

Pay It Forward Processing gives back to local charities with every credit and debit card purchase in Nevada County

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Mike Collins, regional vice president with Pay It Forward Processing, says, "Every credit card swipe benefits a charity."

Photo by Lorraine Jewett |

BUSINESS BASICS

WHAT: Pay It Forward Processing

WHO: Regional Vice President Mick Collins

INFO: Call 530-268-3382 or visit the website PFProcessing.com

Mick Collins is on a quest. He wants every Nevada County business that accepts credit and debit cards to sign up with his credit card processing company, Pay It Forward Processing.

The more businesses he signs up, the more money is donated to local charities.

"Every credit card swipe benefits a charity," said Collins, regional vice president for Pay It Forward Processing (PFP). Collins has disseminated more than \$22,000 over the past four years to three Nevada County charities approved by PFP.



The company does not issue credit cards. It processes credit card payments and provides the equipment that a business's customers use when they swipe or insert their credit cards. The company is essentially the transaction manager between a business and its bank.

Pay It Forward Processing is the brainchild of a couple in San Diego, who in 2005 created a credit card processing company without contracts, termination fees, and other obligations that many businesses dislike.

In 2007, the San Diego couple lost everything in a wildfire that consumed their home and their home-based business. That personal tragedy inspired the founders to change their business model.

They started donating to charities a portion of the proceeds the company received from merchant accounts. Company officials said the exact amount allocated to each charity varies.

Since 2013, PFP has donated more than \$150,000 to 40-plus charities across the nation.

Monies are disseminated to the nonprofits once a year. The foundation carefully vets each nonprofit that asks to become part of PFP.

So far, three western Nevada County nonprofits have been approved: Anew Day, Women of Worth, and The Friendship Club. Just two weeks ago, Collins presented a check for \$4,315.56 to The Friendship Club, up from \$2876 last year.

CHOOSE YOUR CHARITY

Each PFP business client selects which nonprofit it wants to support. The tax write-off is claimed by the PFP foundation. Collins has signed up more than 80 businesses in Nevada County, and works with another 15 businesses and two charities in Yuba County.

“When nonprofits ask how to get involved, I tell them that I’ll forward their information to the foundation,” said Collins. “The foundation doesn’t want lots of charities. Thousands of dollars to a few nonprofits is more impactful than giving \$200 here and there.”

“The three local nonprofits that are vetted into our program can have businesses across the country select them as beneficiaries,” said Collins. “The charities also have their own accounts, primarily to accept donations via credit and debit cards. They naturally chose themselves as the nonprofit to send their proceeds to. So when anyone makes a direct donation to one of those three charities, they actually help out twice.”

A fourth Nevada County charity participates with PFP but in a different way. Habitat for Humanity uses PFP at its ReStore and donates the money back to itself. However, other PFP merchants cannot select Habitat for Humanity to receive their donations

Sandy Escobar is the founder and executive director at Women of Worth.

“Pay It Forward Processing is absolutely amazing,” she said. “Their services save us money. We use their processing service at our thrift store and for general donations. So we save money on credit card processing, plus support our own charity.”

“The Pay It Forward program allows businesses to donate to their local nonprofits without it impacting their finances,” said Lori Nunnink-Taylor, Executive Director of Anew Day. “It’s a great opportunity to give back to the community.”

“Mike takes great care of us as a customer and a nonprofit partner,” said The Friendship Club Executive Director Jennifer Singer. “He is always looking out for us. I trust when I introduce him to someone, he’s going to take care of them, too.”

KEEPING MONEY IN THE COMMUNITY

Collins moved to Nevada County in 2011 and was busy selling life and health insurance when he was approached by PFP in 2013. He loved the charity-friendly business model and joined the company without hesitation.

Another aspect of PFP that Collins appreciates is its ability to meet or beat the fees charged by other credit card processors.

“I go into a business and see if we can fit what they’re doing and see a savings, and I can do that at least 98 percent of the time,” Collins said, adding that target rates are 1.89 percent for credit charges and 1.79 percent for debit transactions. “The business owner knows they are helping a local nonprofit, and they have peace of mind knowing they’re not locked into a contract and there are no hidden fees. And I use social media promotions as a way of saying, “Thank you.””

Kris Phillips, Office Operations Manager at California Solar Electric Company in Grass Valley, said she’s glad her company switched to PFP.

“We’d even be willing to pay more just because it’s the right thing to do,” said Phillips.

“I do it because Mike is local,” said Valentina Masterz, owner of Valentina’s Organic Bistro and Bakery in the Brunswick Basin. “It’s not some corporate office that’s buying an extra jet. Instead, he’s giving money to people who actually need it. I think every business should switch to Mike. His rates match the best rates in the market, the business owner gets better value, and the community wins. It’s common sense.”

As a Regional Vice President, Collins earns a commission on each new business client he recruits.

“It’s how I earn my living,” said Collins, “but more importantly, I’m helping keep money in the community that impacts people.”

Lorraine Jewett is a freelance writer who lives in Nevada County. To suggest a business news feature, contact her at LorraineJewettWrites@gmail.com.