



Overcoming Challenges Together: Life Science Cares & Pine Street Inn

Our sector is rich with expertise and passion for collaboration, and it only makes sense to leverage these strengths in service of our nonprofit partners. That's why we launched the Life Science Cares Hackathon, a fun, fast-moving way for employee teams to use their expertise to give back.

In the midst of our regular and candid check-ins with our partners in late 2020, we learned that [Pine Street Inn](#) was facing obstacles increasing capacity at its iCater Job Training program.

iCater provides Pine Street Inn guests job training while also producing nutritious meals for shelter guests, group homes, and other nonprofits across Greater Boston. In the 20 years since its inception, the program has grown to serve nearly 3,000 meals per day. But as iCater has grown in scale and complexity, it became increasingly challenging (particularly with the ongoing pandemic) for Pine Street Inn operations to meet the demand. The iCater team struggled with the complexity of moving from bulk to individually packaged meals, space limitations due to COVID restrictions, and complexities around ordering and scheduling meal deliveries.

We put the power of our people to work.

To do this right, we partnered with our friends at Slalom, to design and run the Hackathon. Over two weeks in early 2021 — via competition-wide Zooms, team-specific working sessions, and a final pitch and judging session—employee teams from Wave Life Sciences, Visterra and Alnylam Pharmaceuticals worked on solutions for the challenges presented to them.



While each team came up with easy-to-implement short term solutions and a plan to address more complex solutions long term, we had to choose a winner. The team from Wave Life Sciences squeaked ahead with their recommendations for cost-effective technology, shelving, packaging and transportation solutions.

Team Wave Life Sciences will work alongside the nonprofit to help enhance distribution capabilities to serve 5,000 meals a day to its shelter guests and other local human service agencies.

“It was a true honor for our team at Wave to help out with the important work of Pine Street Inn through the first-ever Life Science Cares Hackathon,” said Clara Gil, Senior Director, Supply Chain, Logistics & Procurement at Wave Life Sciences. “Even though COVID-19 has made face-to-face interactions a challenge, we appreciate the creative thinking by Life Science Cares to find ways for companies to support organizations who contribute so much to our local community. We look forward to continued work with Pine Street Inn as they incorporate our proposal and scale to grow their impact in the Boston area.”

Additional honors were given for Highest Value Impact (Wave Life Sciences), Most Feasible (Visterra & Alnylam in a tie) as well as Most Creative Ideas (Alnylam).

Based on the overwhelming success of the inaugural effort, LSC is already making plans to hack many more problems for our nonprofits in the years to come.