

## OtterBox hopes charity project has growing impact

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### Document Text

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When a stone falls into a pond, a ripple spreads far beyond the initial drop. On Thursday, the Otter Cares foundation created a ripple it hopes will reach for miles.

To celebrate the launch of its charitable foundation, OtterBox presented each of its 240 employees a \$200 grant certificate to donate to the charity of their choice. Employees were given three weeks to increase their donations before hand-delivering them to the chosen charities.

"The idea of this project was to get the employees involved in the foundation and to make it a point of pride," said Tricia Lemmer, development director of Otter Cares. "Employees making donations in lots of small places will create a ripple across all of Northern Colorado."

Employees of the Fort Collins-based company embraced the challenge. Sales representative DeAnza Humphreys said the project made her realize her ability to give back.

"It's not about what you have in your hands and what you can do with it," she said. "It's about the potential of what you have and what it can grow to be."

To announce the project, tins containing news of a special surprise were delivered to nonprofits around Fort Collins. When a tin arrived at Respite Care, the whole building was abuzz with anticipation.

"It was very mysterious. We had no idea what it would be. We were all very excited and intrigued," said Allison Hines, development director.

When a team of 34 employees presented the organization with more than \$8,500, Hines was thrilled.

"It was just so heartwarming to see that so many of their employees had chosen Respite Care," she said. "It's good to know that so many felt the connection to our mission. It was very moving."

Last year, Respite Care provided 50,000 hours of care for children with developmental disabilities. The money raised by Otter Cares will help them meet increasing demand for care.

Another group of OtterBox employees donated their funds to the Make a Wish Foundation. The team of 26 raised more than \$6,000 to adopt a wish for a local cancer patient. Thanks to their efforts, his wish to become a

filmmaker will be granted on Sunday.

In all, the employees raised \$29,000. Combined with the \$45,000 donated by OtterBox, the project raised \$74,000 for 73 organizations.

Employees raised money by matching the grant donation, hosting a girls' night fundraiser, or even selling blueberry muffins.

Ephraim Mammo, a process engineer, got creative and raised money by asking people to donate \$1 for every mile he ran in the Denver Rock 'n' Roll Marathon.

"I usually give and forget about it," said Mammo, who donates \$50 every month to Yessera, an organization dedicated to developing self-sufficiency in Ethiopian youth.

"This challenged us to get involved. It forced me to act," he said.

Mammo raised \$2,129 for Yessera, but he learned that raising awareness is just as important as fundraising.

Stephanie Eyster, a receptionist, agreed.

"The stones shouldn't sink. They should become stepping stones for these organizations," she said.

OtterBox employees hope that once the community sees their efforts, they will be motivated to go out and do the same.

"The challenge was a great way to get people interested in something you're passionate about," said Molly McCarthy, a public relations employee. "I hope it inspires other people to throw stones. Our ripple may be huge, but it can only go for so long without help."

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#### **Abstract** (Document Summary)

To celebrate the launch of its charitable foundation, OtterBox presented each of its 240 employees a \$200 grant certificate to donate to the charity of their choice. "The idea of this project was to get the employees involved in the foundation and to make it a point of pride," said Tricia Lemmer, development director of Otter Cares.

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