

**JAN NORMAN ON SMALL BUSINESS**  
news and practical tips for orange county small business owners



## EMPLOYEES GIVE \$176,000 TO CHARITIES TO HONOR BOSS

Posted by [Jan Norman](#), small-business columnist



Register readers voted David Wilson, Wilson Automotive Group (Toyota of Orange and 15 other dealerships) in Orange the 21st Annual Holiday Spirit winner.

You can [click here](#) to read about some of Wilson's non-business kindnesses and other Orange County business owners who give and spread joy all year long. In this blog post, I want to highlight Wilson's employees who nominated him for the award.

For about 20 years, Wilson's employees have been giving to charities in his name instead of giving him birthday and Christmas gifts. At this year's company Christmas party, the general managers of all 16 dealerships presented Wilson with a check of \$176,400 representing the cumulative donations Wilson's employees have made during 2008 to Orangewood Children's Foundation, Olive Crest, YMCA, United Cerebral Palsy, and the American Cancer Society among others.

"With the difficult economy, more people than ever are in need this holiday season and charities are feeling the pinch," Wilson said. "That's why our employees' holiday tradition has even more meaning this year. Our staff continues to amaze me with their generosity, especially in a year what is difficult for our industry. We hope that others will start a similar tradition at their companies."

That first year 130 employees of Toyota of Orange donated \$10,000 to the David Wilson Endowment Fund. It was the foundation's first endowment gift, and Wilson was thrilled. The fund now contains over \$500,000 and the interest from it funds university scholarships for alumni of Orangewood. The 20-year cumulative total for the employee program is over \$2 million for numerous charities.

"A tribute like this says a lot about David Wilson - and his staff," said Gene Howard, director of Orangewood Children's Foundation. "We truly appreciate generosity like this in a year that is financially tough for nearly everyone; and the impact will last long beyond the holiday season."

Wilson Vice President Vikki Murphy said, "David has always been very generous to his employees, and this is just our way of saying thanks."

Merry Christmas to you all.

