



2019 Winner

**GAS SOUTH**  
**Be a Fuel for Good.**

## PROFILE OF A CHAMPION: Put a Stake in the Ground and Live By It

Just two years ago, Gas South operated like many companies with charitably minded leadership and employees, and generous instincts that had yet to translate into corporate practices that genuinely engaged the hearts of employees or customers. This profile charts the remarkable evolution of Gas South's corporate generosity journey from commitment to execution to impact.

A combination of decisive leadership and clear strategy brought Gas South to an exceptional juncture where today purpose plus transparency and accountability bring remarkable benefits for their business and their community. For these reasons, they were peer nominated and selected as our first goBeyondProfit Champion.

### Overall Philosophy

At Gas South, every day holds the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives. The company's stated purpose "Be a Fuel for Good" sounds lofty, but in practical terms means helping customers save money with great low rates and no deposit. It means investing in employees and supporting their growth. And then there's the commitment to go beyond these strong business practices to ensure their company success directly benefits the community. Through a variety of efforts, Gas South helps people in their communities fulfill their potential with hopes that one day, everyone will join in being a fuel for good.

## Cultivating Company Culture

### Embracing a Purpose Journey

It all began when Gas South's leadership read the book *The Story of Purpose*. Inspired, they devised a company purpose statement "Be a Fuel for Good" and backed this up with an audacious pledge to give 5% of profits to help children in need. Next steps – they intentionally empowered their people to execute on this new purpose. A bold goal that today weaves its way throughout the internal culture of the company, spilling over into everything the company does externally. From communications, to the employee "Purpose Team" charged with propelling the purpose through every aspect of the business, to volunteerism and philanthropic efforts, all members of Gas South clearly play an integral role in demonstrating what it means to Be a Fuel for Good.

## Deploying Resources

### Strategy + Employee Engagement

Gas South fuels their strategy with company funds and human spirit. Recently Gas South took the tough step to revamp the process by which they consider nonprofits' requests for funds. For years, the company funded organizations and events far and wide. Last year, they lined up philanthropic efforts with their purpose pledge. They embraced the challenge to narrow the criteria for approved requests to only those who serve children in the areas of basic needs, education and illness/disability. They crafted an online application process, a one-month request window and an employee review board. Finalists present back to the company and employees vote to reward the winners \$50,000 impact investments.

In addition, Gas South provides a variety of ways for employees to take part in hands-on volunteerism. Employees are empowered to lead volunteer projects with organizations that they're passionate about serving. All in all, Gas South offers a myriad of ways for the company and its people to lend their hearts, hands and resources to give back.



*Put a stake in the ground. Make a pledge that is tangible and measurable and articulate a clear, authentic strategy for how your company is going to make a difference."*

**Kevin Greiner, President & CEO, Gas South**



Thanks to Gas South for their compassion and dedication to the welfare of others.

Pam Cushenan, Assistant Professor, Georgia State University Perimeter

## Focusing on Community Empowerment

### Listening, Learning & Leveraging

Typically, companies pick a cause, an organization or an issue as the focus of their community outreach. A goBeyondProfit Champion takes the added step to partner well, bringing the right combination of resources to ensure that their community engagement leaves all participants strengthened. *What does this community empowerment look like?* Gas South showcases this intentionality with these two examples:

Carl E. Sanders YMCA STEAM LAB. - The YMCA approached Gas South with research demonstrating that youth from low-income families and those of color have fewer opportunities to engage in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) programs that enrich their current education and future career opportunities. Recognizing this critical need, the Sanders YMCA was determined to create free access to STEAM for their program attendees. Gas South jumped at the chance to fulfill its promise to help children in need by partnering with the Sanders Y. What did that entail? A financial commitment to help create a STEAM lab inside the YMCA branch, employee hands-on service to renovate the space, volunteer involvement each month, and an extended vision to craft an outdoor garden to supplement indoor learning and provide much needed fresh foods for the students. With this investment and multi-layered support, Gas South helps ensure a more level playing field with access to education today for tomorrow's emerging workforce.

Norton Park Elementary - Gas South supported this local Title 1 elementary school with traditional volunteer projects like clean up days and supply drives. In an effort to better understand the underlying needs affecting school success, Gas South sat down with the school leadership where they learned that hygiene and access to healthcare are crucial issues that the students face. *How does an energy provider help address healthcare needs?* They have the insight to partner well. Gas South reached out to nearby Georgia State's (GSU) dental program to discuss shared resources to tackle the problems. This resulted in informational sessions for parents where GSU provided expertise, and Gas South provided breakfast and bilingual materials. GSU then conducted screenings and dental care free of charge. Gas South supported a school-wide dental education day with employee volunteers helping GSU students guide 800 elementary students through stations to learn brushing, flossing and healthy eating habits.

Imagine the trajectory of impact when a company like Gas South leverages its purpose and resources to meet real needs.

## Leadership Perspective

### Kevin Greiner, President & CEO, Gas South

"We believe we have an obligation to help those in need to ensure stronger more resilient communities. This means caring for our customers and our employees as well as elevating our industry and our communities. Our pledge to invest 5% of our profits to help children in need underscores this commitment. Stronger communities translate into a stronger business, too."

**Lesson Learned:** "I've learned that articulating a purpose and remaining true to it is extremely powerful for building a positive company culture. New team members tell us all the time that one of the things that attracted them to Gas South is our corporate citizenship. This commitment builds morale as our people see first-hand the positive impact we have together through our financial investments and volunteer efforts."

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Carl E. Sanders YMCA STEAM Lab created in partnership with Gas South employees.