

# Debby Ballard



One year, when I was about eight, I opened all of my Christmas presents prior to Christmas. Then I tried to rewrap them so my parents would not find out, but, as a child, I didn't do a great job of that. But being the great parents they are, they never let on that they knew. Instead, they just hid one of the ones I really liked and wanted, and then I had to confess.

**A**s director of Community Affairs for Sprint, Debby Ballard manages a team of seven employees and a budget of approximately \$10 million. Her responsibilities include directing Sprint's charitable funding and strategic leadership of Sprint's community outreach, employee volunteerism, and annual employee campaigns. She organizes events such as those in partnership with United Way, March of Dimes, and National Food Drive, and she also serves as a mentor for Sprint employees and is a member of Sprint's African-American Employee Resource Group.

The work that is done by Ballard and her team directly correlates to Sprint's positive reputation as a good corporate citizen and also supports awareness of its strong brand.

"Sprint passionately supports both local and national efforts to improve the communities where its employees and custom-

ers live and work," explains Ballard. "The goal is to invest our organization's philanthropic resources in the areas that are most meaningful and relevant for our customers and employees – and to do it as efficiently and effectively as possible."

Ballard believes that the key to successful collaboration and teamwork comes from hiring talented people and then giving them the opportunity to do their jobs without being afraid to challenge the status quo.

"Debby has a history of outstanding personal performance matched by a legacy of exceptional leadership," says Ralph Reid, vice president for Corporate Social Responsibility at Sprint. In nominating Ballard for the Eagle Award, Reid added that Sprint is fortunate to have her on its leadership team and that she has led a series of corporate-wide leadership-development initiatives for the organization.

## The Leadership Promise at Sprint

“I believe in treating people fairly and always doing the right thing,” Ballard says, “even when it seems hard or unpopular. I am really fortunate to do the work that I do, and I have an opportunity each day to lead in ways that matter, supporting those who need a helping hand through initiatives like scholarships for deserving students, rehabbing homes in the urban core for the elderly or disabled, facilitating grants to schools and school districts, collecting food for those in need, and packing lunches for the homeless.”

Ballard has always had a passion for the kind of work she does, because her parents instilled in her at an early age a powerful sense of charitable responsibility. “Giving back has always been important to me,” she says, “and this job gives me an opportunity to directly impact communities across the country in positive ways through foundation grants, volunteerism, corporate sponsorships, in-kind gifts, and national programs.”

In her work as well as in her personal life, Ballard subscribes to the philosophy that “to whom much is given much is required.” She humbly acknowledges that she has been abundantly blessed, not only with material things but also with the things that she says really matter the most, such as love of family and the ability to make a difference in the lives of others.

“I have a strong faith,” she says, “and truly believe that, if I can help somebody, then my life will not have been lived in vain.”

*CareerFOCUS Magazine*<sup>™</sup> and the National Eagle Leadership Institute<sup>®</sup> salute 2010 Eagle Award winner Debby Ballard.

Sprint is committed to recognizing, developing, and promoting the best and brightest talent among our employee ranks, and, as a diverse and inclusive employer, we realize that employees of African-American and Hispanic descent are critical to this mission. From our CEO-led Inclusion Council to our associate-driven Employee Resource Groups, Sprint has made diversity an integral part of our business culture.

At Sprint, our employees are our greatest assets. It is our role as an employer to see that our employees are able to achieve the greatest heights possible in their careers. Through our Employee Resource Group mentoring program, our All-Inclusive Workplace training, and other inclusive leadership-development programs, we are able to see that our employees are getting the development and encouragement they need to succeed.

### Debby Ballard At-a-Glance

#### Nominating Company

Sprint

#### Current Position

Director of Community Affairs

#### Professional Milestones

- “Kansas City’s Most Influential African Americans” – *Kansas City Globe* Newspaper
- YWCA Heart of Gold Recipient
- Harmony Humanitarian Award

#### Community Leadership

- Endowment Co-Chair, Kansas City Women’s Foundation
- Board Member, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre and Board Chair, Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey
- Vice President, Partnership for Children

#### Leadership Principle

Believe in collaboration and teamwork, hire talented people, give them the opportunity to do their job, and don’t be afraid to challenge the status quo.

#### Education/Training

- B.S., Central Missouri State University

#### Birthplace

Oklahoma City, OK

#### Current Home

Kansas City, MO