

I've learned that Corvias Foundation is truly the third leg of the stool and that one leg does not bear more weight than the others. Our three core principles of providing the best service, being the best place to work, and generously giving back to our communities all go hand-in-hand. When all three align in perfect harmony, we're an unstoppable force for good. It provides an atmosphere in which our team loves to work because they're valued for providing this high level of service and giving back to their community is a sense of pride for them. This makes them wake up each morning wanting to go out and do their jobs even better, which means they will continue to provide the best service.

This is what we have been working to become for the past 15 years and I'm really happy to say that, for the past 10, we have been more in balance than out of it.

How frustrating is it to see how much unfulfilled need is out there, particularly when it comes to supporting the military and veterans?

The public needs to know that less than one percent of our population is those who defend and serve our nation and keep us safe. It is even less than that when you take into account how many descendants of military families join the military.

We have to understand that it's a miniscule portion of our population who serve every day, so their voice isn't loud. As citizens we have to understand that it's our military that needs support. This isn't something the government can do on its own – we have to help them and stand up to help solve their problems, so awareness is one component of it.

Second, we have to do a better job as a society of not turning our backs and saying it's not our problem. Hiring veterans, and training and committing to them, is a huge responsibility that we need to fulfill, not in dribs and drabs but en masse.

Finally, we need to yell and scream to our Congress to use more of our tax dollars efficiently to support our military.

We support a group called Vet Voice, which stems from a simple fact that, unless members of Congress sit on one of the Defense committees, they usually don't have a military fellow on their staff, yet they're the only people who have real contact with the military. These are the members of Congress who vote on budgets to appropriate funds and spend our tax money, and they don't even have a connection to the military.

In order to solve the military's and veteran's problems, we have to stop treating it like a number on an income statement or a budget and start treating it like it is what it is: it's the defense of our nation and these are the people who serve our nation.

What are the keys to being an effective CEO today?

I enjoy the vision, the entrepreneurship, the growth, the client interaction, the problem-solving – I do not enjoy the day-to-day operations. Therefore, I surround myself with people who are good at that, like most CEOs. I'm passionate about our mission and involved in the operation enough to keep a handle on it, but I'm aware of what my tolerance level is. I don't get in deep enough to mess it up but enough to understand it at a level where I am sure I'm making claims to our clients that I know we can fulfill, and coming up with solutions to problems that I know we can enact. It's important to find that balance. ●



A community center at Fort Polk in Louisiana

A Company that Cares

**An Interview with Janet Colantuono,
Chief of Staff and Chief Strategy Officer, Corvias Group**



Janet Colantuono

EDITORS' NOTE Janet Colantuono wears many hats at Corvias – from serving as a driving force behind the company's vision to championing the Corvias culture of caring. As Chief Strategy Officer, she is responsible for leading the development and execution of the company's path forward. Since joining the company in 2002, Colantuono has worked alongside her partners, John Picerne and Michael De La Rosa, to develop all aspects of the business. As the leader of Corvias' strategic support services, she also offers foresight, innovation, and expertise within the areas of communications, interior and exterior design, human resources, and information technology.

How would you describe Corvias' culture around community engagement?

Corvias was founded on the desire and passion to give back to the organizations that support our service members and their families. Through the work that we do, we identified the many ways in which we can help support our troops, such as hiring veterans and their family members, especially given that they face unique roadblocks to employment such as permanent change of station (PCS), or providing resources. When we started supporting the military, there were so many tentacles to help the community at large and it was a natural progression to expanding the way we help the local communities in which we operate, such as by organizing a clean-up project or sponsoring a run for charity. When we described to employees how we really wanted to make a difference, they ran with that mindset more than we could have imagined. Our employees amaze me on a daily basis because they continue to come up with new ways to help locally, such as rebuilding old bikes for kids, hosting food pantries, volunteering at local shelters, and lending their time to support the less privileged over holidays. Because our partnerships are long-term, our employees get a genuine sense of being part of the community. The residents are our neighbors and friends. We truly are a company that cares, which is why I'm so fortunate to be a part of something special here.

What is the most rewarding part of your job?

There is no better feeling than seeing the excitement on our customers' faces and hearing the enthusiasm in their voices when everything comes to fruition. Second, I thoroughly enjoy the interactions and collaboration with my coworkers. We have fought together and fallen together, but all of this collaboration makes our work product that much better.

What do you want people to most understand about Corvias?

The great people that we hire and the incredible work that we do with our partners. One of the most satisfying experiences for me was when we first took over an entire portfolio of schools within the University System of Georgia (nine campuses spread across the state) and we had to hire many new staff. This would typically be a challenging endeavor to properly integrate everyone into the culture, but we were able to do it seamlessly because of our hiring process. Our employees are excited to go to work every day in a place that truly cares about the work and why it gets done. One story I like to share is that of Sharon Reed, a new employee, who just received the Custodial Staff Member of the Year Award voted in by the Georgia State students. It's the first time anyone outside of the school system was given this award. The stories people like Sharon tell about their passion for the partnership and interaction with the students are the same ones you hear from our service members about the work they do. Providing the best possible academic environment for the future leaders of this world cannot be underestimated. I've been working here for 14 years and to see the incredible retention rate that we have is extraordinary. ●