

Poland Spring
Campaign “Up, Up, & Away” Award Recipient
Representative Tom Bernardino

It all began in 1844, when Hiram Ricker took a sip of the natural and ancient spring near his grandfather’s inn. Since then, for 170 years, Poland Spring has been one of the many original Maine identifiers that make this State so wonderful. Along with other Franklin County-born treasures, such as the earmuffs that are known across the globe and first created by Chester Greenwood, Poland Spring is also world-renowned for being some of the best-tasting natural spring water ever. The company was even comedically referred to by the classic 90’s television show *Seinfeld*!

The United Way of the Tri-Valley Area is honoring Poland Spring with the *Up, Up, & Away* Award which recognizes individuals, businesses, and organizations that are newly supporting the United Way and whose enthusiasm for the work United Way does is growing! Recently, Poland Spring joined our Corporate Champion Circle at the Platinum level. In 2019, Poland Spring was involved with nearly every big project United Way orchestrated. They helped us tremendously by providing water to nearly all of our events, proving to be especially helpful at our annual Color Me United 5K. Poland Spring staff have also participated in our Packs for Progress school supplies drives and stuffing event, and annual meetings. This year they also joined the Community Change Challenge.

I interviewed Tom Bernardino, a representative of Poland Spring, who noted, “We at Poland Spring for 170 years have worked very hard on maintaining efforts to give back to the community and making Maine a great place to live and work, through sponsorships, donations, and volunteering efforts.” Since 2000, Poland Spring has allocated approximately 7 million dollars to local Maine community organizations, causes and events through their *Good Neighbor Grant* program. The grants in this program are reserved for and focus on education, environmental conservation, and other local causes to help improve the future of Maine

I asked Tom what it meant for Poland Spring to be recognized for the efforts giving back. “Our donations and efforts to give back are not purely done for recognition,” says Tom. “Rather, we want to build a legacy and formulate a tradition surrounding community involvement. So when people think of Poland Spring, they don’t just think of it as a bottled water company, but a company that gives back what the community, and the nation, so graciously puts in.”

I asked Tom how his experience working with United Way has been so far. “Poland Spring can’t do all this by themselves, and that’s why we rely heavily on partners such as United Way, to make being able to give back a reality. United Way has been a wonderful partner. I know I’m very appreciative for all they’ve done and continue to do for this community. I see the United Way as a long-term partner and we look forward to what the future holds!”

United Way of the Tri-Valley Area is proud to honor Poland Spring for all their help this year, and the impact they have made at our events and within the community.