. Presently 290 of 338 staff members participate in the project.

Ten non-profit organizations in the region of Sorel-Tracy receive donations, especially the local hospital and C.E.G.E.P., an institution taking care of pre-university education. In the course of the past 15 years the charity project has distributed more than 211,000 Canadian dollars.

Besides his charity project Jacques is also involved in l'Arbre de Joie (The Tree of Joy). Arbre de Joie has two objectives: the first is to procure gifts for children from socially disadvantaged families and the second is to give presents to children affected by chronic illness. To make this possible, Jacques arranged a fundraising each week, in the period of September to December. It began in 2002 and is still going on today. For the diseased children Jacques dresses as Santa Claus on the occasion of an organized festivity and he himself distributes the gifts that have been bought from the collected money. More than 50,000 Canadian dollars could be raised and over 2,000 presents were given to 450 children aged between 1 and 10 years from disadvantaged families. Each child receives a bag containing two or three gifts per year.



Jacques Dupuis

Also on other occasions the Sorel employees could demonstrate their generosity. The Saguenay (Quebec) flood or the earthquake at Haiti – Jacques has always been the standard bearer of these donation campaigns.

Jacques was able to convince Sorel Forge in the years 2006, 2007 and 2008 to become the main sponsor of "Nez Rouge" (Red Nose) during the month of December, on each Thursday, Friday and Saturday night. If an individual realizes that he may exceed the legal limit to safely drive his car than he may call "Nez Rouge" and a team will drive back home the car and the car owner for a voluntary contribution. In each of these years, Sorel Forge employees volunteered to provide 28 teams of three members each, who saw home those who had too much alcohol.

To sum up, it might be said that the people working at Sorel Forge want to be a part of the community they are living in and that Jacques has played a catalytic role for this collective understanding. In order to assure the continuity of his commitment Jacques has taken care that there is a team ready to take over his function.

Michel Tellier