





Playing In the Mud Kitchen With Helping Hands

Hospitality Helping Hands (HHH) has become the Convening Leaders event that I look most forward to attending. I don't even mind the early hour. PCMA has a more than 20-year tradition of giving back to the community – long before Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was a term. For those who have yet to attend Convening Leaders, HHH helps to kick off the convention on Sunday.

It was still dark in Vancouver as the group gathered for breakfast to fuel up for the work ahead. A favorite aspect of HHH is the chance to connect with other attendees in a completely different and collaborative way. At breakfast, we learned that this year, PCMA partnered with Engagement Unlimited and Britannia Community Services.

The need to play, both in personal and professional lives, was a strong theme throughout the entire convention. This playfulness was apparent in our HHH project, assisting at two in-need daycares: Grandview Terrace Childcare Society & Mount Pleasant Childcare Society. HHH participants were split into two groups and loaded on buses to each of the daycares.

Participants could select from various activities including painting the facilities, creating "mud kitchens", fence art, and much more. "Mud kitchens" allow the children to use their imagination outside while honing their fine motor skills inside with the use of kitchen utensils. We were fortunate to have some of the daycare staff as well as the children's parents work alongside us. As they did so, they expressed their deep appreciation for our efforts which helped to freshen up and brighten the daycares.

All HHH participants reconnected when we returned to a networking lunch to recognize the HHH sponsors – GES, Experient, Inc., and Marriott Convention & Resort Network. In addition to the hard work from the participants, PCMA presented the daycares with a check for \$2,762.00. We were all sent a video filmed by Engagement Unlimited of the day's work, as well as footage of the daycare children seeing these improvements for the first time. It was a rewarding day all around! •

— by Will Trokey, National Sales Manager, Visit Charlotte



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Personalization, engagement, and creativity: What I learned at Convening Leaders 2016



From the stellar opening event to the stay-and-play adventures, the general sessions to the serendipitous meetings in the Knowledge Den or over the lunch table, Convening Leaders really lived up to its theme of “cultivating creative moments.” There were ample opportunities to interact, interesting sessions and speakers to get attendees thinking, and even a little bit of whitespace to absorb new knowledge, grab a moment of zen, or relax with a craft.

Engagement was a recurring theme throughout many of the learning opportunities. It's always top of mind for event professionals, whether they're drawing audiences to the event itself or creating new ways to connect on the show floor and beyond.

One track of breakout sessions focused on the connection of data and engagement, helping to demystify the tools and tactics that can be used to collect key data to learn more about what attendees want and need. A key takeaway that was repeated across sessions was not just the importance of collecting data, but using those metrics to create an experience that meet the objectives at hand—not just attendee objectives,

but your organization's objectives and your sponsors' as well.

Other sessions focused on the creative ways that events can utilize personalization; using the kinds of intelligence you can get from data analytics to get incredibly specific and create events that prove that you understand attendee needs, all while providing engaging, interesting content that creates value and keeps them coming back for more.

We learned how personalization is key to appealing to target audiences and creating content that resonates with what they want. If we provide targeted engagements for the audiences that make them want to share their experiences, we can extend our reach past the event and even the attendees.

By giving attendees a chance to experience many different engagement tactics during the event, it brought the learning to life in a hands-on way that goes far beyond a single session. That made this year's PCMA's Convening Leaders more than just a conference—it was a living case study on event planning and engagement in action. •

by Bob Lueke, Director, Business Development,
Freeman Washington, DC

6:31PM
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Hey—I'm a first timer! My experience as a #PCMACL newbie

It is true what they say. Time certainly flies by—I cannot believe that it has been almost a month since we were all together in Vancouver, British Columbia. And now that I have had some time to reflect, I can honestly say without question that I thoroughly enjoyed my first PCMA Convening Leaders experience! From the destination and its setting, the Center and its views to the hotels and the food scene, I was beyond impressed. Let me tell you a little bit about my four days in Vancouver.

The thing that really jumped out at me and I appreciated the most about Convening Leaders were the educational opportunities. It was my first convention experience that was geared equally towards both suppliers and planners. I relished the opportunity to grow alongside my customers, walking through the learning process with them and actively sharing in education that felt pertinent to me. There were panel discussions that incited lively dialogue about trends and the future of our industry and which opened my eyes towards what is to come. I also loved that session topics were intended to benefit both my work life and my personal life. I felt that I left the conference more well-rounded because of it, with takeaways that I can now apply to many facets of my life.

Now can we talk about the events and networking opportunities?! Everywhere I turned I ran into new acquaintances or clients. The conference took advantage of every free minute to promote networking opportunities—there seemed to be a place to connect around every corner, and people were actually receptive to it! Clients and suppliers that I had not met before were open to striking up a conversation with someone new and sharing their experiences. It was great spending one-on-one time with my customers in a different

environment, getting to know them better in both a social and educational setting.

While this was just a small snapshot of my experience, I hope that you can see how fantastic it was to be a first-timer at #PCMACL. I can't wait for my next PCMA experience in 2017! Hope to see you in Austin (if not before)! •

- by Alison R. Ricketts, Convention Sales Manager,
Destination DC

Advocacy Corner

What does it mean to advocate? What makes a good advocate? What does it mean to support a cause? These are only some of the questions that we hope to answer each month in the new Advocacy Corner. We also hope to encourage you to participate in advocating for our industry. You can begin doing this by attending the Global Meetings Industry Day (GMID) on April 14, 2016. GMID will showcase the real impact that business meetings, conferences, conventions, incentive travel, trade shows and exhibitions have on people, business and communities.

The PCMA Capital Chapter Advocacy Task Force is working on the annual Rally that will feature speakers addressing global, national and local perspectives that affect small business, associations, transportation and a myriad of other ancillary services and how what you do has a major impact on society.

So mark your calendar for April 14 and join us at the Omni Shoreham to celebrate advocacy. Watch the Corner for more information. •

by Annette Suriani, CMP, Chief Meeting Strategist, AMS Meeting Solutions



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New Designation:

Johnnie White received his CAE certification (ASAE's Certified Association Executive)

Members on the Move:

Laurie Cipriano, CMP is leaving American Education Research Association to go to Investment Company Institute

Amanda Clark is now Senior Meeting Planner at the Office of Meeting Management with the National Governor's Association

Robert Smith, CMP, CMM is leaving American Council for Technology to go to American Educational Research Association

Lance Wheeler became Senior Sales Executive at JW Marriott Washington, DC

Promotion:

Erin Keedy is now a Washington, DC Citywide Sales Executive for Marriott



Mark Your Calendar

Please join us for these upcoming events. Visit our chapter website for details and to register:
www.pcma.org/connect-and-grow/chapters/capital

2/17 Major Hotel Brands & What You Need to Know
3:00 PM - 6:30 PM; House of Sweden

2/23 Mix 'N Bowl Networking
3:00 PM - 7:00 PM; Pinstripes Georgetown

3/10 Capital Classroom
5:00 PM - 8:00 PM; Hotel Monaco DC



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