Blue Cross Volunteers Help 90 Nonprofits Build Healthier Communities on Annual Service Day

BOSTON, Sept. 23, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, 2,800 Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts ("Blue Cross") employees are volunteering to support 90 service projects across Massachusetts focused on improving the health of children and families as part of the company's 11th annual Service Day.



To support the needs of the community while offering safe opportunities for their employees, Blue Cross worked with 90 not-for-profit organizations to design both in-person and virtual volunteer opportunities that align with the company's health equity work. 1,600 employees are participating in service projects from home and 1,200 are dispersing in small groups to community partner sites across the state.

"Service Day is one of our favorite days of the year," said Andrew Dreyfus, president and CEO of Blue Cross. "We're proud to partner with not-for-profits around the state that are working to address health inequities affecting our communities. We're also thankful for their creativity and ingenuity in helping us create a hybrid of meaningful opportunities, both virtual and in person, so our employees can help support their critical missions."

Volunteers participating in-person are supporting 75 projects in 39 cities and towns across Massachusetts focused on addressing the social and environmental conditions affecting the health of children and families. Service projects include creating new outdoor play spaces for children to stay active, harvesting fresh produce to donate to local food pantries, and cleaning beaches and clearing trails to improve access to green space.

Simultaneously, 1,600 employees are volunteering from home in 25 virtual projects. Together on Zoom, volunteers will complete projects such as writing letters to seniors who are isolated during COVID-19, packing themed Happy Hope Bags filled with creative activities for hospitalized children and creating lifesaving paracord bracelets for military and first responders. The company is also partnering with Common Impact to engage employees in virtual skills-based projects that will convene small groups of volunteers to tackle business challenges facing three community partners – Fathers' Uplift, East Boston Neighborhood Health Center and Weymouth Food Pantry.

Projects are chosen based on their alignment with the company's focus on health justice. In addition to sending a group of enthusiastic volunteers to complete the task, Blue Cross also provides a grant to cover the project costs. Since Service Day's inception in 2011, Blue Cross has contributed more than $10 million through this annual volunteer day.

For more information on Blue Cross' annual Service Day and the company's commitment to health justice, visit its Corporate Citizenship website or read its latest Corporate Citizenship Report.

Service Day community partners and projects:

Event Name	Event City	Event Description
Annie's Kindness Blankets	Virtual Project	Sending someone a gift of hope by creating a no-sew Annie's Kindness Blanket that serves as a symbol of hope and an everlasting hug.

Ascentria Care Alliance	Brockton	Working alongside young mothers and their children to build a beautiful and safe backyard at the Ruth House in Brockton. This home provides 12 families with a safe, therapeutic residential environment that builds individual's strengths and helps young families move toward self-sufficiency.
Backyard Growers	Gloucester	Helping weed the raised garden beds, mulch common areas and pathways, and beautify the gardens to support Backyard Growers provide healthy, fresh food to low- to moderate-income residents of Gloucester, including many immigrant and refugee families.
Bikes Not Bombs	Virtual Project	Using bicycle parts to craft drink coasters that will serve as party favors for Bikes Not Bombs Building Momentum Breakfast. Bikes Not Bombs relies on this annual event to build community and raise critical funds in support of equitable access to safe, reliable, and sustainable transportation.
Birthday Wishes	Natick	Bringing a smile to a homeless child! Volunteers will be wrapping birthday gifts that will be donated to homeless children with October birthdays.
Boston Harbor Now	Boston	Supporting the Boston Harbor Islands and help ensure Moakley Park remains a vibrant, waterfront park - now and for future generations - by cleaning up, landscaping, and clearing trails.
Boston Home	Boston	Creating a treasured oasis for the residents, their families and staff at The Boston Home. Volunteers will beautify the garden and grounds with fall plantings and fall container garden displays, as well as a fall grounds clean-up.
Boston Scores at the Roxbury YMCA	Boston	Ensuring that community members at the Roxbury Y can enjoy clean and welcoming outdoor spaces.
Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell	Lowell	Ensuring that kids & teens in Lowell have an inviting space to participate in Club activities and grow and learn by helping to spruce up both indoor and outdoor areas of the physical building.
Boys & Girls Club of Marshfield	Marshfield	Creating an inviting space for more than 1,000 young people ages 5-18 who use the Club for out-of-school care, enrichment programs and camp.
Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston (Yawkey Club)	Boston	Working on various landscaping and building improvement projects to ensure members have a safe, positive atmosphere, and prepare healthy nutritious snacks and meal for approximately 200 youth.
Brockton VA	Brockton	Supporting the VA's garden and help veterans eat healthy food! Volunteers will help weed and plant vegetables in the indoor greenhouse used for the hospital's farm to table meal program.
Camp Harbor View	Boston	Ensuring more than 1,000 campers have a beautiful place to be active and explore opportunities by helping close the campgrounds for the season.
Cape Cod Military Support Foundation	Bourne	Helping pack Food4Vets boxes and personal care packages to be distributed to veterans and active-duty military and their families.
Cardinal Cushing	Hanover	Providing an outlet for being active and gathering outside for the 600+ individuals with intellectual disabilities served by Cardinal Cushing. Volunteers will help spruce up their fitness trails and create an outdoor seating area!
Catholic Charities - Sunset Point Camp	Hull	Helping close up camp for the season and prepare for the following summer .Sunset Point Camp is an historic summer camp for at-risk children ages 6-13. Operated by Catholic Charities, it is a hidden gem located in a quaint residential neighborhood near the seashore in Hull.
Community Servings	Boston	Helping prepare and package medically tailored meals to be delivered to critically ill and homebound clients.
Confetti Foundation	Virtual Project	Sending a happy birthday to a child in the hospital! Volunteers will create birthday banners, birthday cards and bookmarks to be added to a themed birthday box for a child and their family having to spend their birthday in a hospital setting.
Cradles to Crayons	Virtual Project	Sorting clothing and packing bags and that contain a week's worth of everyday outfits for children in need who are living in homeless and low-income situations in Massachusetts.
Cradles to Crayons - Giving Factory	Newton	Helping Cradles to Crayons provide high-quality everyday essentials such as clothing, shoes, hygiene items, books, and more to thousands of local children in need by working in the Giving Factory warehouse sorting, sizing, quality-checking, and packaging children's items.
Crossroads	Duxbury	Helping close up the campgrounds for the season and ensure more than 1,500 campers ages 5-18 each summer have a beautiful place to be active and build social-emotional skills.

Daily Table	Boston	Helping provide nutritious food to Dorchester families most in need at prices everyone can afford! Volunteers will sort produce, label and package foods, stock retail shelves, reorganize the freezer, and design displays on the store floor.
Dimock Center	Boston	Beautifying the entrance to the Dimock Center and helping set up for a special outdoor employee appreciation BBQ to celebrate our healthcare heroes!
DOVE	Quincy	Creating a beautiful space for survivors of domestic violence. Volunteers will brighten the indoor and outdoor areas at DOVE's shelter program by cleaning and organizing the common spaces for women and their children to enjoy.
East Boston Neighborhood Health Center	Virtual Skills-based Project	Developing a suite of recommendations for EBNHC's Community Resource and Wellness Center staff can use to mitigate compassion fatigue and burnout at the leadership, managerial, and frontline worker level.
Emerald Necklace Conservancy	Boston	Protecting one of Boston's greatest outdoor treasures by helping maintain the trails along the Emerald Necklace. Volunteers' efforts will benefit the native species that inhabit the parks, as well as the thousands of Bostonians who use our public parks every day.
Esplanade Association	Boston	Beautifying the Esplanade! Volunteers will work together outside and connect with nature while promoting active lifestyles and healthy ecological environment.
Father Bill's & Mainspring	Virtual Project	Delivering bag lunches to Father Bill's shelters for guests.
Father's Uplift	Boston	Helping pack "Bags for Dads" duffels and write notes of encouragement for dads experiencing reentry after incarceration.
Father's Uplift	Virtual Skills-based Project	Partnering to create graphic design elements and recommendations to incorporate Father's Uplift's brand to launch an engaging peer-to-peer Movember Men's Health campaign to expand their network of donors.
Food For Free	Somerville	Packing groceries in grab-n-go style grocery boxes at Food For Free's assembly-line style facility in Somerville to support over 2000+ families at various low-income housing sites, schools and Food Pantries.
Friends of Holly Hill Farm	Cohasset	Spending the morning at the Holly Hill Farm! Volunteers will assist with various farm chores and will learn organic farming techniques to harvest vegetables, flowers and herbs.
Friends of Mansfield Drop In	Mansfield	Welcoming back seniors to the Mansfield Council on Aging at their first in-person celebration since the start of the pandemic. Volunteers will help set up for a special luncheon, greet guests as they arrive, and help serve lunch during the event.
Friends of Peter Igo Park	Marshfield	Enhancing the public green space at Peter Igo Park for all to enjoy. Volunteers will help ensure that the Park continues to be one of the best places for outdoor recreation in Southeastern Massachusetts.
Germantown Neighborhood Center	Quincy	Refreshing and restoring the Germantown Neighborhood Center operated by the South Shore YMCA. Volunteers will help clean the kitchen, restock the food pantry, and harvest vegetables in their community garden.
Good Sports	Braintree	Sharing the love of sports by helping sort and distribute brand-new sporting equipment, apparel and footwear to Good Sports has a warehouse of brand-new equipment, apparel and footwear to communities in need.
Greater Boston Food Bank	Boston	Helping stop hunger now! Volunteers will work together to inspect, sort, and repackage food for distribution to partner agencies. Projects may include packaging boxes of nonperishable products, inspecting fresh foods like produce and bread, and sorting frozen retail product.
GreenRoots	Chelsea	Helping bring new love and life to Bosson Park, one of the most popular playgrounds in Chelsea! Volunteers will paint a mural and clean the park to ensure that it is safe and inviting for local children.
Hope & Comfort	Virtual Project	Participating in a Poverty Simulation emulating the difficult decisions about how to spend resources based on the average income of a Massachusetts family living at the federal poverty level. Followed by coloring and putting together toothbrush kits for families served by Hope & Comfort.
Hope Floats Healing and Wellness Center	Kingston	Supporting grieving families by creating an inviting and peaceful outdoor space for support groups and children's activities.
Hull Lifesaving Museum	Hull	Helping the Museum prepare for fall programming. Volunteers will clean up the gardens and landscape, reorganize and clean the children's loft after a summer of activities, and clean out materials from the boathouse in preparation for rowing races.
Interfaith Social Services	Quincy	Helping Interfaith serve Quincy residents in need by working with their team to fill grocery orders, unload the food rescue truck and stock shelves, fridges and freezers in their food pantry.

Keeping Pace with Multiple Miracles	West Bridgewater	Helping Keeping Pace with Multiple Miracles prepare their center of operations and resale boutique for families to shop the fall and holiday seasons.
Kind Hearts for Kids	Bourne	Assembling duffle bags full of wrapped holiday gifts for teens in foster care to help show these vulnerable young people that they have not been forgotten or overlooked during such a special time of year.
Louis D. Brown Peace Institute	Boston	Commemorating the life of Louis D. Brown's grandmother and beloved member of the Peace Institute family, Zoila Weddborn by helping create a flowering garden at their Center of Healing, Teaching and Learning.
Love for Our Elders	Virtual Project	Writing letters to seniors who are isolated during COVID-19 to lift their spirits and let them know that they are loved.
MA Audubon - Boston Nature Center	Boston	Ensuring that the Boston Nature Center visitors and program participants are able to enjoy this open green space by removing invasive plants, restoring BNC's trails, and tending to the landscaped areas.
MA Audubon at Broad Meadow Brook	Worcester	Helping clearly define boundaries of protected land with visually appropriate split-rail fencing and restoring an accessible sensory-friendly trail to assist the more than 18,000 visitors who come each year to this 435-acre sanctuary in New England's second-largest city.
MA Coalition for the Homeless (A Bed for Every Child)	Lynn	Helping provide a good night's sleep for a child in need! In just two hours, volunteers will work together to help build, sand, and stain bed frames for the children A Bed for Every Child's waitlist.
MA Military Support Foundation	Foxborough	Supporting our military families in need! Volunteers will sort food and personal hygiene products and pack them into personal care packages for military members and their families.
Magical Moon Foundation	Marshfield	Working in Magical Moon Foundation's five-acre farm in Marshfield to provide children diagnosed with cancer and their families the opportunity to develop skills to manage their disease holistically - from proper nutrition to music and art therapy.
Manet Community Health Center	Quincy	Helping create a welcoming environment for patients and staff at the North Quincy Manet Community Health Center. Volunteers will beautify the grounds, landscaping and planting new fall flowers.
Message of Hope	Bourne	Helping prepare supplies and package holiday-themed Happy Hope Bags that will be delivered to children receiving medical care throughout Massachusetts.
Message of Hope	Virtual Project	Sending a boost of hope and travel fun to hospitalized children by assembling and packing themed Happy Hope Bags filled with creative activities and special items that bring joy!
Old Colony YMCA Middleboro (Camp Yomechas)	Middleborough	Creating a 10-station fitness trail at Camp Yomechas and expand their treehouse reading loft to enhance the summer experience for hundreds of children and young people.
Old Colony YMCA Plymouth (Camp Clark)	Plymouth	Building two new "Chill Zones" at Camp Clark to provide a permanent, sensory-friendly environment for children who need a rest.
Old Colony YMCA Stoughton	Stoughton	Creating a fitness trail with five separate stations across the Old Colony YMCA Stoughton's Camp Christina that will not only serve the over 500 campers that come each summer but will be available for the local community for use in conjunction with their Y Without Walls programming.
Operation Gratitude	Virtual Project	Making paracord bracelets for military and first responders that not only show our support but can actually be used to save a life in an emergency situation.
Our Neighbors' Table	Amesbury	Helping ensure food security in northeast Essex County by packing and distributing groceries to local families. Your efforts will provide families with fresh, wholesome food for the week ahead.
Pine Street Inn	Virtual Project	Creating cards of support for homeless and formerly homeless individuals throughout Boston that will be distributed with gift cards to individuals living on the street and in Pine Street Inn housing.
Playworks	Lawrence	Making recess fun again for students at Guilmette Elementary School in Lawrence! Volunteers will help totally revamp the playground's blacktop by in order to transform the culture and activities at recess to promote active lifestyles for children in schools.
Project Just Because	Hopkinton	Helping families get access to warm winter clothes by setting up the area where coats, hats, gloves, and other cold weather items will be offered.

Regional Environmental Council	Worcester	Building wooden raised beds that will allow REC to grow in underutilized spaces on the farm and increase their ability to provide healthy affordable, locally grown food for the community.
Room to Grow	Boston	Sorting and organizing donations of baby items at the Room to Grow Boston Warehouse. Activities will include sorting and quality checking donations, organizing donations by category (clothing, books, toys, etc.), and sorting clothing items by size and season.
Saint Francis House	Boston	Preparing and serving a nutritious lunch to the 229 men and women experiencing homelessness served by the St. Francis House.
Save the Harbor/Save the Bay	Boston	Restoring South Boston's beaches by helping remove overgrown brush, sweep sand back onto the beach, pick up trash and other debris, and paint doors and shade shelters.
School on Wheels	East Bridgewater	Ensuring over 6,000 students affected by homelessness are ready to learn! Volunteers will help prepare and quality check fully stocked backpacks for students from Pre-K through college.
Sewa International	Lawrence	Spreading happiness among children in form of blessing bags! Volunteers will pack bags with thoughtful items such as toiletries, non-perishable food, hand-made greeting cards, and DIY craft supplies, etc.
Sharing the Harvest at YMCA Southcoast (Dartmouth)	Dartmouth	Helping alleviate hunger on the South Coast and support Sharing the Harvest's Community Farm. Since 2006, the Farm has donated over 858,000 pounds of produce to 19 emergency food programs. Volunteers will support these efforts by helping to maintain the Farm and tending to the crops.
SHINE Initiative	Worcester	Creating backpacks filled with instructions for various mindfulness activities, as well as the materials needed that will be distributed to students throughout the school year.
St. Mary's Center for Women and Children	Boston	Revitalizing St. Mary's playground cleaning up the play area and painting murals will provide a space for play-based learning and will benefit the emotional and social wellbeing of St. Mary's children and families experiencing poverty and homelessness.
Stars	Westwood	Helping close up camp for the season by cleaning cabins, storing equipment and storing away picnic tables and tents.
Support the Soupman	West Bridgewater	Assembling backpacks with essential toiletries which will be distributed to community members experiencing homelessness on the South Shore.
The Food Project	Lincoln	Helping grow vegetables for food insecure communities in the Boston area by volunteering on our Lincoln farm. Volunteers will get their hands dirty by doing whatever needs to be done on the farm that day, from weeding to harvesting!
The Outreach Program	Pembroke	Working as a team to feed hungry New Englanders! Volunteers will help pour, weigh and package food in a fun group setting that will then be distributed to local community food pantries.
The Trustees	Hingham	Helping set up for The Trustees' annual outdoor Fall Festival, preparing the Farm for winter, and building new trash stations to encourage recycling.
Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center	Boston	Clearing trails and brush throughout the island to prepare for the return of their 4k Trail Run fundraiser.
Together We Rise	Virtual Project	Creating Superhero Boxes filled with a personal card, decorated pillowcase, and superhero costume to lift the spirits and give hope to kids in foster care.
Union Capital Boston	Virtual Project	Phone banking to Union Capital's 2,800 members encouraging them to vote and/or participate in the 2021 Boston Mayoral Election.
Urban Farming Institute	Boston	Supporting local sustainable farming by helping weed, harvest produce, and prepare garden beds for fall planting. Volunteers will also help assemble grow kits that will be handed out to local youth to teach them gardening tips at their Annual Food Day in October.
Waltham Fields Community Farm	Waltham	Working the farm to help grow organic food to be distributed through food access programs.
West End House	Boston	Supporting West End House's Sports, Fitness and Nutrition Program by promoting healthy and active lifestyles for our young people through our Fitness Carnival and our Live in Motion Café, and by addressing food insecurity through our Family Food Program.

Weymouth Food Pantry	Rockland	Creating a mural to brighten the entrance of the food pantry's expanded distribution hub. The mural will serve as the backdrop for thousands of photographs in the years to come and will enhance the space for the many volunteers who work hard to keep the pantry in operation.
Weymouth Food Panty	Virtual Skills-based Project	Creating guidelines for a basic employee handbook that Weymouth Food Bank can incorporate into their hiring and onboarding process as they continue to grow and expand their staffing.
Women's Lunch Place	Boston	Creating a clean, warm, and welcoming environment for women experiencing homelessness to come and relax. Volunteers will help paint, clean and repair furniture at the Women's Lunch Place in Boston in order to provide comfort and dignity to the women served.
Wonderfund	Plymouth	Renovating and decorating Brockton's Department of Children and Families waiting room to transform these rooms into comfortable, soothing spaces where a child is more likely to have a positive experience.
YMCA Cape Cod	Sandwich	Participating in outdoor improvement projects at Camp Lyndon, including in the Equestrian Center and help beautify this 70+ acre summer camp which is "home" to 600 campers ages 5 to 15.
YMCA of Greater Boston - Camp Ponkapoag	Milton	Helping ensure more than 200 children can play, learn and explore in the beautiful natural setting of the Blue Hills Reservation at the YMCA of Greater Boston's Camp Ponkapoag. This project will focus on cleaning up and closing up the campgrounds at the end of the 2021 season.
YMCA Southcoast (Wareham)	Wareham	Creating a welcoming and engaging space for health and wellness. Volunteers will sand and paint benches, clear trails, and weed and plant new flowers in the Zen garden.
Zoo New England	Boston	Enjoy a morning among the animals helping to improve one of Boston's biggest attractions. Volunteers will help plant native tree saplings and shrubs around the grounds and install rain barrels to protect the exhibits.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (bluecrossma.org) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We are committed to the relentless pursuit of quality, affordable and equitable health care with an unparalleled consumer experience. Consistent with our promise to always put our members first, we are rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

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