



A Culture Driven to Build A Better Community

By Mark Traylor



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Batson-Cook has always focused on its community. We started operations in October 1915 in West Point, Ga. A few years after our founding, the community was hit hard by a flood and a devastating tornado. Understanding that we were in a position to help, we did. We helped rebuild homes and businesses whenever possible, thus starting a tradition that has lasted over a century.

We often say around here that we’re not just building hospitals, schools, and offices; we’re improving the same community we live in and we’re building relationships. When we build a library, there is a good chance that our employees or their family will check out a book there. When someone gets sick, they will be visiting the same hospital built by Batson-Cook. We just completed a police precinct that will help keep our communities safe. It’s because of this that we realized the important role we play and how we can push ourselves to do more.

In 2006, we decided to host a large-scale fundraiser to benefit deserving organizations in our community. This was a grassroots effort because it was important to our employees. This was employees coming together to do some good in our communities. It was decided that the event should bring people together—from owners to trade partners to architects and engineers, and our employees—because the fellowship and getting to know one another was just as important as raising funds for charitable organizations. We also thought we would do something different than everyone else. Since many organizations were hosting golf tournaments, we decided to change things up a bit and host a clays tournament.

Our first annual Clays for a Cause tournament was held on Friday, March 30, 2007. The American Cancer Society was our first beneficiary due to their programs of research, education, advocacy, and service. And I’m proud to say that after all the planning and organizing we did, despite it being our first event, we were able to raise \$50,000 for that organization. And with the lessons we learned from that first event, we were able to grow it for our second year, bringing in \$75,000 for the American Cancer Society.

One lesson we learned was the importance of getting the word out about the event. We needed to promote it at every level of the company, so our employees could self-promote it on jobsites and beyond. We started a tele-

thon to accomplish this. Employees are encouraged to call their contacts and promote the event. If their contact signed up, they were rewarded with a scratch off ticket. The event would go for three hours and at the end of every hour, the office would come together to reveal how much money was raised in that hour in addition to the grand total. The combination of raising money and securing participation helped us to increase participation.

We simply couldn't pull off Clays for a Cause without our employees stepping up to volunteer their time – they're the reason the event runs so smoothly. We've learned that spreading the work around is key, which is why we aim for a big committee, so no one gets stuck with too much to handle.

And to make the greatest impact on our community, we rotated the beneficiaries on a two-year commitment, nominated by our employees. This way, more than one organization would



receive the necessary funds to help their organization succeed.

And you know what else makes me really proud? Just how generous everyone connected to this event is. Simply put – they trust us. Our colleagues know we're bending over backwards to keep the tournament costs down so that the charity gets the biggest possible chunk of the money. Even way back during the 2008 recession and again with COVID hitting, our friends still had our backs and showed up for the event, and we still managed to raise some serious funds for some really great causes.

If we hadn't delayed our 2020 Clays for a Cause event, we would have already celebrated our twentieth annual tournament. As it stands, we'll have the privilege of hosting that milestone in 2026. And if our fund-raising trend continues, allowing us to raise around \$250,000 for our beneficiaries that year, we will have reached a total of three million dollars contributed to our communities.

This event has had a ripple effect on our company's commitment across the southeast. Our Florida offices host and participate in Smoking Clays and Clays 4 Hearts tournaments. Our Charlotte office has begun its own Clays to Raise sporting clays tournament. And Batson-Cook Texas, LLC, is holding its second annual Tee It Up Golf Tournament. Totaled together, we've contributed \$5.3 million dollars to our communities.

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