

# Communities

## Why is it important?

Our licence to operate as a chemicals business that handles complex, sometimes hazardous materials, as well as our reputation as a good corporate citizen, relies on the trust and support of the communities that live near our sites. Indeed, those communities are home for many of our employees. At the same time, a growing number of people want to work for companies that demonstrate strong social connections and provide opportunities for community volunteering. In providing those opportunities, we can help create a greater sense of belonging and purpose among employees.

## Our commitments

We are proud of our long tradition of supporting our local communities, in particular through the Synthomer Foundation. Since it was established, first as the General Tire and Rubber Foundation and through its evolution as GenCorp and OMNOVA, the Foundation has played a positive role in communities in the USA for more than 60 years.

For more information about the Synthomer Foundation – [click here](#)

We want to continue building on this great legacy, and in the past few years we have refocused the Synthomer plc approach to community engagement, adapting the way we provide funding and support for local community activities, based on lessons learnt from the Foundation.

## Policies associated with engaging with communities

Our Code of Conduct – [click here](#)

## Our approach

We want the communities where we work to thrive, and look for ways to promote learning and career development in chemistry and engineering. We also support and encourage our site-based social committees to host activities that help raise funds for good causes. However, we do not get involved in providing any financial or non-financial support for political activities.

### We focus our activities on four key areas:

Area of focus	Why we get involved
Education	We want young people to feel inspired to study scientific and technical subjects and consider careers in these areas. In doing so, we contribute to the future talent pipeline – ours and the wider manufacturing industries that modern society relies on. We also want to help develop the leaders of the future who will one day contribute positively to their neighbourhood's growth and prosperity.
Health	Strong communities rely on healthy citizens, so we look to support the immediate social needs of vulnerable members of the community.
Diversity	Companies like ours rely on diversity of thinking in order to succeed. As well as striving to reflect the communities in which we operate, we want to help them celebrate and amplify their culture, supporting activities that foster unique opportunities to broaden cultural horizons.
Environmental stewardship	We want to minimise our impact on the environment. We always operate within local legal regulations and seek to do more where possible. For example, our sites look for ways to care for their local environment, encouraging employees and local communities to get involved through volunteering activities.

Our global volunteering network, formed in 2021, has helped drive consistency into our approach. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) representatives from each site propose and present initiatives to their regional coordinator on a regular basis. Those representatives then meet with our central team on a quarterly basis to discuss project proposals and share volunteering ideas. They also track high-level metrics, such as the number of volunteers and hours volunteered. The network is actively supported by an executive sponsor and our Human Resources network.

We want to encourage more employees to get involved in community activities and have made a matched-funding programme available to all Synthomer plc employees. In addition to this, the Synthomer Foundation also has a matching gift programme available to eligible US employees. We also continued to develop a 'working with the community' component to our talent development and graduate programmes in all our key regions.

In May 2021, we launched Synthomer Cares week, where employees around the world get involved in activities to raise funds, support local communities and feel connected with one another. Since then we have run this annually.

## Our performance in 2024

In 2024, Synthomer plc provided 28 grants totalling £23,600.

In 2024, the Synthomer Foundation awarded \$1.3 million to non-profit organisations who provided services that improved the quality of life education, health and human service, civic initiatives and the arts. The Foundation also continued to partner with the American Institute of Chemical Engineers to support the Future of STEM Scholars Initiative, providing a \$240,000 multi-year commitment to support students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

## Global: our fourth annual Synthomer Cares week

This year, we held our fourth annual global Synthomer Cares Week. We saw an incredible turnout, with more than 800 employees across the Company participating in our physical activity challenge. Together, they covered an impressive 36,000 kilometres and raised more than £14,000. This included a generous contribution of \$5,000 from the Synthomer Foundation, all in support of various good causes. The table below shows the charities that received a percentage of that money.



Below are more highlights from a selection of our programmes from each of our operational regions during the past year.

## Asia: supporting inclusion, education and biodiversity

During their annual meeting in October 2024, the Global Leadership Team (GLT) took time to engage with Dignity for Children Foundation<sup>1</sup>, a non-governmental organisation that provides holistic care and education for urban poor children in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. GLT members visited the various classrooms, in particular those where children were studying STEM subjects. After this, the GLT members participated in a range of practical activities in Dignity's own workshops, including woodworking and Batik crafts.

And in August 2024, our team in Malaysia organised a 'Plant a Tree' activity at a local school, helping students build a herb garden and hold a climate change awareness talk. Together with 20 dedicated volunteers, our employees guided the students in revamping the garden, planting seedlings and trees, and learning about the benefits of various plants and herbs. Our employees also helped repaint the area, install netting and racks, and educate the students on how to grow different types of plants. This initiative not only enhances the school environment but has given the students invaluable knowledge and skills to fight climate change.

## EMEA: supporting education, biodiversity, and good causes

At our Harlow site in the UK, our teams have been raising money for several good causes, including fundraising to support seasonal celebrations for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and creating a social event for pensioners to meet and spend time together. In addition, Harlow

<sup>1</sup> <https://dignityforchildren.org/>

colleagues have raised money for a number of cancer charities, including Prostate Cancer and Cancer Research UK.

Our site in Sokolov, Czech Republic, has been working with local schools and universities to create learning experiences for students. Examples include offering a two-week internship to mid-level students at local schools, supporting career days at two Czech universities specialising in chemistry and offering continuous development opportunities to teachers at local schools.

In Marl, Germany, our people built beehives and bee hotels to support local populations of these important pollinators and help local flowering plants to thrive around the site. The site team hopes to collect honey to sell for charity.

### USA: focusing on inclusion

The Synthomer Foundation partnered with non-profit organisation Replay for Kids to repair and adapt toys and assistive devices for children with disabilities. Beachwood employees participated in the workshop. The toys were donated free of charge to agencies that work with kids with disabilities.

Once again, Akron Technical Centre stepped up to partner with Akron Children's Hospital, with members of the team volunteering their time and creative talents to the hospital's annual Christmas Tree Festival. Employees decorated a 'Lorax Does Christmas'-themed tree, which generated much community excitement, including local news coverage. All proceeds from the tree sales benefited the hospital.

### Our next steps

We will continue to support local activities and provide financial contributions in line with our areas of focus. And we will keep looking for ways to help more employees get involved in those activities. That includes our next Synthomer Cares week, which will take place in May 2025.