

# Common Impact Volunteer Spotlight: Cate Hewett, State Street

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*Pro Bono Week is almost here and we're thrilled to be spotlighting another one of the many dedicated skills-based volunteers we have the pleasure of working with. Today we hear from Cate Hewett, **Riverside Industries, Inc.***

**You recently participated in a Common Impact skills-based volunteering project with Riverside Industries, a nonprofit that serves and empowers adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities by providing services to maximize their opportunities for employment, personal growth, and independence. What was the challenge you were collaborating on and how did you use your professional skills to solve it?**

It was an amazing opportunity. My entire team participated and everybody came back with really powerful experiences that have changed the way we work as a team and the way that we work with other teams throughout State Street. There are so many things you get used to doing when you're in person, and it felt like a lot of them went away during COVID. It's nice that State Street worked with Common Impact to put together a strong, solid virtual program that felt just as important and meaningful as if we had been in the room together.

We love Riverside Industries and what they do, and it made us think in the best possible ways about how to help them – and not just bring them back to where they were, but use the opportunity to ask what we could do to make them even bigger and better. Their ask was around recruiting and we went full bore on it because we saw that there was just so much opportunity. We looked at revamping their board, their service offerings, their fundraising efforts. The thing that we loved about the organization was they were totally open to everything and anything. I don't think they felt like there was any one thing that they were married to in terms of trying to rebuild.

We spent so much time on the project that it was hard to walk away from it at the end. I know we were still talking about it as a group internally at State Street, how we could get involved. A bunch of the people on the team made donations and looked into how they could have them matched. It was such a good, engaged, energetic, all-in group. I would love to work with them again.

**At Common Impact, we know that professional skills are superpowers. What are some of the superpowers you practice every day in your work at State Street?**

Listening and being engaged. Especially during COVID right now, that can be hard – making sure that you're really in the moment. The thing we've been focusing on at State Street, and that I definitely focus on as a leader, is just caring about people as people and not as employees. I think that's been a critical piece of trying to make lemonade out of lemons during the COVID experience. In some respects, it's really brought us together as a team and as an organization.

**How did leading this skills-based volunteering project impact you on an individual level? What was the most valuable aspect for you?**

It was a powerful moment for me to hear how much personal time the people from Riverside Industries gave to their clients, how invested they were, how much they gave outside of what I would call a normal workday. It was unbelievable to talk to some of them and hear what they've done, what they've been through, and how they've continued to try and further things along, even though things have been challenging during the pandemic. I can't wait for the next skills-based volunteering project. I wish we did it more often as a company – and certainly for longer, because it's something that's good for State Street to do and something that I am very dedicated to and need to find a way to do more often.

## **What advice would you offer to someone who is interested in using their professional skills to support a nonprofit?**

If you're being selfish: It's only going to make you feel good at the end of the day! It's going to make you understand all the things that you have to contribute, and if there's something around subject matter excellence, you can absolutely bring that to the table. Also, look at it as an opportunity: if it's a group event, there's an opportunity to network there, to meet other people within your organization or potentially outside your organization – and you never know what that's going to be for you, what that might mean.

If you're being more philanthropic: I think it's really around giving back to people, trying to remember that people have helped you along the way. There are certainly tons of different nonprofits that need your help. Not every one of them is in a tough situation, but some of them are, and I have to tell you that nothing is going to make you feel better than helping somebody rebuild their business, than trying to help another person who is out there every day helping people. I'm passionate about that, so I would encourage people to give it a chance, find something that's interesting to you, and be open minded.

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