The MIT Public Service Center (PSC) was established in 1990, with a mission to engage students in public service and civic engagement. This initiative was spearheaded by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and involved partnerships with organizations both within and outside of the academic community. Over the years, the PSC has fostered a range of programs designed to address various social issues, from education to health care, and has encouraged students to participate in projects that promote global citizenship and community service.

In 1992, the PSC established the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program, which allowed students to earn federal funds by engaging in community service projects. This program was initiated in response to the need for students to gain practical experience and to support their financial needs. Since then, FWS has served as a cornerstone of the PSC’s mission, enabling students to apply their academic knowledge to real-world problems.

Through the IDEAS challenge, the PSC has supported student-led initiatives that aim to address social challenges. For example, the Priscilla King Gray (PKG) Service Center, established in 1998, has provided resources and support for students involved in social innovation projects. The PKG Center has been pivotal in launching start-ups and providing seed capital to student entrepreneurs, helping to forge a path for socially conscious businesses.

The PKG Center’s history is marked by a series of initiatives that have expanded the scope of public service and community engagement. In 2005, the PKG Center launched an initiative to address the needs of underserved communities through the provision of fresh, healthy food. This endeavor has since evolved into a comprehensive program that addresses issues of access to healthy eating and promotes sustainable practices.

In 2009, the PSC initiated the Fresh Life program, which aimed to provide access to clean water and basic sanitation facilities in rural areas. This initiative has had a significant impact, reaching thousands of people and improving health outcomes.

The PKG Center has also been instrumental in fostering partnerships between MIT and other universities, helping to expand the reach of public service initiatives and to create a network of collaboration among institutions.

Through its various programs, the PKG Center has demonstrated its commitment to empowering students to become leaders in their communities, with a focus on promoting health, education, and sustainability. By providing opportunities for students to engage in community service and to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts, the PKG Center has helped to shape a generation of socially conscious leaders who are dedicated to making a positive impact on the world.

"Because the world needs people like MIT students." - Priscilla King Gray