



# Connections for Good

our planet, our people, our policies

2023



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We are...

*CURIOUS ABOUT THE world.*

*Creative IN EVERYTHING WE DO.*

*Conscious OF THE PLANET.*

*CONNECTED BY celebrations*

*FOR everyone AND everything.*

*WE ARE American Greetings.*



As a global leader in the Celebrations marketplace, connections are at the heart of who we are and what we do at American Greetings — and that begins with treating our people and our planet with kindness and respect. Our Connections for Good initiative is a commitment to accountability surrounding our social and environmental efforts, because we believe that's what our associates, our stakeholders, and the communities in which we live and work deserve.

As a company that relies on the paper industry for many of our products, we embrace our responsibility to carefully consider our environmental impact, and we are determined to keep making strides in increasing the recyclability of our products, reducing waste, and being a force for good.

Of course, it's not just our planet that depends on our positive strides. Our people depend on that, too.

Diversity and inclusion are vital in ensuring that our consumers can express themselves and celebrate each other in an authentic voice that is true to who they are. This means fostering a diverse organization of talented and engaged individuals of different backgrounds, perspectives, skills, and experiences who learn, create, and celebrate together. We will continue to cultivate an inclusive culture with policies that enable all associates to feel respected, supported, and valued — not just for the good of the business, but for the good of everyone.

Connections are at the core of our mission, vision, and values. Because connections don't just fuel or inform the work we do — they are the work we do. I am proud to share our continued progress and achievements so far, as well as our ambitious goals in the pages that follow as we continue to strive to make the world a more thoughtful and caring place.

**JOE ARCURI**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**





# Connections for Good



## ***Our Planet***

Making the world a more thoughtful and caring place starts with respecting our planet's limited resources and our role in sustaining them. We're dedicated to incorporating sustainable practices in both our day-to-day operations and our long-term planning.



## ***Our People***

We believe in a holistic approach to embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion that encompasses every area of our organization. Enriching the lives, passions, and careers of our associates is what empowers all of us to feel good and do good. Through our Employee Resource Networks, wellness programming, training opportunities, and more, we put care into cultivating a vibrant corporate culture and sense of community.



## ***Our Policies***

We know that an ethical and honest approach to business starts with the tone at the top. Our Board of Directors and CEO set the highest standards for how we operate through all facets of the organization. Our policies and practices are designed to affirm and reinforce every associate acting with a high degree of integrity every single day.



# Leading by Example

Documenting environmental, social, and governance matters is no small task. It is a truly collaborative effort that requires curiosity, thoughtfulness, and a passion for the greater good. Kristina Beifus, Lavone Lee, and Chrissy Walters all have this in common. They are not only experts in their respective fields – they use their expertise to make Our Planet, Our People, and Our Policies the best they can be.

## KRISTINA BEIFUS

Director of Compliance  
& Sustainability



### In what ways does your role in the organization support this statement about Our Planet?

*Through her role as Director of Compliance & Sustainability, Kristina has been instrumental in establishing the strategy that informs our company's holistic approach to the Actively Green program. In partnership with Kelly Ricker and other various groups, she ensures AG follows through and tracks our progress on sustainability commitments. "It's important to keep moving our program forward, based on industry pressures and our own desire to do better," says Kristina. "In my role, I'm able to remind everyone at AG that any step in the right direction is the right next step, because it's the aggregate of all the small things that make the big things possible."*

### What parts of your job do you find most rewarding?

*"It's never boring," says Kristina. "I feel like I'm constantly being introduced to new people and new aspects of the business, across all of our locations." As a self-proclaimed "problem solver," the realm of sustainability keeps Kristina excited and engaged. She values seeing ideas progress "into real projects and goals" that end up influencing all areas of our business.*

### From your perspective, what are the biggest strides AG has made regarding Our Planet in the past year?

*"Our forward motion," says Kristina. "We set some goals, met most goals, then asked ourselves, 'What more can we do?' That approach has had a tremendous impact on cross-organizational involvement in the Actively Green program." Kristina reiterates, "This forward momentum and widespread support illustrates that any next step is a right step; it makes bigger challenges feel far more possible."*

## LAVONE LEE

Director of Diversity &  
Inclusion



### In what ways does your role in the organization support this statement about Our People?

*Director of Diversity & Inclusion Lavone Lee is passionate about the journey AG associates take together. "When we work together, we have the opportunity to develop connections in the spirit of mutual support and genuine caring. That is why I lead with compassion, empathy, and love. I meet people where they are on this journey and I walk alongside them," shared Lavone. In her role, Lavone collaborates across teams, amplifying voices, bringing new voices into conversations, and leading in ways that elevate diversity and inclusion holistically.*

# Leading by Example

## What parts of your job do you find most rewarding?

*Prioritizing the people, who are at the heart of everything she does, Lavone brings the spirit of the African philosophy Ubuntu, meaning “I am because you are,” to all she does. Whether she is coaching and developing, supporting Employee Resource Networks (ERNs) in making their vision a reality, enhancing our work culture, or inspiring leaders in continuous education and growth, Lavone finds joy in encouraging others along their journey of professional development.*

## From your perspective, what are the biggest strides AG has made regarding Our People in the past year?

*Over the last year, Lavone has been instrumental in prioritizing growth and development association-wide, leading associate Implicit Bias Training, increasing ERN support, hosting listening tours and diversity and inclusion focus groups, and advocating for more community outreach and visibility.*

## In what ways does your role in the organization support this statement about Our Policies?

*As Director of Internal Audit, Chrissy and her team play a crucial role in the organization. “The internal audit team provides an independent assessment of policy compliance,” she explains. “We help other departments by determining if they have appropriate controls established to meet those policy objectives.”*

## What parts of your job do you find most rewarding?

*Chrissy values collaborating with proactive coworkers. “I love when others reach out to the Internal Audit team to help brainstorm solutions before a problem arises. We can help mitigate risks by working together to develop controls.”*

## From your perspective, what are the biggest strides AG has made regarding Our Policies in the past year?

*American Greetings commitment to cultivating a diverse and inclusive culture stands out to Chrissy. “I think it is great that the company has developed D&I initiatives.”*

### CHRISSY WALTERS

Director of Internal Audit



for  
Dreamers  
like  
you.

Edelights  
and warmth  
that welcome  
and invite.  
Just giving  
props  
where props  
are due  
or celebrating  
awesome  
you.

to others.  
You are truly  
someone  
to celebrate.

what a joy it is  
to see you  
smile.  
No words  
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# Our Planet

As a company dedicated to making the world a more thoughtful and caring place, we recognize the importance of our planet's limited resources and our role in sustaining them. With that in mind, American Greetings launched Actively Green, a corporate-wide program to advance our sustainability efforts. Actively Green has five company-level goals to be achieved by 2025.

The goals are formed around five "R's": **R**esponsible Sourcing, **R**ecycled Paper Use, **R**educing Throwaway, **R**ecyclability, and **C**orporate **R**esponsibility. These goals involve updating our products, processes, and personal practices to become a more environmentally conscious organization.

Extensive planning, research, and collaboration went into creating sustainability goals that both align with our business strategy and make a meaningful impact. Some examples of AG going actively green include making eco-conscious product decisions, reducing corrugated shipping and display waste, increasing the use of sustainably sourced paper, and planting trees to offset paper usage at our corporate offices.

Our global team is also making big strides in their efforts to combat climate change and conserve natural resources. Through offsetting carbon emissions, transitioning to a fleet of electric vehicles, introducing paper made from recycled fibers, and much more, the global team is aligning practices and corporate culture with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

"In today's world and beyond, sustainability has to be part of any long-term business strategy," said CEO Joe Arcuri. "At AG, we are accelerating our sustainability efforts and all associates are encouraged to get involved and contribute to this critical initiative for our company and the communities in which we live and work."

As consumers, retailers, and supply chains prioritize making sustainable choices, AG will continuously work to get better through the Actively Green program. We know that our future depends on every organization and every person doing their part to help protect the planet.

*"In today's world and beyond, sustainability has to be part of any long-term business strategy."*

**- JOE ARCURI, CEO**

# North America

## Fast-Tracking Our 2025 Goals



# 87%

GOAL

Source **90%+** of all the paper we use from sustainable sources <sup>R1</sup>



# 12.4%

GOAL

Ensure that at least **10%** of the paper fiber we use is post-consumer waste content <sup>R2</sup>



# 52%

GOAL

Reduce the amount of municipal waste we send to landfills by **50%** <sup>R3</sup>



# 254 tons

GOAL

Eliminate **200 tons** of landfill waste at AG Creative Studios <sup>R5a</sup>



# 100%

GOAL

Offset **90%+** of the AG Creative Studios carbon footprint through reforestation efforts <sup>R5b</sup>



R1 — Data include paper purchased through North America, Asia, and the UK related to all product categories. Base year: FY17 (March 2016 – February 2017).

R2 — Data include American Greetings branded greeting cards. Base year: FY17 (March 2016 – February 2017).

R3 — Data include US distribution and North American retail (excluding Plus Mark), all product categories. Base year: FY17 (March 2016 – February 2017).

R5 — Based on Westlake AG Creative Studios office. Base year: FY18 (March 2017 – February 2018).

# Sustainable Solutions



At American Greetings, collaboration, creative problem-solving, and resourceful decision-making are all integral parts of the way we do business. In the Spring of 2022, these values proved to be especially important in our relationships with retailers and communities.

When the need arose to reconfigure our card department at one of our major retailers, a cross-functional team from AG pitched the idea of leveraging this retail partner's existing recycling resources across store locations nationwide. The retailer agreed to this plan, and in doing so, enabled us to divert 21.9 million pieces of greeting card product from landfills. That's 424 tons! This solution — slated to finish in Summer 2023 — benefits the planet while aligning with the shared values of two companies committed to a more sustainable future.

Similarly, when COVID-19 shipping delays resulted in a surplus of unsaleable plush product, the eco-conscious individuals of AG brainstormed the best way to give these 45,000 critters a happy end to what could have been a sad story. After some extensive networking and logistical ingenuity, AG shipped 30 pallets of plush penguins and bears to Camp Pendleton, a Marine Corps base in California. Over the course of various events like Christmas in July, homecomings, deployments, and the annual tree lighting celebration at Camp Pendleton, troops distributed all of the plush to military families.





# Big Red Bow Initiative



A simple change in how we ship our big red bows is making a big green impact on American Greetings sustainability goals.

A new and improved shipping carton for AG's best-selling big red gift bows will reduce shipping carton usage by an estimated 20,000 units, diverting 15 tons of packaging waste annually – the weight of two adult elephants!

AG's big red bow is a top-performing Christmas item at our major retailers, with over 508,000 sold since 2017 and more than 180,000 sold in 2021 alone. If you took every 9" bow sold in 2021 and lined them up side by side, that would be almost enough to cover the distance of a full marathon! Until recently, a small box of four bows was being shipped inside a too-large carton. Because of the non-optimal dimensions of the smaller bow boxes within the larger shipping carton, roughly 80% of the shipping carton was full of air instead of product in the tens of thousands of cartons that our Danville Distribution Center has distributed in prior years.

AG's business unit worked diligently to find a better way to ship more bows and make more sustainable, efficient use of our container space. They enlisted the help of cross-functional partners to collaborate on this process improvement.

After months of dedication, this cross-functional team developed a solution: a new right-sized carton for the big red bows. This means that the Danville Distribution Center can now fit five times the number of bows in a carton — that's 20 bows instead of the previous four! As mentioned previously, it's estimated that this will reduce carton usage by 20,000 and divert 15 tons of packaging waste annually.

The implementation of this innovative idea will play a major part in helping AG reach our 2025 R5 Sustainability goal of reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills by 50%. This is a shining example of how forward thinking and a collaborative approach can positively impact our business – and our planet.



# United Kingdom, Australia & New Zealand

As a leading celebrations company, UK Greetings (UKG) is committed to doing everything we can to support the United Nations-led push for a fairer, more sustainable future for all. This means integrating sustainability into the fabric of our company and our strategic imperatives, starting from our day-to-day operations all the way through our products. Through our sustainability strategy, we're poised to make a positive impact on 11 out of 17 of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Guiding us on this mission are our core values of creativity, collaboration, innovation, people, and success.

Creating celebrations products that help build connections while also respecting the planet is vital to who we are. Ultimately, our goal is for all of our products to be sustainable and fully recyclable, helping to conserve natural resources. We've incorporated this goal into our product innovation, which includes ending the use of glitter on all brand lines, removing 275 tons of non-recyclable plastic cello overwrap on our single cards, using only fully recyclable ink, varnishes, and envelopes, and exclusively sourcing Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®)\*-certified envelopes.

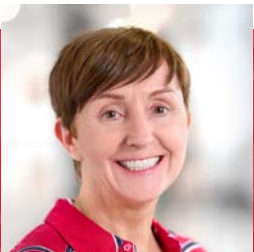
Additionally, UKG strives to ensure that every single greeting card and envelope it sells is offset through the global conservation charity World Land Trust's Carbon Balanced Paper program. This is one of the largest

commitments to date under the Carbon Balanced Paper program. With sustainably sourced paper being our primary raw material, choosing Carbon Balanced Paper was the next step in our sustainability journey, supporting World Land Trust in their efforts to protect the world's most biologically significant and threatened habitats.

UKG continues to reduce our carbon footprint for sourcing and transportation by working with partners who share our mission. For example, we work with a sea freight company that shares our sustainability ambitions and offers climate-neutral transport solutions. Key to our carbon reduction strategy is the heavy investment in UK manufacturing, in order to increase production using our modern facilities, powered by energy derived from renewable sources. Once our products are on the road, we want our customers to know that they have been designed, manufactured, and transported with a strong commitment to sustainability.

UKG is passionate about making a positive impact, and we aim to lead our industry in rethinking the way we produce and distribute our products — because we are committed to serving our community and the planet for the long term. We will continue to set impactful goals in every aspect of our business to reduce climate change and conserve our planet's precious natural resources.

\*Trademark License Code: FSC-C138823



*"Our product brings happiness, laughter, and love by celebrating life's most important moments, every single day. We do this by working collaboratively to ensure that our product is created sustainably, where future generations are able to then celebrate life's events."*

**CERI STIRLAND**  
**CEO - INTERNATIONAL**

# Our People

If you were to ask anyone at American Greetings what they liked most about their job, chances are they would respond, “the people.” That’s a point of pride for us. As a company, we work to cultivate a dynamic workplace that welcomes a diversity of talents, backgrounds, and perspectives. We believe that having a vibrant, varied culture and a positive presence in the community empowers all of us to make a difference in the marketplace and demonstrates how much we care about consumers and connections.

In the words of Kelly Ricker, Chief Product Officer and Chief Inclusion Sponsor:

“During my career here, I’ve been continually inspired by every person I’ve met and what makes them unique. It’s easy to see that we’re at our best when we bring our diverse skills, experiences, and knowledge together and work toward common goals. We become stronger as a company as we engage a more diverse workforce and develop a more inclusive culture.”





# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

We're proud that our products help hundreds of millions of people celebrate and connect with the ones they love. To reach such a large and diverse audience, AG aims to have a diverse workforce. Our goal is to recruit, develop, and grow associates from different backgrounds and perspectives, then bring them together to work toward making the world a more thoughtful and caring place.

Recent examples of how we have fostered a diverse and inclusive culture for our associates include:

- Offered enhanced parental leave
- Opened an All-Gender restroom at Creative Studios (pictured below)
- Instituted a floating holiday, providing associates with the flexibility to observe cultural or religious holidays and events, or other activities of personal significance.
- Instated a company-wide observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Debuted gender transition guidelines for managers and associates
- Launched company-wide unconscious bias training

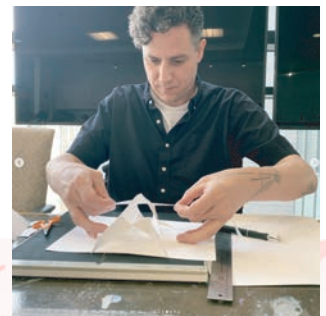


# Talent Development



For over 100 years, American Greetings has embraced a culture of growth. As a company, we believe that everyone, regardless of department or role, can bring creativity and innovation to their jobs. We aim to help our associates build upon their skills while also seeking and identifying new opportunities to propel their careers forward. That is why we invest in the personal and professional development of our associates through activities like:

- *Coaching & Feedback Training*
- *Compliance Training*
- *Creative Skills Workshops*
- *Effective Brainstorming Training*
- *Events & Exhibitions*
- *Guest Speakers*
- *imAGine University Classes and Training Sessions*
- *“Lunch & Learn” Programming*
- *Merchandiser Job Training*
- *OSHA Training*
- *Performance Management Training*
- *Unconscious Bias Training*





# Career Paths

Every day American Greetings sells thousands of products that help consumers celebrate and stay connected with the ones they love. This requires an associate base that is highly creative, exceedingly analytical, and operationally strong. Writers, designers, photographers, data scientists, business managers, technologists, merchandisers, marketers, sales leaders, and more all have compelling and fulfilling career paths at AG. Here are just a few examples of those building their careers at American Greetings.

## SEAN HIGGINS

Senior Program Director –  
Innovation & Licensing



*Creativity is at the core of everything we do at American Greetings, and it is essential to fostering an environment that encourages experimentation, risk-taking, and the exploration of new ideas. Innovative leaders like Sean use their creative skills and design expertise to develop products that not only meet the needs of the market, but also push the boundaries of what is possible.*

*“I started at AG as an Associate Line Designer on the Music and Tech team before accepting a position in the New Product Concepts department, which focuses on new-to-the-world social expression products. This role is when I fell in love with the process of new product development, and seeing something I sketched on a piece of paper come to life. I currently lead the Innovation & Licensing team, who in the past several years have developed the displayable pop-up card and décor brand Magic Moments, which is home to over 250 unique products.*

*“I feel so fortunate to work for a company that allows associates to seek out internal opportunities and projects that we find interesting for personal or career growth. These are the projects that have helped me grow as a creative and as a manager, and ultimately have helped me progress in my career.”*

## DEPREE HENDERSON

Centralized Customer  
Management Representative



*Throughout his career, DePree has demonstrated a passion for helping others and building strong relationships with customers. He began his professional journey in logistics in 2013, and later worked as an Operations Manager before joining AG as a Customer Experience Specialist in 2017. He then advanced to his current position as Account Representative for Centralized Customer Management.*

*“What I love most about the work I do is building a relationship with customers. Customers are essential to a thriving company, as they drive sales and provide AG with the opportunity to evolve. My team allows me to grow as I learn the business and develop my gifts and talents to assist in making the team thrive.*

*“Working for a company that provides happiness, laughter, and love aligns with my values as an individual and gives me a more positive outlook on life in general. I also value the work I do as part of the Employee Resource Networks, as it has allowed me to collaborate with others in the building, grow my knowledge within the company, and use my talents to help others.”*



# Career Paths

**MAUREEN MEIDENBAUER**  
Vice President – National  
Accounts & Shopper Marketing



Since starting at AG in 1997, Maureen has worn many hats. From Telesales, Product Management, and Sales to Product Development and the Target Team, Maureen's experiences prepared her for her current role as Vice President of National Accounts & Shopper Marketing — and solidified what she values most about American Greetings:

*"I came to AG because I loved greeting cards and the connections they allow people to make. Twenty-six years later, I continue to experience the emotional tug when I see people interact with our product."*

*"Beyond our product, what I love and value most are the people of AG. I feel so fortunate that I have spent my career with talented, passionate, caring, and supportive people who challenge one another to do our best."*

*"I'm grateful to have such an exciting and fulfilling career with one company. The variety of opportunities, the support for personal development, and the ability to take on new challenges has allowed me to always find myself in a job that I can learn in, grow from, and bring benefit to."*

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**GOLDIE HOLLIMAN**  
Manager – Order  
Filling/Transport



Goldie Holliman has been making her mark at the Osceola, Arkansas, facility since 2000. In her time with AG, she has rounded out her expertise through projects in Distribution, Receiving & Warehouse, Holiday Order Filling, Hand Finishing, and Pre-pack Assorting departments. In 2018, she became the manager of the Pre-pack Assorting department. Goldie acknowledges the exceptional nature of her range of experience: "To my knowledge, I've been one of only a few women to accomplish attaining these various roles and the only African-American woman to do so at the plant-level."

Goldie cites the "ever-changing nature of the business" as what she loves most. She enjoys navigating the facets that make each holiday, person, and project unique, and she takes pride in helping the business succeed. "There are, and have always been, opportunities to improve an operation," she says. "I've had the privilege to work on many successful initiatives over the years. It's been a rewarding experience thus far."

At the end of the day, it's the "family-value oriented" culture of AG that Goldie truly values, especially when combined with the genuine support of her coworkers. No matter who she's working with or what department she's in, Goldie has always felt assured that "everyone wants you, the plant, and the company to be successful."

# Employee Resource Networks

We understand how important it is for all individuals to feel valued, supported, and connected in the workplace. AG sponsors eight Employee Resource Networks (ERNs) to give associates a space to find and foster connections, support, and community. We believe that when people come together to bond over shared experiences or interests, it sparks a belonging that invigorates our entire organization. Our ERNs are extremely active in hosting events, sponsoring cultural celebrations, influencing product and company policy, and leading philanthropic activities.

Each ERN has at least one associate lead as well as an executive sponsor. These leaders take great care in highlighting the importance of their respective groups and celebrating the ways that ERNs inspire creativity, fuel productivity, and help unlock our fullest potential.



# Employee Resource Networks



*"American Greetings has been able to engage the AARN to enhance product for the Black community, and enact change across the company due to our presence at Creative Studios. It has been an honor for us to serve in this capacity and to know that we are helping AG make change as we continue to evolve and grow."*

- JAMENDA WHITEHEAD



*"The Green Team provides associates the opportunity to play an active role in advancing sustainability initiatives within our company and our communities. We're learning, growing together, and encouraging all associates to come along on the journey. Big changes don't happen overnight, but rather through small, repeated changes — and the Green Team is helping to lead the way!"*

- AMY HUBER



*"Our HRN members share an understanding of a culture that has been grouped into one, but is a melting pot within itself. We represent one of the largest minorities in the US, whose purchasing power grows every year, in addition to its growth in the workforce. We are a resource for our product and our partners, and we are here to provide a better understanding of this community. We also like to have fun!"*

- ANGELA MERCADO



*"The PRN is a space where parents of all different backgrounds can come together to share experiences, make new connections, and add skills to their parenting toolboxes. We want to create a sense of success, both at home and at work, by helping to alleviate some of the stresses that come with being a working parent."*

- RACHEL WESLEY



*"Our group's LGBTQIA+ advocacy and visibility, combined with leadership support, help to make associates more comfortable bringing their whole selves to work and living their lives authentically. Also, our work on product development has been critically important in connecting with members of the larger LGBTQIA+ community."*

- JUSTIN RAINES



*"Communication and leadership skills are essential to any organization. Toastmasters serves as an indispensable resource to all associates for the development of communication skills in a welcoming and supportive environment."*

- STACIE KNISLEY



*"The WLC is a network of professional women who share their perspectives, support and teach one another, and provide a sense of safety, all while continuously developing as leaders within our organization. Empowering women to grow in their career and influence company growth positively affects corporate culture and inspires everyone to embrace the leader within themselves."*

- ALYSSA ABRAHAM



*"YPRN is important because professional development and networking are vital stepping-stones early on in one's career. We provide a space to foster that professional growth through various events and service opportunities, which help to attract and retain talent across the company."*

- KATHLEEN WAZEVICH



# Pride@AG

## Supporting the LGBTQIA+ Community

American Greetings believes all associates and customers should feel a sense of well-being and pride in who they are. The Pride@AG Employee Resource Network helps ensure LGBTQIA+ individuals as well as those whose family, friends, or colleagues identify as LGBTQIA+ feel uplifted and encouraged.

Pride@AG raises awareness of issues affecting the LGBTQIA+ community, works with American Greetings to address the needs and concerns of LGBTQIA+ associates, and generally aims to strengthen the inclusive culture at AG.

Within the past year, AG was awarded a perfect 100-point score on HRC's Corporate Equality Index (CEI). This achievement was made possible by meeting the following criteria:

- Having workforce protections that cover all sexual orientations and gender identities
- Providing inclusive benefits for transgender individuals and those in same-sex partnerships
- Supporting an inclusive culture and corporate social responsibility by demonstrating at least three LGBTQIA+ internal best practices across the workforce, having an LGBTQIA+ employee resource group, and making at least three distinct efforts of outreach or external engagement with the LGBTQIA+ community





# Pride@AG

AG is dedicated to showing support for LGBTQIA+ associates by ensuring that our corporate policies align with our values. This includes taking proactive steps such as...

- Updating our Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy
- Supplementing gender affirmation insurance coverage
- Creating Corporate Giving Guidelines to ensure that our philanthropy is aligned with our values and policies

In addition to being instrumental in AG achieving this CEI score, Pride@AG further demonstrated support for the LGBTQIA+ community and allies through...

- Crafting Gender Transition Guidelines for associates and managers
- Debuting an all-gender restroom with a custom mural at Creative Studios

- Supporting Ohio Business Competes, a nonpartisan coalition of businesses committed to achieving nondiscrimination policies at the state level
- Offering resources for National Coming Out Day and Transgender Day of Visibility
- Hosting a “Pronouns 101” lunch and learn at Creative Studios
- Sponsoring the 2022 “Pride in the CLE” march and celebration
- Joining in a retail partner's pre-Pride celebration in Cincinnati
- Celebrating “Pride Week” at Creative Studios, encouraging associates and the broader community to show their pride with custom stickers and card bundles
- Continuing to amplify LGBTQIA+ voices and occasions through product, marketing, and social media



# Parental Leave

Welcoming a new child into the family is a precious time in one's life. It brings strong connections, big emotions, and even bigger changes. It speaks to the heart of AG's mission — to help people celebrate the moments and relationships that matter most.

For AG to authentically share that mission with the world, we know it must be reflected in our company culture. The passion of our associates is vital in ensuring we're not only talking the talk but walking the walk. Individuals from the Women's Leadership Council and Parents Resource Network illustrated this when they came together to research and pitch updated short-term disability and parental leave policies for birthing, non-birthing, adoptive, and foster parents.

With the full support of Women's Leadership Council Executive Sponsor and Chief Financial Officer, Lorna Street, these passionate associates worked with HR to develop a solution that would enhance existing policies and make all aspiring parents at AG feel supported.



**LORNA STREET**  
**CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

## *Moving the Needle*

*“AG’s new parental leave policy is a strong step in our prioritization of diversity and inclusion. Women in the United States represent over 50% of entry-level roles but fewer than 25% of C-Suite positions. Nearly 30% of working women leave the labor force when they have a child. Access to extended paid leave at the time of a birth significantly increases labor market participation in the year of a birth\*. Working women continue to face a disproportionate burden of work in the home. Extending the opportunity for both parents to stay at home longer when welcoming a child into the world will also help increase participation of women in the workplace and will give them more opportunity and time to focus on their career.”*

*\*source: study for the March of Dimes Center for Social Science Research conducted by the nonprofit Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR)*



# UKG Supports Mental Health

## ***Introducing UKG's Mental Health First Aiders***

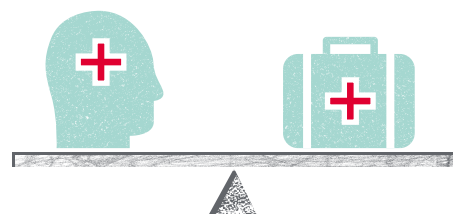
One in four people in the UK will experience mental illness in their lifetime, with many more having a friend, partner, or family member experience it as well. As such, UK Greetings is committed to providing initial and ongoing mental health support and help to our Associates.

One of the ways UKG offers support is through a team of Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA). These associate volunteers are a point of contact if a fellow associate is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. While the MHFA team does not replace professional help, they are available to all associates to offer a friendly, non-judgmental listening ear.

Each associate volunteer undergoes training with Mental Health First Aid England, where they learn tools to support their own and others' well-being. They receive training on how to recognize signs of ill mental health, listen in a non-judgmental way, and signpost to support for help and recovery.

Each team member has volunteered to spend time with any associate to give initial support and to help direct them to additional help and resources if needed. For example, they can help associates find ways to manage any symptoms they may be experiencing concerning anxiety, depression, eating disorders, sleeplessness, or self-harm. All conversations are ensured to remain in the strictest of confidence.

"The training has instilled an increased confidence amongst myself and the MHFA team in enabling conversations about mental health between colleagues, friends, and family," says Lucy Mumford, Marketing Assistant and MHFA team member. "It helped us fulfill a key goal of our role, which is to reduce the stigma around discussing mental health, and instead to create and encourage a positive attitude towards the topic of mental health and well-being at UK Greetings."




*"We all have moments in our lives when stresses and strains impact how we're feeling. There's no shame in recognizing you need help — all it takes is to overcome that first hurdle of contacting one of the UKG Mental Health First Aiders. When you receive the reassurance it's all confidential and at your pace, you'll realize there's a positive network to support you, and that you're not alone!"*

# Product Development

American Greetings leads the celebrations industry with product and marketing that represents all consumers. We publish an array of products and social media assets that celebrate the holidays and relationships that are uniquely meaningful to diverse communities. Many of these products are created by our Inclusivity Creative Team, an interdisciplinary group of experts that specialize in creating this content.

The Inclusivity team's role is to ensure authentic representation of diverse consumers and their content preferences. This means constantly researching and learning about different consumers and cultures. The Inclusivity team often works with AG's Employee Resource Networks, external consultants, and other community members outside of AG to develop just the right content.

According to Inclusivity Editorial Lead Maria MacNamara, the only way to make products that feel truly inclusive is to see them “as part of who we are, and not just what we’re creating.” This means continually building knowledge, challenging our thinking, and expanding our network of contributing voices. According to Maria, “The world is constantly changing and a big part of our role is to make sure we’re changing with it.”



*“Everyone should feel seen in our products – no matter who you love, the color of your skin, the occasions you celebrate, or anything else that makes you unique. It is essential our product offering conveys a sense of belonging, giving all consumers the opportunity to form meaningful connections for the moments that matter most.”*

**ERIN MCLEOD**  
**SENIOR PROGRAM DIRECTOR – D&I AND TARGET FEATURES**



# Product Development

## *Diversity & Inclusion By the Numbers*

**1**

Dedicated D&I Team

**6**

External Cultural Consultants

**6**

ERNs Representing Diverse & Inclusive Work Culture

**73%**

Increase in Cards with Diverse Representation

**100%**

Corporate Equality Index Score

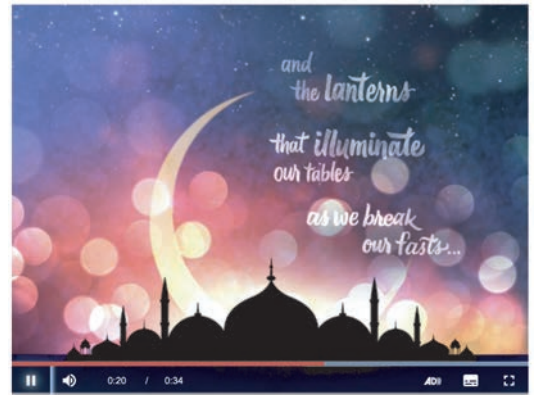
**1,077**

D&I Cards Created Since 2020



# Product Development

## ***Celebrating the Islamic Community***



## ***Celebrating the Hispanic Community***

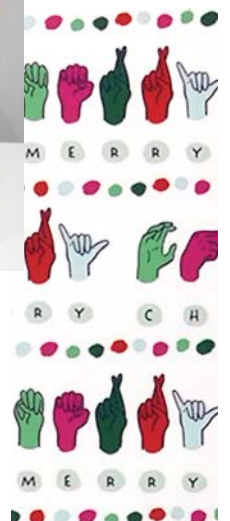


# Product Development

## ***Celebrating the LGBTQIA+ Community***



## ***Celebrating the Disabled Community***





# Product Development

## ***Celebrating ALL Our Children***



## ***Celebrating the Jewish Community***

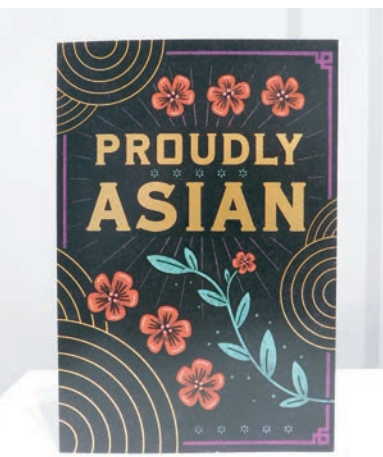


# Product Development

## ***Celebrating the Black Community***



## ***Celebrating Asian Communities***





# Product Development

## **Introducing...** *...the best up-and-coming independent artists.*

UK Greetings created and developed a fun, diverse, and inclusive new card line called **"Introducing,"** in partnership with UK supermarket chain, **Tesco**. This card line showcases fresh and trend-forward designs by independent artists from across the UK.

"It's been great to see the positive reactions on social media, as artists and shoppers alike celebrate UKG's and Tesco's commitment to a diverse and inclusive range of cards," said Richard Bentley, Tesco Customer & Product Manager.



**Introducing...**  
*...the best up and coming independent artists.*

**A BRAND NEW**  
greetings card collection  
exclusively for **TESCO**

Available in selected  
stores **NOW**

**16 amazing**  
**NEW artists**  
to discover!

**Alex Willmore** is an author and best-selling children's book illustrator. His characters are brought to life with a sense of mischief and fun.

**Cherelle Brown** is the owner of KitsCH Noir, a brand that represents the love, joy and humour of the black British experience.

**Zoe Spry** combines thoughtful sentiment with colour, character and humour to really make her designs pop!

**Kerrie McKell** makes fun and playful illustrations focussing on everyday life. Her work sparks joy and a new sense of excitement in the world around us!

**Sam Jayne's** designs are created to make people smile. Everything is designed in Sam's home studio, powered by a cup of tea and her sidekick Millie the dog!

Only at **TESCO**



# Community Outreach & Engagement

## *Our Mission in Action*

American Greetings has a long and proud tradition of serving the communities in which we work and live. We care about our people, our communities, and our planet and treat each with kindness and respect. Whether it's through fundraising and donation drives, educational scholarships and public event sponsorships, or acts of service and volunteerism, the people of AG truly live out our mission of making the world a more thoughtful and caring place.

Here are just some examples of community outreach and engagement activities:

- **Green Team Earth Day sapling giveaway**
- **Green Team Edgewater Beach clean-up day**
- **Green Team Tree Planting in Cuyahoga Valley National Park**
- **Green Team Holiday Light Recycling Drive**
- **YPRN fundraising benefit and donations to support Cleveland's Rainey Institute, which provides arts education programming for all ages**
- **YPRN memorial donation drive for the Epilepsy Association in Cleveland, in honor of Brenna Brossard**
- **YPRN holiday donation drive for Shoes and Clothes 4 Kids**
- **PRN donation to Colors for Colette, benefiting the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, the Inpatient Pediatric Oncology Unit, and the Pediatric Oncology Research Department of UH Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital**
- **PRN donation of plush bears to UH Women's & Children's Outreach Program**
- **PRN partnership with the Birthday Party Project to give back to participating shelters in Cleveland, Ohio**
- **2022 "Pride in the CLE" corporate sponsor**
- **2022 corporate sponsor of Cleveland's Juneteenth "Freedom Fest"**
- **AARN volunteer day at Tower City's Holiday Wonderland**
- **Fundraising for Cleveland Clinic cancer research through VeloSano cycling event**
- **Fundraising for American Lung Association through Fight for Air Climb**
- **Developed MyRoad® card for Cleveland Clinic heart patients**
- **Osceola "Cards for Kids" donation to Arkansas Foster Child Birthday Card Program**



# Community Outreach & Engagement

## *Sharing Celebrations*

Birthday celebrations belong to everyone. No matter who someone is or what they're experiencing, every person deserves to be reminded that they're special – especially if they're a child. Partnering with The Birthday Party Project has allowed American Greetings to put this core belief into practice.

The Birthday Party Project has made it their mission to bring joy to children who are experiencing homelessness through the magic of birthday celebrations. The Birthday Party Project makes this possible via thoughtful, all-in-one celebration “kits”. These kits include all the elements for a happy birthday, such as decorations, goodies, a beautifully wrapped gift, and — naturally — a card!

For three years and counting, American Greetings has provided the custom card that's included in The Birthday Party Project's celebration kits, and the AG shopper marketing team has facilitated a giveback campaign at retail benefiting the BPP. To date, AG has donated more than \$500k in dollars and card product! AG has also run multiple offers and social campaigns with the message “You give. We give.” These campaigns have boosted awareness for American Greetings and The Birthday Party Project alike, as well as garnered a wealth of positive engagement.

Associates at AG have taken notice of this feel-good partnership, too. Rachel Wesley, associate lead of the Parents Resource Network (PRN), recently spearheaded AG's local involvement in The Birthday Party Project. With help from fellow PRN members and AG associates, Rachel curated an online wish list, wrapped gifts purchased from that list, assembled celebration kits, and coordinated delivery of those gifts and kits to three participating shelters around Cleveland, Ohio.





# Papyrus Gives Back

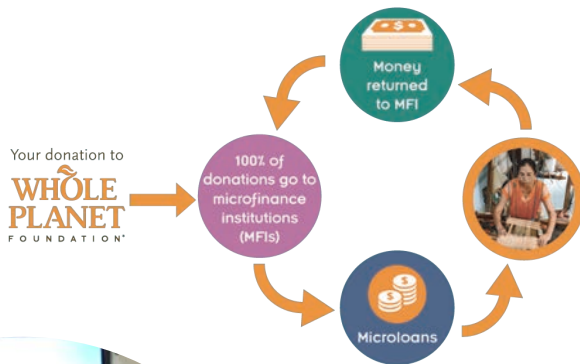
Finding ways to make the world a more thoughtful and caring place is part of what drives American Greetings forward as a company. Papyrus-Recycled Greetings (PRG) is grateful to have been recognized by the Whole Planet Foundation, whose mission is to alleviate poverty worldwide, with the 2022 Trailblazer Award in honor of the company's leadership and generosity. Papyrus and Recycled Paper Greetings have been actively supporting the Whole Planet Foundation since 2014, and both brands are proud to be connected to this special collaboration that makes a difference in communities across the globe.

Founded in 2005, the nonprofit's mission is to empower the world's poorest people with microcredit and the chance to create or expand a home-based business and lift themselves and their families out of poverty. The organization alleviates poverty through microfinance partners

in the United States and 79 other countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

The Papyrus-Recycled Greetings support translates to the funding of microloans and the creation of opportunities for impoverished entrepreneurs and their family members. In 2014, PRG also became the founding partner of the Whole Planet Foundation 100K Donor Level. This has paved the way for other supplier partners to get involved in a meaningful way.

"It is a tremendous feeling to be able to lift others up and help provide them the chance to provide for their families," said Sara Sadaghiani, Senior Sales Director, Regional Customer Team. "Being part of the work funded by the Whole Planet Foundation is another way we bring our Purpose, Mission, Vision, Values to life, and this continued collaboration has been so meaningful to be part of."





# Green Team

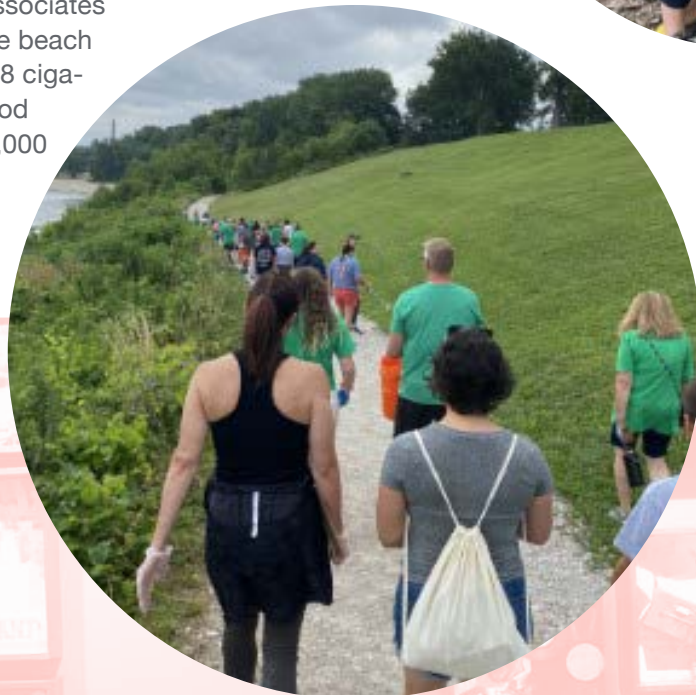
American Greeting's Green Team Employee Resource Network (ERN) is continuously sponsoring events, drives, and volunteer opportunities to work towards their mission to:

- Work together to minimize AG's carbon footprint.
- Identify opportunities to increase sustainability.
- Inspire coworkers, families, friends, and neighbors to live a sustainable lifestyle.
- Share successes, failures, and ideas, and build on them to create positive change.

Here are just a few of the ways the Green Team has made a difference.

## ***Beach Clean-Up***

The Green Team ERN sponsored AG's first beach clean-up in partnership with Cleveland nonprofit, "Drink Local. Drink Tap." In July of 2022, 90 Cleveland-based associates, directors, and executives gathered at Edgewater Park in Cleveland, OH to collect trash and microplastics from the beach. During the cleanup, associates removed 4,768 pieces of trash from the beach — that's 103 pounds! This included 588 cigarette butts, 502 pieces of foam, 259 food wrappers, 211 bottle caps, and over 2,000 microplastics!





# Green Team

## ***Tree Planting***

In November of 2022, 42 Cleveland-based associates participated in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Habitat Restoration Tree Planting event at Wetmore Trailhead in Peninsula, OH. Volunteers helped restore the native habitat by planting more than 200 native species of trees in an area of the park identified for habitat restoration.

## ***Composting at Creative Studios***

American Greetings partnered with Cleveland-based waste removal service provider, Rust Belt Riders, to begin a composting program at Creative Studios in March of 2022. Composting moves us closer to accomplishing our corporate sustainability goals by re-directing food waste and compostable service ware away from landfills and back into soil nutrients, thus reducing our carbon footprint.

## ***Treeling Giveaway***

To celebrate Earth Day, the Green Team sponsored a giveaway of 300 river birch treelings, a species native to the Cleveland, OH area. They also sponsored an informative workshop with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy to educate associates on the benefits of a healthy urban forest, and the proper way to plant and care for a young river birch tree.



*"I'm blown away by the enthusiasm and engagement shown by our associates! Events like these show the huge positive impact we can make when we work together toward a common goal."*

**AMY HUBER**  
**GREEN TEAM ERN ASSOCIATE LEAD**

# Celebrating Female Leaders

## American Greetings Progressive Grocer's Top Women in Grocery Award Winners

American Greetings is proud to be home to four winners of the Progressive Grocer's Top Women in Grocery Awards, the most prestigious honor for female leaders in the grocery industry.

The Top Women in Grocery award winners represent all industry levels within the retailer and supplier communities. Colleagues and peers nominated candidates, and winners were announced in the June 2022 issue of Progressive Grocer magazine.

American Greetings associates continue to receive recognition in this award program each year. In 2022, four of AG's sales leaders were acknowledged for their above-and-beyond achievements.

### **DANIELLE GIBBS**

*Commercial Analyst —  
Rising Star Award Winner*



*Commercial Analyst  
Dannielle Gibbs provided a creative shopper solution for an AG retailer when a competitive supplier didn't deliver all of the needed gift wrap for the holiday, increasing sales by almost 50%. She also grew the business by an incremental 54 feet across six stores, ultimately leading to a 150-foot competitive takeover of incremental space in 16 additional locations.*

*Additionally, she simplified a reorder process to not only reduce labor for the field, but also increase shipments by more than 50% in a one-month time period.*

### **KATIE KUBASTA**

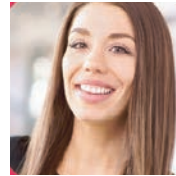
*Senior Account Executive —  
Rising Star Award Winner*



*Senior Account Executive  
Katie Kubasta exceeded the sales plans for two major AG retailers, who both saw more than 12% sales growth. She also led the design of a first-of-its-kind, celebrations-focused "Department of the Future," which took a new approach to merchandising several key categories, with major lifts to several divisions.*

### **BETH REPPERMUND**

*Master Commercial Analyst —  
Rising Star Award Winner*



*Working in conjunction with sales, marketing, and product teams to drive sales growth and household penetration, Master Commercial Analyst Beth Reppermund managed analytics for one of our major retail accounts and engaged weekly with their analytical organization to ensure best practices and share insights. She steered analytical work on sustainability initiatives, including reducing landfill waste at company headquarters, and helped offset 100% of AG's carbon footprint through reforestation efforts. Reppermund mentored new female analytics talent and led collaborative discussions across analytics organizations to share insights and solutions to help drive total business growth.*

### **KAREN VIERS**

*Account Executive —  
Rising Star Award Winner*

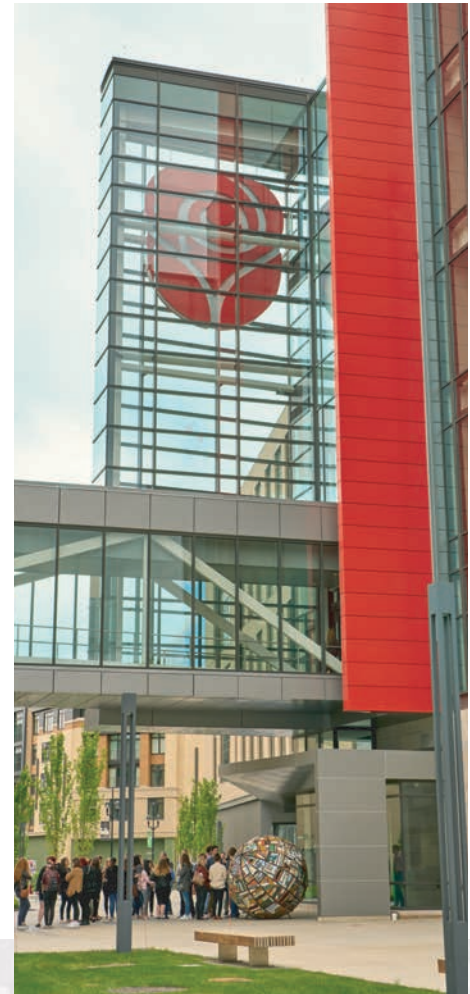


*As an Account Executive, Karen Viers managed a collection of grocery divisions as well as owning one of AG's key regional relationships, and used her sales expertise to deliver innovative programs that aligned with her customers' strategic vision. Through her leadership, she delivered 12% year-over-year sales growth for her retail divisions and industry-leading Valentine's Day sales performance for a grocery chain, while also leading a Nurses Day and an essential-worker Thank You program.*



# Our Policies

At American Greetings, we believe that good corporate governance goes a long way toward building and maintaining trust. Our employees are guided by our values to be safe, maintain the highest integrity, treat everyone with dignity and respect, focus on our customers, and be excellent in all we do. Our corporate policies and practices are designed to ensure that these values are continuously upheld at all levels of our company.



*“Protecting the interests of our stakeholders, customers, and associates is of the utmost importance to how we do business. We’re proud that our approach to corporate governance is inspired, guided, and strengthened by our core values, particularly treating people with respect.”*

**CHRIS HAFFKE**  
**GENERAL COUNSEL AND CHIEF HR OFFICER**

# Corporate Governance

## Board of Directors

The American Greetings Board of Directors oversees the interests of the company and its stakeholders in the long-term health, overall success, and financial strength of the business. There are six directors on our board, including seasoned financial and operating partners from Clayton, Dubilier & Rice, family members of the company's founders, and our Chief Executive Officer. Together, our Directors bring decades of experience as owners and operators in consumer packaged goods businesses, the retail sector, and the celebrations industry.

Our Board of Directors follows, both formally and informally, governance principles designed to ensure that it provides AG with informed and competent oversight that serves the interests of the company and its stakeholders. To assist in the oversight function, the Board has standing Audit and Compensation Committees, each of which has three Directors and meets regularly. The Audit Committee reviews the adequacy of our financial policies and procedures, compliance with those procedures, and systems of internal control. In addition, it

oversees the integrity of our financial statements and related auditing, accounting, and financial reporting processes. The Compensation Committee reviews and approves the policies, programs, and procedures related to compensation of the company's executives.

The Board of Directors also reviews and ratifies our environmental and social sustainability strategies. In this capacity, they oversee our sustainability program and human capital management practices, including diversity and inclusion efforts.



# Corporate Governance

## Code of Conduct

American Greetings is committed to a policy of complying with the law wherever we do business and maintaining high standards of business conduct. These principles, which apply globally, are the basis of our ethical business practices and the foundation of our success. Each year, American Greetings associates are required to certify that they have read and are in compliance with our Code of Conduct and Business Ethics. The Code of Conduct covers a variety of areas including the following:

- Antitrust Laws
- Accurate Books and Records
- Confidential Information
- Equal Opportunity / Anti-Harassment Policies
- Conflicts of Interest
- Fair Dealing
- Foreign Corrupt Practices Act
- Insider Trading
- Political Contributions
- Software & Intellectual Property
- Reporting Violations or Concerns

Additionally, we work with suppliers who share our principles of product safety, obeying labor laws, safety at work, diversity, the fight against corruption, and respect for human rights. Current and prospective suppliers are required to provide evidence that a third-party social compliance audit has been completed and approved at the supplier's location within the previous 12 months.

## Whistleblower Policy

American Greetings maintains a “We Care Hotline” whereby associates of AG and other operating subsidiaries can report Code of Conduct violations or other concerns by phone or through the web. The We Care Hotline is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The hotline is staffed and managed by a third-party service provider that is not affiliated with American Greetings. It is American Greetings policy not to discharge, demote, suspend, threaten, harass, or in any other manner discriminate against whistleblowers.





# Compliance

## Environmental Health & Safety

American Greetings is committed to protecting human health and safety and the natural environment. We operate in strict compliance with applicable Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) law, regulations, and governmental requirements in keeping with good corporate citizenship. Below are the core elements of our EHS program:

- Management Leadership
- Employee Participation
- Hazard Identification and Assessment
- Hazard Prevention and Control
- Education and Training
- Program Evaluation and Improvement

## Regulatory

American Greetings is committed to distributing quality, safe, and environmentally responsible products in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Our product safety and compliance program is designed to meet the regulations, standards, and best practices identified and enforced by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and its regulatory counterparts around the world. This includes:

- U.S. Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA)
- U.S. Federal Hazardous Substances Act (FHSA)
- European Toy Safety Directives (TSD)
- REACH
- RoHS
- California Prop 65
- Additional U.S. state chemical laws and reporting requirements

We monitor regulatory changes and industry initiatives to ensure compliance and make adjustments when appropriate. Requirements are documented in our Product Safety and Compliance Manual, which is distributed to our suppliers and requires an annual declaration of compliance. Product testing is the final step in our strategy and is used to verify that a particular risk has been eliminated or mitigated to an acceptable level.

# Compliance

## Supplier Qualification

Suppliers of American Greetings undergo a thorough risk-based vetting process in the initial diligence phase and as part of the onboarding process. We routinely monitor our suppliers thereafter. The qualification and monitoring process includes onsite factory inspections, raw material validation, product safety testing, finished product quality inspections, and assured compliance to the American Greetings Product Safety and Compliance Manual and the American Greetings Supplier Code of Conduct.

In addition, on an annual basis our audit program evaluates supplier practices relative to local and international labor standards, quality, supplier management, health and safety, and environmental impacts. See our Supplier Code of Conduct for more information.

## Tax

American Greetings is committed to following all applicable laws and regulations relating to taxes and maintaining a transparent and constructive relationship with tax authorities in all jurisdictions where we do business. We ensure that our governance process for managing tax positions is appropriate and robust and apply diligence and professional care in carrying out our tax responsibilities and reporting.

# Risk Management

## Information Security

We recognize that information security is vital to the health and success of American Greetings. In today's world, the data that we collect and use is one of our most valuable assets. To protect it, we have a comprehensive set of policies and procedures related to Information Security, Data Privacy, and Data Handling. Our Chief Data Officer and Chief Information Security Officers are accountable for administration of the policies and ensuring that they are comprehensive and up-to-date.

Our broad goals around information security are to maintain the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data. We use the NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) security framework and a core set of security principles as the foundation for our policy. These security principles cover the following concepts:

- Universal Participation
- Risk-Based Security
- Deny All That is Not Explicitly Permitted
- Least-Privilege
- Defense-in-Depth
- Compartmentalization
- Secure Failure
- Separation of Duties
- Defense through Simplicity
- Dedicated Function
- Need-to-Know
- Effective Authentication and Authorization
- Audit Mechanisms

We recognize that our associates are important guardians of our data. Targeted phishing campaigns and other cyberattacks are becoming increasingly sophisticated and more common.

We use a comprehensive set of training and testing techniques to ensure that our associates are well versed in the newest and most common forms of security threats and are trained to avoid them. Our program includes:

- Mandatory security essentials training for all associates, conducted annually
- Quarterly phishing tests and remedial training for those who fail
- Information sessions, guest speakers, and training videos during National Cyber Security Awareness Month
- Various other activities and training opportunities throughout the year

## Internal Audit

Our internal audit team periodically conducts comprehensive, company-wide risk assessments covering key business and functional areas. The assessment focuses on the following five primary types of business risk:

- Strategic
- Compliance
- Operational
- Financial
- Reputational

We use the COSO (Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission) method to identify the universe of risks applicable to AG, and risks are scored according to likelihood and impact. Existing countermeasures to mitigate risk are documented and evaluated. Countermeasures are augmented to address residual risk where appropriate.