

# **GIVING TIME**

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE  
IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

**BY  
LEN GUTMAN**



*Llumina Press*

Copyright 2003 Len Gutman

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from both the copyright owner and the publisher.

Requests for permission to make copies of any part of this work should be mailed to Permissions Department, Llumina Press, PO Box 772246, Coral Springs, FL 33077-2246

ISBN: 1-932303-28-6

Printed in the United States of America

The author would like to thank Free Arts of Arizona for authorizing the use of the collage that appears on the cover of this book. It is one of many works of art created by extraordinary children in Arizona each year. Free Arts of Arizona is a nonprofit organization that trains volunteers to share the healing power of the creative arts with abused, neglected and homeless children. Through volunteer mentors in the visual arts, music, theater, dance, creative writing and other art forms, children can build self-esteem, improve social skills, renew trust with a caring adult, and learn to express emotions in a positive way. Over 2,000 volunteers have given their time, talents and love to over 23,000 abused and homeless children since 1993.

Free Arts of Arizona is a national affiliate of Free Arts for Abused Children. To learn more, visit [www.freeartsaz.org](http://www.freeartsaz.org).

# CONTENTS

## **Part I. Stories of Volunteering**

Preface	1
Hearts and Crafts	5
Creating A Difference	11
What if Kids Ran the City?	15
Thank You For Calling KAET	21
Saving Families One at a Time	27
Books and Fudge	33
Special Delivery	39
Downright Miracles	43
A Roomful of Miracles	47
One Ringy-Dingy	51
If You Build It, They Will Come	55
The Best Dam Phone Calls	61
Bigs and Littles	65
Stuff The Bus	69
Take Me Out to the Ballgame	73
Lifelong Learning	77
Soup For You!	81
Someone To Watch Over Me	85
Boo! At The Zoo	91

## **Part II. Resources**

Organizations Profiled In This Book	99
National Volunteer Resources	103
City Cares Programs	107
Volunteer Center National Network	115
Further Reading	117



## **DEDICATION**

*For my wife Leslie, who has stood by me  
for better or worse. I love you!*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people to thank for making this project a reality. First I'd like to thank my wife Leslie and son Connor for not complaining too much when I ran off to volunteer, sometimes even on weeknights and weekends. Thanks to my mother and father for teaching me values like compassion, acceptance and love. Thanks to my grandmother for giving me my first typewriter. Thanks to Paul Maryniak at the *Arizona Republic* for believing in this project and in me as a writer, and Janie Magruder for encouraging me to follow through with the idea. Thanks to Monica Aguirre for giving the manuscript a good read with both a sharp editor's eye and a wonderful reader's perspective. Thank you to the many volunteers who allowed me to enter their hearts and minds and to the community organizations across Arizona for going above and beyond to make my volunteer experiences rewarding and fun. Special thanks to my friend Kathleen Clark, who was with me when I concocted this idea and blessed me with her enthusiasm and vast non-profit community connections. Finally, to the people of Phoenix, Arizona for their commitment to each other in good times and in bad – there is no finer community in America!



"When we quit thinking primarily about ourselves and our own self-preservation, we undergo a truly heroic transformation of consciousness."

-- Joseph Campbell



**PART I**



**STORIES OF  
VOLUNTEERING**



## PREFACE

**F**or years now I've been saying I needed to volunteer in the community, but the closest I've ever come is dropping off some old clothes at Goodwill. And that was always less about altruism and more about tax deductions. Volunteering sounded good in theory, but coming up with the time and energy to actually do something was a different story. Maybe it had something to do with the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 or maybe I just got tired of making excuses, regardless I knew it was time to get out from behind all those reruns of *The West Wing* and do something good for mankind. This was going to be more than a New Year's resolution --- it was going to be life altering.

I'd always equated community volunteerism with doling out plates of mashed potatoes at some neglected old soup kitchen in a dilapidated neighborhood teeming with drug dealers and gang bangers. It's a perception I had despite the fact I'd never really done much volunteering. I suppose I had these negative images of social service organizations burned in my mind from watching too many bad movies and awful television news stories.

To get past these images I knew I had to open my mind, put aside my preconceived notions and, as they say at Nike --- just do it. I also knew I had to take myself out of my comfort zone. I wanted to find out where

someone like me, a typical middle-class American with a family, a career and very little free time, could find volunteer opportunities that were both rewarding and not too time consuming.

That quest was the impetus for the series of columns in this book, all of which appeared in one form or another in Arizona's leading daily newspaper, *The Arizona Republic*. Twice a month for more than a year I took readers along with me as I volunteered my time to various organizations. Throughout the journey I hoped to demystify community volunteerism, introduce readers to some wonderful non-profit agencies and maybe even share some poignant moments. I also hoped to have fun and meet hard-working, dedicated people just like you and I who are making a difference in the community.

I also wished to surprise my readers along the way. Volunteering in the community takes numerous forms, from working in that soup kitchen to reading to children to answering phones. Volunteering also doesn't have to take a lot of time. Not having enough time is probably the number one excuse people use for not volunteering in the community. We have jobs, families, social engagements, etc. However, what I found is that most organizations will tailor volunteer experiences to fit your schedule. You can do as much as you want or as little as you want.

I also found over the course of this exploration that Phoenix, Arizona, a place I've called home for 10 years now, is a community filled with miraculous people who thanklessly give their time and energy to hundreds of causes. I've always been something of a cynic, especially when it came to people's motivations, but time and again I was astounded by what Phoenixians did for the community. What surprised me even more was that the volunteers and non-profit workers I met

represented every age group, every race and every social standing imaginable. And it almost seemed to me as if the less fortunate a person was, the more willing they were to help others in need. A final revelation to me was how civic-minded Generation X seems to be. I've been quite critical of the "slacker" generation in the past, but nearly everywhere I went in the community over the past year young people were making a difference.

I hope the following stories inspire you to give some of your time.



## HEARTS AND CRAFTS

**J**ames is five years old. The rules at La Mesita Family Shelter in Mesa, Ariz. prohibits volunteers from knowing too much about the residents, so last names are not used. This much is evident – James is Hispanic, speaks Spanish and English fluently, and is as bright as any five year old you'd ever meet. He enters the small library at the shelter a few minutes after the other children arrive, runs up to the project leader to give her an enormous hug, then sits down with the other children to do arts and crafts. He does not stop smiling his infectious smile from the time he gets there to the time he leaves.

If you met James under any other circumstance you'd never guess he was homeless. When I mention this later on to the project leader, she simply flashes a knowing smile conveying without words that I have discovered the great misconception about homelessness in America – these are just people like you and me who for a variety of reasons have found themselves in unfortunate circumstances. The children are innocent victims.

La Mesita is a former motel on a busy street in the historic downtown section of Mesa. If you were just driving by, you'd think it was simply another relic from the 1950s now relegated to transients and one hour sexual encounters between unknown partners.

The residents of La Mesita have all been referred to the shelter from PreHab of Arizona, a human services agency that provides a variety of programs to help people overcome challenges and to lead productive and healthy lives. Residents of the shelter can remain there for up to six months, however they must follow strict rules, go on job interviews and participate in counseling sessions. If they are successful, after six months they move on to more permanent housing. It is during these resident meetings each Thursday night that a handful of the children are chosen to participate in the “Read to Me” program organized by Make A Difference, a Phoenix non-profit group that mobilizes people to meet community needs. Nikole! Holverson runs the program at La Mesita. The exclamation point after her name is not a typo, it’s a statement. She is passionate about what she does, she is loud and she is brash. She’s an in-your-face proponent of children’s issues and it would be a mistake to tell her something can’t be done. She’d just laugh and do it anyway.

“It’s hard to focus in school when your family life is completely obliterated and destructured,” says Holverson. “How can they focus and say ‘I’m going to get an A, but I’ll just pretend I’m not homeless, I’ll just pretend I’m not abused, I’ll pretend that my parents aren’t drug addicts.’”

Holverson is 23 and has a bachelor’s degree in Intercultural Communication from Arizona State University, but she has the wisdom of a 30-year social services veteran. Only she’s not a social worker, she works at Home Depot and volunteers at La Mesita once a week, sometimes more. She is all Generation X, from the piercings to the attitude. She usually drags her boyfriend Scott Johnson with her each Thursday night,

an unassuming twenty something that you might mistake for a drummer in a grunge band. Scott has grown accustomed to Holverson's passion and smiles when I tell him later that his girlfriend is a ball of fire.

Holverson has been coming to La Mesita on Thursday nights for two years. The event began as a reading program, where the children were expected to read to the volunteers who helped them with difficult words and basically coached them as they improved their reading skills. But over time Holverson found that she had better results getting the kids to open up if she got them involved in some sort of craft or physical activity. She has used her Home Depot skills to teach the children about laying tile, building shelves and painting.

"Teaching independence and self worth is the most important thing to me," she says. "It gives them a starting point for what they learn in school. For example, I teach them how to measure with a measuring tape and that teaches them fractions. They have a quest for knowledge and they're not really able to absorb it at school, so they look forward to this program."

Before the children arrive, Holverson asks me to cut hearts out of construction paper. When I hem and haw, she gives me the once over and remarks that surely a college graduate can figure out how to cut a few hearts. She is chiding me, and it works. Although some of my hearts are too fat or too thin, she lets me know afterward that I have done a good job.

We tape the hearts to the walls around the library as decorations. Then we peel paper off crayons, cut out squares of wax paper, cut strips of red and pink ribbon and heat up an iron. Holverson says she thought up this project herself. The kids are going to shave the crayons,

press the shavings between two pieces of wax paper, then we're going to iron them flat. When they dry, we're going to cut out hearts, punch holes near the top and thread ribbons through them. Holverson calls this "stained glass crayons."

On this particular Thursday night in February Holverson is expecting 10-15 kids, but when six o'clock comes there are only five children in the tiny library. She doesn't show her disappointment, she just gets right down to business introducing the kids to me and the other volunteers. I'm ashamed that I expected all the kids to be African American or Hispanic, but most of them are white. The children seem excited to be here, all except one, a 16-year-old boy named Michael, who makes it clear right away he does not want to be here.

The other children are younger, between five and eight. Holverson says typically the kids are between five and 14 years old. The kids get right to business shaving crayons, even Michael, who is disappointed he can't find a light blue crayon, the color of the North Carolina Tarheels. Nevertheless, he too begins to shave crayons and even leans over a few times to help the younger kids.

The volunteers move around the table offering help where we can. Along with Holverson, Johnson, and myself there is one other volunteer tonight, a woman named Shelly. Holverson says the typical volunteers at La Mesita are in their 30s or 40s. She gets all types of people -- insurance agents, post office workers, librarians, glass vendors, and collections agency people.

"You'll become addicted, you get so personally involved with these kids," she says. "It's only an hour and a half of your time. You can do that waiting in line and this will change someone's life."

My fatherly instincts kick in right away, and before long I'm interacting with the children as if they are my own. A few times when I look over at James, his smile reminds me of my own son. They are about the same age, only I imagine they've led very dissimilar lives.

When it comes time to iron the crayons, Holverson looks at me and says, "Well, let's see what you can do." I am nervous. I don't want to ruin the projects, but after a few minutes I get the hang of it and realize that the kids could care less how well the crayons spread out between the wax paper.

After the crayons dry, I grab some scissors and cut out hearts. A little boy named Jessie wants his to be in the shape of a star, a difficult cutting job for anyone not named Martha Stewart. Again I look to Holverson, who laughs and says "let's see it." I cut out an imperfect five-point star, and Jessie is delighted. Holverson is smiling at me again. I get the feeling the kids are not her only project tonight.

Another volunteer ties on the ribbons, and the kids are thrilled with their "stained glass crayons." They can't wait to give them to their mothers for Valentine's Day.

"I like to take kids who are very withdrawn and work on them," Holverson says. "Everyone says they like a challenge, but it's very hard to take someone who has nothing and gain their respect and teach them self respect through the activities we do."

The most important thing a stranger can affect is a child's memory, she remarks.

"I'm going to give these kids memories that I was there for them, and I challenged them and they changed," she says. "They can be able to say, 'I can stand on my own two feet, I do know what I want to do,

I do have a goal, I do have a future. And maybe I don't have to be the richest person, but I know that I can get out of this situation because I can build stuff, I can do stuff on my own -- I can make it.”

Even Michael appears proud of his work, and as the other children begin to leave with their guardians, Michael remains behind to talk to Holverson. She asks him what he has learned. She tells him he did a great job teaching the other kids. She pushes Michael to explain what he learned from the experience. He looks uncomfortable, but he begins to reach inside and find the words. Before I leave I hear Michael and her make plans to get together next week to begin building shelves in the back of the library. Another child saved?

“I love working with children,” says Holverson. “I think I have more respect for children than I do adults, because children don't have to justify everything, they're more willing to change.”

It also turns out that this is James's last Thursday night at La Mesita. He will be leaving the shelter for more permanent housing. As he begins to walk out the door, he quickly turns back and runs into Holverson's arms, giving her one last hug. She'll not likely see him again, but she hopes he'll always have fond memories of his time in the library at La Mesita.

# CREATING A DIFFERENCE

**Y**ou'd think the last thing a bunch of 10 to 13-year-old YMCA summer campers would like is sitting on a school gymnasium floor listening to some adult tell them how to improve themselves. Heck, most of them would probably rather be home zoned out in front of an X-Box.

In fact, several of the campers gathered on the gym floor on this hot summer morning at Phoenix's Centennial Middle School say they're only here because their parents don't trust them home alone all summer. Fortunately for Dr. Bob Ruotolo, it's exactly this attitude he's here to address.

Ruotolo is a consultant, speaker and author with more than 30 years of organizational development and human resource management experience and a master's degree in social work. His published books include 1997's *Inspiration at Work: Igniting a New Entrepreneurial Spirit in the Individual and the Corporation* and this year's *Creating Your Dreams and Making Them Real*. In 2001 he founded Creating A Difference, a non-profit organization designed to provide leadership development programs to youth organizations and schools across North America. The

program is based on his decades of work at corporations around the world.

About 40 kids are lounging around the gymnasium bleachers on this morning when Ruotolo, wearing khaki shorts, sandals and a wireless headset, calls the kids to order. Without much explanation, he breaks them into six teams and has them sit on the gym floor. Before long, the campers are asked to compete in the type of exercise often found at corporate retreats and leadership training classes.

Members of each team line up facing each other. The first team member must fall back into the arms of their teammates, who are then required to pass the person to the back of the line without dropping them. The first team to pass each team member through the line wins. Creating A Difference Board Member Bruce Inouye, president of special event production company P2 Events, handles the session's audio needs and blasts music while the competition takes place.

After a lot of yelling, laughing and a few dropped kids, Ruotolo asks the campers to sit back down. The learning begins.

"It was pretty scary," says one camper.

"I felt like I couldn't trust anyone," yells another.

"The program is about creating a difference in yourself, in your relationships and in your environment," Ruotolo explains to the campers. "This exercise was about teamwork and working together."

Now that he has their attention (and has given them an opportunity to blow off a little youthful energy) he begins the lesson. He uses a flip chart to capture the campers thoughts and set the expectations for the program, which will take place for 60-90 minutes, twice a week, over the coming four weeks.

“It’s kind of a boot camp to train kids in leadership behaviors and to give them the tools to apply the learning in school, with friends and family, even in sports,” says Ruotolo, a former all-Canadian football player at Saint Mary’s University in Nova Scotia.

The four-week program focuses on thought, attitude, words and actions -- what Ruotolo calls the four “power tools.” By understanding these tools and utilizing them in their day-to-day activities, the kids learn how to use positive thoughts, attitudes, words and actions to become successful leaders.

“I had been interested in doing something with youth to develop leadership skills and character building,” he says. “This is a great age to teach them. When they get to high school they’ll have a better chance to do well.”

The program utilizes experiential learning in addition to lecture-based learning. Along with a series of physical exercises like the line passing, the program also creates an opportunity for self exploration through the use of a guided journaling process. Each participant is given a personal journal at the beginning of the program which is loaded with written exercises related to the day’s learning.

“I’m trying to draw them out as much as I can,” explains Ruotolo. “The journal helps them develop a record of the things they’ve learned over the four weeks. We even ask the counselors or teachers to participate in the journaling process so they can be coaches and role models.”

At the completion of the first session, Ruotolo and his daughter Kinsey-Beth (who is the full-time director of public relations for Creating A Difference) hand out pieces of candy to the campers. The kids head off to their next camp activity with a bounce in their step. In

two days the Creating a Difference staff will be back for the next lesson, but for now they appear pleased with the first day's efforts.

Creating A Difference has worked with several area schools already, but this is its first attempt at a camp-based program. Another of the organization's board members, Dennis Woods, captures the camp program on video. An award-winning editor and producer, Woods owns Corporate Video Solutions and also works in Honeywell International's visual services department. The organization has also received critical seed money from two corporate sponsors -- Arizona Tile and Target Training International.

On its web site at [www.creatingadifference.org](http://www.creatingadifference.org), the organization claims it “frees individuals to tap into unrealized personal potential and allows organizations to understand, articulate and achieve their goals.”

Ruotolo has an even simpler way of stating it: “It's all about mental attitude.”

## WHAT IF KIDS RAN THE CITY?

**O**ften we hear the complaint that when students graduate to the real world they don't have any of the practical skills they need to manage their lives, let alone the right skills to function effectively in a work environment. Junior Achievement of Arizona is out to change that perception by teaching students early on how to succeed in business and in life.

In 2002 about 4,500 fifth graders from around the state took part in a six-week program managed by Junior Achievement, with a curriculum that culminates with the students running a miniature city for a day. It's called Exchange City and it's located at the Junior Achievement offices in Tempe, Ariz.

Exchange City is a 7,000 square foot kid-size community where students spend the day running 14 mock business, including a newspaper, a bank, a post office, a fitness center and a variety of stores. Volunteers work with the students to guide them through the work day, with a goal of paying back their business loans by the end of the day.

"This is experiential learning at its best," says Leslie McCarthy, who works at Junior Achievement as the manager of Exchange City. "Volunteers are acting as business consultants, keeping the students on task, and

helping them reach their goals. It's the greatest opportunity to see where a kid is at and help them get to where they want to be."

On the day I volunteer at Exchange City, fifth graders from Larkspur Elementary School in Paradise Valley, Ariz. are the entrepreneurs of the day. I am assigned to the city's broadcast center, which along with making announcements about break schedules over a loudspeaker is also responsible for playing music, selling radio advertisements and, like all of the businesses in Exchange City, making enough money to keep the business afloat.

The broadcast center has a station owner, two disc jockeys, two advertising account executives, an accountant, and a copy writer. As you might imagine, being a disc jockey is the most coveted job in the city, and after taking a few minutes to figure out how to use the compact disc player and flipping through the rack of CDs, music is blaring through the city.

The students spent several weeks in the classroom learning about managing money, starting a business, supervising employees, even holding public office. All that seemed to go right out the door once the simulation begins – but it isn't long before the students begin to realize they only have a few hours to pay back their loans.

"The children really take ownership of their jobs," explains McCarthy. "You'll hear them say stuff like they don't have time to go on their break. Our president says you can see the light bulbs going on in their heads."

After a rough start where most of the students in the broadcast center don't have a clue where to begin, they are soon off selling ads and gathering news for their broadcast. After a few hours, all the ads are sold and the

ad sales executives don't know what to do next. I pull the business owner aside and tell her that her employees need another project. She calls a staff meeting and the team brainstorms a new way to make money – selling dedications to their fellow students. It isn't long before the dedications come pouring in.

After the first break the students received their paychecks and had to go to the bank, deposit their checks and get cash back to spend in the city. They were only allowed to take care of these errands during their breaks to add to the real-life experience.

As the day wears on I can see the frustration begin to mount for the students running the broadcast center. Although the disc jockeys pretty much have their jobs figured out within the first few minutes, the other employees struggle to fully comprehend their roles. With about 30 minutes left in the simulation, the broadcast center staff realizes that, although it has remembered to pay its bills, it has neglected to collect the money it is owed by the other businesses in the city.

One of the most difficult parts of my role is remembering not to give the students too much help. After all, even if they fail in their goal of paying back their loan, they still will have learned a valuable lesson about business. So, instead of telling the students what to do I bring the store owner, the accountant and the advertising sales team together for a meeting. The team decides to quickly split up and collect on their bills in person rather than rely on e-mail and the post office to deliver the invoices and collect the checks. The team manages to pay off its loan literally minutes before the end of the simulation.

Volunteering with Junior Achievement is enormously rewarding. In the back of my mind I've

always thought I'd make a good teacher, and this opportunity gives me some valuable insight into how I might actually do in a classroom environment. Seeing the look on the students faces when they figure out how to balance their checkbooks or complete a particular task is priceless. I had planned on staying at Exchange City for just a few hours, but I ended up staying for the entire simulation.

Julie Ishmael of Paradise Valley, Ariz. is a fellow volunteer in the broadcast center. Her daughter, Heidi, is a student at Larkspur school and is mayor of Exchange City for the day.

"Heidi worked hard to become the mayor, she had to write an essay, and when she came home and told me she was going to be mayor she was so excited," Ishmael says. "This is a great adventure for them so they know what to do when they get in the real world."

The typical Exchange City volunteer must first go through a three hour training class to prepare for the day. The volunteers get a tour, they learn how to run the accounting software and they get information on how the city operates.

"The training was great," says Ishmael. "They taught us exactly what to do. The key is letting the kids do the work. It's hard not to help. It feels like I'm not doing anything, but they are definitely learning."

Volunteers most often have a relationship to the school, but McCarthy says Junior Achievement is always happy to find places for volunteers and likes to keep volunteers on call in case they need help. The Exchange City training is a one-time session.

Junior Achievement of Arizona was founded in 1957 and is supported almost entirely by businesses. Exchange City has been up and running since 2001, and

in 2003 it hopes to increase the number of students taking part in the program to more than 10,000.

In addition to volunteering at Exchange City, Junior Achievement also needs volunteer in-school classroom assistants, mentors, and special event help.



## THANK YOU FOR CALLING KAET

**F**or some, the term “public television” conjures up images of mind-numbing adaptations of Edith Wharton novels and painstakingly-long documentaries about the migratory habits of the black-throated sparrow. Truth be known, however, America’s Public Broadcast System (PBS) estimates 100 million of us watch public television every week.

These days there seems to be something for everyone on public television, most of which contains no foul language and very little violence. But even as the audience for public television grows, funding for public television declines. Were it not for donations from various charitable foundations and corporate sponsorships, public television programming would depend entirely on the support of viewer donations. Even with alternate funding, membership contributions are the largest single source of support for public television stations.

Yet even viewer donations are becoming more and more dependent on the quality of the giveaway hawked during the frequent pledge drives. After all, who doesn’t want the six-DVD set of the best of Bill Moyers?

In truth, a quick flip through an issue of Phoenix’s *KAET Magazine* reveals local and national programming

with enough variety and entertainment value to keep everyone in your family from channel surfing. There's legendary rock band *The Who at Royal Albert Hall*, *Arizona Memories from the 60s*, personal finance guru Suze Orman showing viewers *The Road to Wealth*, *Elvis Forever*, and the ever-popular *Antiques Roadshow*.

If you have young children, your television is likely set to PBS for several hours a day. PBS programming for kids is entertaining, educational and wholesome – a combination that's hard to resist for parents concerned with what their kids are watching on TV. On a typical day my son will watch *Caillou*, *Zoboomafoo* and several episodes of *Arthur*. His latest favorite is *Sagwa*, an animated show set in ancient China created by award-winning author Amy Tan.

PBS not only depends on viewer financial support, it also counts on volunteers for a variety of duties, including polling area residents for public interest research, organizing events, and of course, staffing the phones during pledge drives. Phoenix's KAET has a volunteer hotline that provides information on current volunteer opportunities.

I met 73-year-old Phil Couet at the KAET studio in Tempe, Ariz., which is tucked away on the Arizona State University campus like some pirate student station, identifiable only by the array of satellite receivers perched on the roof. Couet has been retired for eight years and says he has very little to do. He spent 21 years in the broadcasting industry, and usually volunteers at KAET during the twice-yearly membership drives.

Couet is one of 20 or so volunteers at the station on the particular Monday night I joined KAET's efforts. I signed up for a 7 to 10:45 p.m. shift, and as we gather just outside the studio we are greeted by a handful of

“shift captains,” veteran KAET volunteers who coordinate the night’s activities.

The KAET volunteer program is run by the “Volunteer Friends of Channel 8,” quite possibly the most organized volunteer group in town. After you join, you receive a constant flow of information on upcoming events via phone, mail and e-mail. Once you agree to volunteer for an event, you receive detailed information on what will be expected of you. You’ll get several reminder calls, know when to arrive, where to park and what to wear. Nothing is left to chance because a shortage of volunteers means there might not be enough people to answer the phones.

“They called me three or four weeks ago and I had four nights available, so I volunteered four nights,” says Couet, who has been volunteering for KAET for just over a year.

Couet believes there is too much violence and sex on commercial television. His favorite shows on KAET are the music-related programs. He also volunteers at local hospitals and says he is just a person who likes to help.

“Just how much corporations are going to donate and continue to donate is one thing, but people have a soft spot in their heart for Channel 8 so they’re going to donate what they can afford to donate,” says Couet, who took a \$10,000 donation from a viewer over the phone one night. “I’m surprised there are a lot of \$40 donors who are probably giving maybe more they can afford to give but they want to help out.”

Before we are marched out to the set to take our places at the phone bank, the first-time volunteers are asked to introduce themselves, then we are all given a brief explanation on what we’ll be doing. We are then

shown a short video, hosted by KAET Program Manager Joe Campbell, who explains to us how to fill out the pledge forms and what to do in case a viewer has a question we can't answer.

We're then told that this night's shift will be a "virtual" shift, meaning we won't actually be on television and there will be no live host in the studio. Frankly, everyone seems a little too relaxed, but in reality it's a good introduction to volunteering at the station because the shift captain and other veteran volunteers have more time to help the newcomers. One of the team captains tells me it's more fun when the show is live and when there is "talent" in the studio.

The night's programming is a two-part PBS series about noted teacher and mythology expert Joseph Campbell (no relation to the station manager on the introduction video). A pre-recorded appeal for financial support airs during the show's intermissions, which last about 15 minutes each. It is during these breaks that the volunteers answer calls from viewers who wish to pledge their support in return for a gift, usually a tape of the show or some combination of items.

Although the breaks are part of the taped show, the viewer calls come in live to the local station. As we sit at the bank of phones awaiting the first break, we are able to watch the program. But the moment the show heads into the first break the phones begin to ring.

When my phone rings for the first time I nearly jump out of my chair. I can't imagine who'd be interested in a tape of this dead guy spouting off about the meaning of life, but it soon becomes evident that Joseph Campbell has quite a large following.

I answer: "Hello, Channel 8, may I take your pledge?"

The woman on the other end of the line makes a \$150 pledge and receives a Joseph Campbell DVD set. The next caller also pledges \$150. The third caller, a woman who can't locate her credit card, pledges \$200. During the next 10 minutes I take three more calls, all of which pledge more than \$100. Perhaps I should do some research on this Joseph Campbell fellow?

After the first intermission is over we get our break. There are food and drinks in the break area, and I sit down to chat with more fellow volunteers.

"A friend of mine called me and asked me if I could serve as a volunteer," says Santiago Moratto, who works in the Hispanic Research Center at ASU.

Moratto speaks Spanish and English and volunteered specifically to serve as an interpreter for Spanish viewers calling to make a donation. He has worked at the university for nine years, but this is his first time volunteering.

"I think there is a growing Hispanic community here and when they contacted me for this volunteer job they indicated that sometimes they have Spanish speakers trying to make a contribution," he says. "In my family we watch KAET a lot."

Joe D'Amaro, a Chandler resident who works at Charles Schwab, said he volunteers at least twice a year, mostly during pledge drives. D'Amaro works odd shifts as a broker at Schwab and KAET offers flexible volunteer shifts.

D'Amaro has two kids and is busy at work as well, and another reason he likes volunteering for KAET is that they don't pressure him to volunteer all the time.

"I feel that I'm doing something, even if it's only a few nights a year," D'Amaro says. "This is a pretty easy volunteering job, but seeing the money coming in and

knowing that you're helping to make a difference is the most rewarding part."

D'Amaro says he and his wife began watching PBS frequently when their daughter was born. Initially he felt bad that he couldn't afford to donate money to the station, so he decided to volunteer his time instead.

"The kids like *Clifford the Big Red Dog* and we watch *Dragon Tales*, and a little *Barney*," he says. "I'm glad we're out of *Teletubbies* though."

Before the night is over we had answered phones during about six intermissions. Nearly every call I took resulted in a pledge of more than \$100. Perhaps the biggest lesson I learned during the four-hour shift was that PBS actually has to pay for the merchandise it gives away with pledges, something that takes away from the net donation. The script we were given asks callers if they'd like to forgo the gift so a larger percentage of the donation goes to the station, but only one of the viewers I spoke with took me up on that offer.

A few days after my shift I did manage to watch a large portion of the Joseph Campbell special. It was fascinating, and another example of how rewarding spending a few hours with public television can be.

## SAVING FAMILIES ONE AT A TIME

**N**obody knows for sure how many Americans are homeless, but a 2001 study by the National Coalition for the Homeless estimated that on any given night about 750,000 Americans will be without shelter. Surprisingly, one of the fastest growing segments of the homeless population is families with children. A survey of 25 U.S. cities found that in 2000, families with children accounted for 36 percent of the homeless population.

There are many reasons a person can become homeless (such as substance abuse and mental illness); nevertheless, there's little doubt as to the most common cause of homelessness among families with children – 50 percent are fleeing domestic abuse.

Solving the homeless “problem” has been a dilemma for countless politicians, government agencies, community organizations and religious groups. Even with all the attention, the numbers continue to rise. However, one organization that seems to be making progress on this distressing social issue is Mesa, Ariz.-based Save The Family.

Save The Family is a transitional housing program for homeless families with children. In 2001, Save the Family served more than 150 families across the Valley.

The non-profit and non-denominational organization houses its clients in homes purchased with funds raised through grants and donations and renovated largely by the generosity of volunteers.

One of the best ways to get your hands involved in the business of assisting homeless families is by volunteering to renovate or maintain one of Save The Family's 124 houses. It's also a great way to share a volunteer experience with friends, coworkers and family members.

I arrive at one of the organization's recently-purchased houses just north of downtown Mesa early on a Saturday morning with my four-year-old son. I had been looking for a way to get my own family involved in my exploration of volunteer opportunities, and what better organization to bring my family to than Save The Family.

It is 7 a.m. and already the house is buzzing with activity. More than 100 volunteers from The Boeing Corporation are on hand to clean, paint, landscape and repair the house, a project the aerospace giant with operations in Mesa has been planning for several weeks with the help of the Save The Family staff.

My son and I jump right in. Within minutes of our arrival we are in one of the bedrooms of the house taping off molding for the volunteer painting crew. Although my son ends up with more tape on his body than on the walls of the bedroom, we have a blast and before long we have finished taping off the baseboards.

"To make the world a better place we need to start in our own communities," says Scott Siegwald, an embedded software engineer at Boeing who along with his teenage daughter Stephanie are working with us in the bedroom. "I think that Boeing is doing a great job

continuing its community programs. There are choices for who you work with so I choose a company that has civic awareness.”

Siegwald and the other Boeing employees are wearing matching “volunteer” t-shirts and working diligently on the house. Save The Family Volunteer Coordinator Cicely Rocha says it would normally take weeks to do what this group accomplishes in one day.

“It’s really important for corporations to understand how much giving back to the community will help them in the long run,” she explains. “It’s a good opportunity for the corporations to have their employees work together on something outside of work.”

Save The Family relies heavily on volunteers to help its small staff renovate and maintain its properties. To that end, it does a remarkable job of coordinating events like this one for corporations, youth groups, service clubs, schools and church groups. Save The Family is also happy to work with individuals looking for volunteer opportunities. The organization takes care of all the details so volunteers can get the most out of their experience. Of course, it’s the homeless families that truly get the most out of the experience.

Save The Family says its “whole family” approach to its programs has proven effective for 90 percent of its clients who complete the program. Typically, these families successfully transition back into the community within an average of 14 months.

By mid-morning my son and I have tried nearly every job on the property. We prune bushes, paint walls, pick up trash, and spread gravel around the backyard with the back of a rake. Perhaps my son’s favorite job is spraying down the giant pile of gravel with a garden hose to keep the dust down as Boeing employees spread

buckets of it across the yard. More than a few engineers, mechanics, accountants and administrative assistants get sprayed by my toddler, who laughs hysterically at his errant work.

We meet Boeing Software Engineer Linda Smith while she is pruning *Bougainvillea* in front of the house. We pick up the freshly cut branches and stuff them into garbage bags for disposal.

“I like doing volunteer work and I like working outside because I sit at a desk all day,” says Smith, who works on the Apache helicopter program. “It’s fun to volunteer with my coworkers, but I volunteer on my own too.”

Save The Family has one of the best-run volunteer programs in Phoenix. It’s due in large part to a dedicated staff, who are quick to acknowledge that without volunteers they wouldn’t be able to help nearly as many homeless families.

This particular project is the first as a Save The Family volunteer coordinator for Rocha, who is still attending Arizona State University, studying communication and non-profits and is concurrently working on a certificate in American Humanics which prepares students for professional careers in the non-profit sector. She works full time for Save The Family.

“There are tons of opportunities for volunteers at Save The Family,” says Rocha. “We have 124 houses and only five maintenance guys, so we have a tremendous need for people to come out to the houses to do landscaping and cleaning. If you’re interested in working with the agency itself you can do office work, sort donations, even work in our thrift store.”

By the time we leave the house around noon it has literally been transformed into a house anyone would be

proud to call home. With the large Boeing contingent, the work goes quickly and as I look around the property I can see satisfaction on many of the volunteer's faces.

We stop at McDonald's for lunch afterward, a reward for my son's hard work that morning. Although he's only four-years-old, I'm certain he understands what we accomplished because of the really great questions he asks throughout the morning, like "Why do some people have no place to live?" and "Why are all these people helping to clean the house?" He falls asleep in the car on the way home. I imagine he is dreaming about the child who will soon be living in the home he helped create.



## BOOKS AND FUDGE

**M**elva Difrancio reaches into a glass display case and slices off a chunk of key lime fudge. A retired financial planner originally from San Antonio, Tex., Difrancio moved to Chandler, Ariz. with her husband three years ago to be closer to family. She volunteers her time at Chandler's Downtown Library every Friday, where she works in the gift shop.

"I cut the fudge," says the affable Difrancio, who often gives customers samples of the home-made fudge. "Usually when they taste it, they buy it."

Along with great fudge, the gift shop at the library sells such items as candy, drinks, candles, wind chimes, and, of course, books. Difrancio says she visited the library when she first moved to Chandler and saw the gift shop, along with a sign looking for volunteers.

"I'd never seen a gift shop in a library, so I checked into it," she says. "I had volunteered at places before, but I didn't feel too productive. I really enjoy the retail sales part of this job. I like helping people and talking to people."

Difrancio is a "Friend of the Library," one of thousands of volunteers who join the organization and perform community service at their local library. In Phoenix nearly every library has a "Friends" program.

"It's a really fun place to volunteer," says Christine Hippensteel, a Chandler library employee who manages

the Chandler Friends of the Library program and oversees the operations of the gift shop. “You’re interacting with people all the time, not just the library staff but the patrons too. It’s really amazing what our dollars do for the library.”

The Chandler Friends program is currently providing funds for all of the library’s summer reading programs. Throughout the year it also funds book discussion groups, Reading is Fundamental (RIF) book distributions to at-risk children, and adult literacy programs. Each January the Friends put on a multicultural festival for Chandler.

All the volunteer programs at the Chandler Library fall under the umbrella of the Friends of the Library. Although the organization has membership dues of \$25, those who volunteer more than 25 hours per year don’t have to pay. Through memberships and retail operations that include the gift shop and used book sales, the organization raised \$69,000 for programming in 2001.

Hippensteel began as a Chandler Library volunteer more than 12 years ago, and later was hired to manage the gift shop. The library paid her for five hours a week – the rest was volunteer time.

Typically, Chandler Library volunteers either work in the gift shop or in the used book area. The gift shop is run entirely by volunteers who must sign up for a shift.

“We have difficulty sometimes getting enough volunteers for the evening shift, so sometimes we close at 7 instead of 9,” says Hippensteel. “Between the gift shop and used books we have 35-40 volunteers a week, and with that many we’re still probably five or six short every week.”

Since the gift shop added fudge sales a little more than a year ago, all gift shop volunteers have to have

their food handlers permit to cut the fudge. Hippensteel had been looking into selling fudge at the gift shop when a fudge shop in downtown Chandler went out of business and approached her about buying the equipment.

However, working with books is what brings most of the volunteers to the library.

“For the used book area volunteers can pick and choose when they want to come in,” she says. “They get trained on the pricing and how to categorize books, and once a month we weed out older books that aren’t selling. They generally put in a two- or three-hour shift, but in the gift shop we require a three-hour shift.”

Lani Travis of Chandler is sorting through old books in the library’s used book store, removing books that have yet to find a buyer. Travis pulls books from the shelves and hands them to me to box up for future book sales. Although she has only been volunteering at the Chandler Library for a few months, she says she enjoys the work. One of her duties will be researching used books to sell on Internet auction site eBay.

“I like reading books and I saw there was an opportunity to volunteer,” she says. “I usually spend a lot of time in the library. I’m just about to start putting books on eBay. It’s just a matter of researching the books and finding ones that would be worthwhile for the library to post.”

Travis has another reason for volunteering at the library. She recently quit her job at Intel, where she was an engineer, and one of the things she’s considering doing in the future is opening a bookstore.

“I recently left my job so I decided to use my spare time to try volunteering,” she explains. “I find it’s

actually kind of relaxing to do something like this. It's also nice to learn more about books in general."

Mary Boyer, a retired nurse who lives in Sun Lakes, has been volunteering once a week at the Chandler Library since 2000.

"I served on the board for a while and got bored with that and then they put me to work in the used book store," she says with a smile. "I like to give back to the community, and working at the library is just one of the things I do."

Boyer is one of many area seniors who volunteer at the library. She says sorting and straightening books isn't too physical, and being around all the books reminds her of her youth.

"I've always liked to read," she reflects. "Even as a kid I'd like to climb up into the apple tree and read by the hour. We'd go to town once a week and I'd always come home with a bag of books from the library."

One of the things that makes the library a great place to volunteer is the breadth of volunteer opportunities. At the Chandler Library, for example, you can be a computer assistant, helping library patrons with basic software applications, the Internet and the library catalog. Homebound Book Buddies select and deliver materials to homebound library patrons. Acquisition assistants help with the clerical aspects of new book arrivals and the research of donated books for collection and development.

In fact, the Chandler Library is always looking for volunteers with expertise in certain areas. On my tour of the library, Hippensteel shows me boxes of books people have generously donated to the library, some of which could contain valuable books. A recent donation included stacks of classical records, and until the library

finds someone who can estimate their value they'll likely remain in boxes in the back room.

My last task during the three-hour volunteer shift is spent sticking “book plates” on books that are to be donated to several organizations. The stickers identify the books as donations from the Chandler Friends of the Library. As part of the library’s “Books While You Wait” program, previously read children’s books are donated to places where people tend to do a lot of waiting with children. This particular box of books is headed for the waiting room at the Chandler Regional Hospital Emergency Room.

Another group of books, this time a brand new set of World Book Encyclopedias given to the library as part of the RIF program and the Rosie O’Donnell Show, are being prepared for delivery to two schools on the Gila River Indian Reservation. The library supports the reservation with its “If I Can Read, I Can Do Anything” project.

With numerous volunteer opportunities for teens, adults and seniors, becoming a Friend of the Library is a fun and rewarding way for your whole family to get involved in the community.



## SPECIAL DELIVERY

**E**d Taylor sits in his wheelchair looking out the front window of his house near the Tempe/Scottsdale border. He looks frail, and seems a little sad, as if he's been waiting several hours for our arrival.

"Right on time," he says as we approached his door. "It's 11:15 exactly."

We hand him two bags, one with his entrée and the other with a container of fruit, a package of applesauce and a box of milk. Today's entrée is an antipasto salad, but Taylor is more interested in giving Meals on Wheels volunteer Sue Leiphart a hard time about the canned ham she gave him as a gift the week before. We spend a few minutes making small talk, say goodbye, then go back to the car to deliver more meals.

Leipart has been delivering meals to the homebound for nine years. A retired housewife from Paradise Valley, Ariz., she delivers meals each Monday morning with her friends Carol Galts, a mother of eight grown children from Scottsdale, Ariz. who works part time at the Franciscan Renewal Center, and Pat Crews, a retired nurse from Phoenix.

Riding along with the trio of volunteers, it doesn't take long to understand why they do this each week. Not only does it give the friends quality time to spend together, they obviously enjoy interacting with the

people on the receiving end of their deliveries. They know something about each person, from the names of their relatives to the careers they had long before they required public assistance.

“Most of these people are confined to their homes, but they are so cheerful and pleasant and appreciative,” says Galts. “It’s a joy.”

The friends have this particular route through North Tempe and parts of Scottsdale down to a science. Leipart drives, Galts navigates and Crews sits in the back cringing at the way Leipart drives. Leipart jokes that I’m taking my life into my own hands driving with her behind the wheel, and we almost do get into an accident once. Mostly her driving makes for a whole lot of good-natured razzing by her friends. The three women are very charming and hearing them poke fun at each other adds to the enjoyment of the morning.

“We’re often the only ones they talk to all day,” says Crews. “And they want to talk!”

One of their favorite clients is a woman named Ruby, who lives by herself in an apartment complex called Hacienda de Los Arcos, just south of the former Los Arcos mall. Ruby is 92, and was the fourth person to move into the retirement community when it was first built in 1973.

“She’s usually all dressed up when we get there,” says Galts. “Her hair is done, and she has her false eyelashes on. She used to play piano for silent movies. She’s wonderful, she always has a bright smile and she loves to talk, so we always have a little visit.”

I go along with Galts as she delivers Ruby’s lunch. She invites us in, tells us stories about her Easter dinner with her family the day before, and shows us her Easter basket full of chocolate. I tell her it would take a year to

eat all that chocolate by herself, and she laughs. Ruby insists on giving me a hug before we leave.

This particular Meals on Wheels program is run out of the Concord Senior Center, which is a rented clubhouse at the Concord Village Apartment complex in North Tempe. Amy Koon is the site manager in charge of the center and it's her responsibility to plan events at the center and make sure the meals get delivered on time.

"We average about 110 home delivered meals a day, five days a week," says Koon, 24. "We have a really good crew of volunteers who have been here for years, but we can always use more volunteers."

The meals are provided by Marriott. Koon says the biggest part of their day is preparing for the deliveries. A group of volunteers is waiting at the center when I arrive in the morning. Jean Kearney lives at the apartment complex and volunteers four days a week preparing meals for delivery.

"It's something to do, otherwise I wouldn't get dressed in the morning," jokes the 72-year-old Kearney.

Kearney explains that three men, including her husband, started the meal delivery program 20 years ago. All three men are since deceased, but Kearney keeps on going. She has been volunteering at the center for 20 years.

When the food arrives I jump in to help pack fruit salad into little Styrofoam containers. Frida O'Brien, a fellow volunteer, scoops the fruit into the cups and I cover them and stack them on a tray. O'Brien is 92 years old, a little hard of hearing, and says she volunteers almost every day. Born in Germany, O'Brien moved to New York in 1927 and married an Irish American. She lives at the complex with her daughter.

O'Brien is part of an efficient production line, and even though she's 92, I have trouble keeping up with her as she fills the cups with pieces of watermelon, honeydew and cantaloupe. In less than 30 minutes, the crew prepares 103 meals for delivery, plus 15 special diet meals.

The volunteers then help load the cars for the drivers, and get ready for "chair" aerobics, one of the more popular events each day at the Concord Senior Center.

## DOWNRIGHT MIRACLES

**I**t's easy to dismiss the severely disabled and go through life pretending they don't exist. In fact, just a few decades ago most severely disabled Americans were locked away in institutions. You might imagine that even today with all the miracles of modern science these individuals would lead lives full of misery and despair. Of course, you've probably never met Ernie.

Ernie is a 33-year-old "consumer" at The Centers for Habilitation (TCH) in Tempe, Ariz. He spends his days at the center working on skills a typical preschooler could master, but for Ernie these skills are nearly impossible. Ernie has cerebral palsy combined with severe mental retardation. He can barely speak, he can't feed himself or change his clothes. His body is so contorted it's hard to tell which part is which. Nevertheless, Ernie typically sports a smile so infectious just looking at him makes you want to laugh out loud.

"I feel so good about coming to work here everyday," remarks 33-year-old Lisa Gallagher, Ernie's teacher at the center. "It's fun. We go on outings and teach them living skills. I love these guys."

Not all of Gallagher's students at TCH face as many physical and mental challenges as Ernie, but she seems to get the most reward from those that are the most developmentally disabled. When I arrive at TCH to spend time volunteering, Gallagher wasted no time

putting me to work with Ernie. She hands me some crayons and a piece of paper and asks me to work with him on his coloring skills.

As I reach for Ernie's hand, admittedly nervous about this same task I perform all the time with my four-year-old son, he shyly pulls away. But soon the crayon is in his hand and I'm leading it along the page, trying my best to stay within the lines. Although my hand is doing all the work, Ernie lets loose a huge toothy grin that makes me realize he could care less about how his picture turns out. Later, I rub lotion on Ernie's hands and arms, this time bringing forth not only a grin but a loud moan of appreciation as well.

Wendy Reed is manager of the adult day treatment program at TCH, where she oversees classes that include music, skill building, communication development, socialization and even cooking. TCH also has programs for children and seniors.

Reed says it's no secret that volunteering at TCH can be difficult. Volunteer for a while and you're likely to witness an adult seizure and that can be an overwhelming thing to see, she remarks. But she balances that by saying most of TCH's volunteers have fun.

"It sometimes can take a while to see the fruits of your labor, but the rewards are downright miracles," she says.

Reed has been at TCH for 10 years. She laughs each time we're interrupted in her office by another smiling face, just popping in to see what Reed is doing. She has a bachelor's degree in education and is currently working on a master's degree at Arizona State. She also has a three-year-old daughter.

TCH has been working with the disabled in the Valley since 1967. The center offers a variety of work for volunteers. Perhaps the most unique amenity at the center is Grandpa Charlie's Garden, a one-and-a-half acre working garden built in 1997 that provides opportunities for passive and active garden therapy.

Grandpa Charlie's Garden, named for longtime friend of TCH Charles Sweet, includes a greenhouse, raised growing beds, a rose arbor, a children's garden, a sensory herb garden, wide pathways to accommodate disabled visitors and a meandering pond. I take a brief walk through the garden and am taken by its beauty as well as its serenity. The garden is open to the public and is available for private events and parties.

Back in the classroom, I spend time working with other disabled adults, including Alicia and Kevin. Alicia has a rare disease that has left her with virtually no control of her body, and Gallagher and others must use a mechanical lift to move her from a bed to a chair for lunch. Gallagher was clipping Alicia's fingernails on this morning and she asked me if I wanted to put polish on Alicia's nails – my first-ever attempt at a manicure.

Alicia doesn't seem to respond at all while I paint her nails blue; in fact, I think she falls asleep at one point. The job is actually quite difficult, because Alicia's hands are stiff from her disease and I have to pry some of her fingers loose just to enable the polishing.

Shortly after my work with Alicia, I meet Kevin. Gallagher has me work with Kevin on something she calls "tactile response." I sit on a mat with Kevin, rub his back and shoulders and present him with various toys, each a different shape and texture. Kevin also suffers from cerebral palsy and severe mental

retardation, a disease so advanced he can not speak nor move much at all.

The highlight of the session comes when Kevin responds with a smile and a loud groan when I shake a ball filled with sand or some substance that makes a sound similar to rain. I spend the last part of my visit at TCH feeding Kevin his lunch of chicken casserole, yogurt and juice. Several teachers and assistants in the classroom warn me to watch my fingers, obviously speaking from experience, but nothing like that happens and Kevin really enjoys his meal.

After just a few hours volunteering at TCH, I understand what Reed means when she tells me the personal rewards of this type of work take time. This type of volunteering is not for everyone, but if you have the patience and the motivation the rewards may indeed be miraculous.

## A ROOMFUL OF ROLE MODELS

**T**hree-year-old Ethan is looking for something to do. He wobbles over to the play area, where he finds several shelves full of blocks and puzzles and other items of interest to a toddler. He looks at me for approval, then pulls down a container full of beads and string, which land with a thud on the carpet.

One by one I hand him beads, and he begins threading the large wooden circles, squares and triangles. As each shape slides down the string, a squeal of joy bursts forth from Ethan. Within minutes his classmates at Kyrene de las Lomas elementary school in Ahwatukee come wandering over, each reaching out for a string of their own to thread. Pretty soon the whole toddler class is sitting around me in a semicircle, threading beads. I have managed to get seven toddlers harmoniously working together and they continue to diligently thread beads for what seems like an hour.

Well...okay...it is at least five or ten minutes, and they don't even start fighting until all the beads are used up. So maybe I'm not ready to open my own daycare center.

Many parents volunteer at their children's schools, doing everything from chaperoning field trips to assisting teachers with lessons. Most schools encourage

the active participation of parents in their children's education.

However, we often don't hear about the many additional needs of schools and school districts, some of which can be carried out by volunteers. As a resident and parent living in the Kyrene School District, I decided to look into how I could get involved in some of the many district activities.

Through the Kyrene Community Education Department I learn about the Kyrene Kids Club, which offers before- and after-school care for students ages 5-12, as well as full- and half-day child care for infants and toddlers. All the programs feature trained staff, low student teacher ratios and the prices are significantly below commercial rates. The program also offers many teachers an on-site daycare program for their own children.

Kyrene de las Lomas school is home to the district's first infant daycare program, which opened its doors this year. Although a part of me misses the first few years of parenthood, I decide to volunteer a few hours in the toddler room with children closer in age to my own son. Besides, if I can avoid changing diapers all the better.

"The overall purpose of starting Kids Club was to offer a childcare program for families on their campus, and to have a quality, national standard based program so families can have a safe and secure place for their children," explains Karin Crider, who works for the district as Grants and Partnerships Program Manager. "We've had our Kids Club in operation since 1993 and we'll have 17 sites open next year, so we've really grown over the years."

The infant and toddler programs grew out of the district's desire to offer its employees an on-site daycare option.

"We did a lot of research on employee childcare, and although this is open to the public we offer a discount to our employees," Crider says. "We've really been able to meet the needs of the community and our internal community."

Crider works in the Community Education Department for the district, which along with Kid's Club programs also offers academic intervention, athletics, parent education and more. All of these areas can benefit from volunteers.

"There are always opportunities because we have a variety of programs," she says. "You can volunteer and help coach in athletics, come and volunteer in our academic intervention program and try to make a difference in a child's life who is really struggling, or you can come and have fun and play with the toddlers."

Playing with the toddlers is certainly a fun and rewarding volunteer experience. Children relish any kind of attention, and even at two and three years old they seem to instinctively appreciate a new face in the classroom.

Cynthia Wilkerson, with more than 20 years of teaching experience, and Pricilla Iosca, with more than five years in the profession, teach the toddler class at Lomas. They have their hands full and don't mind at all when I jump right in to participate in the children's activities.

At circle time we sing songs and work on identifying shapes and colors. During free play I show one little guy how to make a road out of blocks for his toy car and he is thrilled as he pushes his car along the

track. Several children reach into a container full of plastic animals and we spontaneously begin practicing our animal sounds. If we don't have to clean up for lunch, we might play with the animals for hours.

All in all it isn't too different than a typical day at my own home, except we have only one child so it's not normally as frantic. As with previous volunteer experiences I've had involving children, the time I spend at Lomas school seems to fly by. And as I get back to work that afternoon, I am reminded again of something someone once told me – if you want a really good role model for how to approach life, just take your example from a child.

## ONE RINGY-DINGY

**A**s synonymous with Christmas as Santa Claus and candy canes, Salvation Army bell ringers are a holiday tradition going back to 1892. What better way to volunteer in the community than to don the ubiquitous red apron and raise money for the needy at the holidays. How hard could it be? Besides, I won't even have to come face-to-face with any hungry children or disabled veterans -- just a never-ending parade of cheerful holiday shoppers. I can handle that.

It begins with a simple call to the local Salvation Army. A man calling himself Captain Sumter returns my call and minutes later I've agreed to a four-hour shift with a Christmas kettle at a Fry's Supermarket in Tempe, Ariz. All I have to do is show up, he explains. "Some folks like to wear Christmas hats and stuff like that, but it's up to you if you want to look silly," he remarks.

I arrive early the next day for my shift and decide to buy some candy canes to give out as a thank you for donations. I wait patiently for Captain Sumter to arrive (wondering if he will arrive in some sort of military uniform and whether or not I am expected to salute him). Just as my shift is scheduled to begin, an older gentleman drives up with a kettle and an apron and we make eye contact. I ask Bill (according to his nametag) if there is anything I need to know before I start. He says

to just greet the people nicely and he'll be back in four hours to collect the kettle. I am expecting at the very least I'll have to show my driver's license or sign some legal document stating I am responsible for the kettle and whatever money I collect – but there is nothing like that. I suppose I've worked too long in corporate America. I am used to not being trusted.

The previous night I put together a game plan that included parking myself at the out door so I won't bother people both on the way into the grocery store and again on the way out. Much to my chagrin this particular store has two doors, one at each end of the store, and both are in *and* out doors. Immediately I have a crisis. This could turn out to be the most difficult part of the entire experience, but thankfully the choice is made easier by the fact that the door on the right also serves as the main access to a bank branch. I figure I had a good shot at bringing in some serious dough parked right outside the bank, so I set down my kettle, put on my apron and start ringing that annoying bell.

At first I feel a little uncomfortable, but I have lots of nervous energy so I quickly begin wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday. I throw in a few Merry Christmases and even an occasional Feliz Navidad. Before long I am saying “ho, ho, ho” and shouting “Merry Christmas” in my best Santa voice. Once or twice when I get no response from someone I throw in a “happy winter solstice,” but that gets me nothing but strange looks.

The money starts pouring in. Bill told me a good four-hour shift should bring in about \$80 or \$90. I am intent on at least doubling that. I try to predict which people are likely to give money and which are going to walk right by with their eyes down. Some of my

assumptions turn out to be way off. To begin with, this particular grocery store is in a neighborhood that has seen better days and I wonder if that will affect the amount I will collect. Lesson number one for the day is that Christmas spirit has no class boundaries. Lesson number two is that women overwhelmingly give more often than men and give bills more often than change.

After a while I notice I am glancing down at my watch a lot. Four hours is going to seem like four weeks if I don't do something to make this more fun. To keep fresh I pace back and forth some, even help people with their grocery carts. Then it hits me – the bell.

Up until this point I have been simply ringing the bell. It is time to kick it up a notch. I begin experimenting with different rhythms. Ring, ring – ring. Ring – ring, ring. Pretty soon I am playing *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, *Santa Claus is Coming to Town* and *Silent Night*. I even throw in a few rounds of *Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel*, but no matter how hard I try, every song comes out sounding like *Jingle Bells*.

The time sails by. About half the people who walk by throw money in the kettle. A few people sheepishly walk by saying they don't have any change. A few walk by quickly trying not to make eye contact with me. But most, even if they do not give, return my smiles or holiday wishes.

The children are especially touching. Usually I hear them asking their parents for change to put in the pot, and then when I thank them and hand them a candy cane they grin from ear to ear.

I didn't really know what to expect from the day. I'm not even really sure why I did it. In fact, the last time I stood outside a grocery store like this I was soliciting signatures for a ballot initiative in California.

But why am I standing outside a grocery store ringing a bell for the Salvation Army?

The answer comes in the most unlikeliest of forms.

Near the end of my shift, a man in one of those electric scooters rolls up to my stand and hands me a check for \$200. He looks up at me with a huge grin and says “there are plenty of people out there who need this more than me.”

I am stunned. The most anyone has dropped in the kettle all afternoon is \$2. But before I can even thank him he reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a few sheets of paper. As people stroll by dropping coins and bills into my kettle, I read with delight a poem he has written about the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. The final stanza reads:

When facing adversity, we were defiant!  
We wouldn't give in, no matter how bad,  
And we would win, giving all we had.  
Our characters, forged by adversity,  
Helped to keep our nation free!

It is dated Oct. 15, 1996, five years before the devastating attacks of Sept. 11, but perhaps even more relevant today.

I thank the man and ask him his age. He is 73, and a veteran of World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Before he leaves he hands me a business card. It reads “Dr. Leonard Bischel, President, 1992 World Congress of Poets, Phoenix, Arizona. U.S.A.”

We share the same first name. And we share a touching moment that I'll never forget.

## IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

If your idea of volunteering in the community means rolling up your sleeves and getting your hands dirty, then well-known non-profit agency Habitat for Humanity (HFH) is for you.

Habitat for Humanity puts volunteers to work building houses for low income families. The agency's underlying principle is that community involvement benefits both the underprivileged as well as those lending a hand. Rarely does hard work feel this good.

The East Valley affiliate of Habitat for Humanity has been building houses – and character – in the East Valley since 1991. Within minutes of my arrival at one of the organization's latest projects in Chandler, Ariz. I am put to work installing insulation. Although I have no construction experience, I grab a stapler and a some R-19 insulation and do the best I can.

I am joined by about a dozen other volunteers as well as the future home owner of the house, a young man who, along with his wife, supports five children ages 4 to 11.

One common misconception about HFH is that it's a hand out rather than a hand up. In reality, qualifying families pay a down payment and a monthly mortgage payment for their house. As part of their commitment to

HFH, this couple has agreed to give 400 hours of service on their house as well as other project houses. In return they get a \$55,000 house and an interest free mortgage.

Volunteers provide most of the labor and individual religious groups and corporate donors provide money and materials to build houses for Habitat families. Although many of the projects are worked on by groups and organizations, HFH also has plenty of work for individuals who want to make a difference.

One thing is clear as I team up with my fellow home builders – this volunteer experience is great for people of all walks of life and all ages.

“Habitat for Humanity is great because there’s always something to do and you’re outside, not cooped up in an office or anything,” explains volunteer Kathy McGuire, a sophomore at Arizona State who along with friend and fellow ASU sophomore Andrea Coury are painting primer around the home’s windows and doors.

The students joined a volunteer group at ASU and chose HFH for their first project. McGuire is a pre-business major and Coury is majoring in accounting.

“Last year all we did was go to school and work, so this year we thought we’d get out get involved,” says Coury. “You actually get to meet the family that is moving in. It’s neat to see who is going to benefit from what you’re doing.”

The pair said despite ASU’s party school reputation and a younger generation many call slackers, they know plenty of young people who do community service.

“I don’t think volunteering among young people is as prevalent as it should be, but there are a lot of organizations out there to join and I think a lot more people will be volunteering in the future,” says McGuire.

Bryant Dawson is another ASU student volunteering at the house that morning. The second-year pre-business major chose to work with HFH for a school project.

“For my sociology class you have to do ten hours of community service and write a paper on the affects of volunteering on society,” he explains. “I picked Habitat for Humanity because I believe in the organization. I didn’t want to sit around and stuff envelopes. I’m all down for volunteering, but I’d rather work with my hands.”

Dawson says that although he is only required to do 10 hours for the paper, he and his friend from class plan to stick with the project for several weekends.

“A lot of my friends don’t volunteer,” Dawson says. “They don’t understand that even though it’s not doing much, every little piece you do helps out a lot in the big picture. It also really makes you understand what it’s like to do actual work.”

Founded in 1976 by Georgia lawyer Millard Fuller, the organization rose to international prominence in 1984 with the formation of the Jimmy Carter Work Project. The former president and Nobel Laureate’s involvement made everyone want to pick up a hammer and build a house. To date the Jimmy Carter Work Project has built more than 150 houses in Georgia, Florida and New York and has recruited popular celebrities like Susan Sarandon, Ethan Hawke and Paul Newman.

Although Habitat for Humanity began as and remains a Christian-based organization, the organization receives financial support and volunteer time from people and groups of all religious affiliations. According to Habitat for Humanity, it has built more than 125,000

houses, sheltering more than 625,000 people in some 3,000 communities worldwide.

Just down a ways from the college students, 74-year-old Helen Cook is up on a ladder painting. A retired optometric assistant originally from Kansas, Cook has lived in Arizona for 24 years and has volunteered for HFH in the past through her church.

“My husband and I used to volunteer together but he passed away four years ago,” she says. “It’s just satisfying knowing you’re helping people that may have problems. When you feel blessed you kind of hope you can pass it along.”

Cook says often she feels like she gets more out of the experience than the families she’s assisting. She also says she thinks America’s sense of community is not fading away like many believe.

“There is a lot more going on that isn’t publicized,” says Cook. “There are a lot of good people doing things behind the scenes and don’t expect anything from it. Sometimes we [Americans] don’t give ourselves enough credit – look who is always there for the whole world.”

Cook spent her Saturday morning painting and cleaning up around the house. She says if everyone would share a little bit the world wouldn’t have so many problems.

“There’s so much work to be done in the world to try to help people,” Cook says. “Habitat for Humanity is one of the greatest programs we have going in the U.S. and around the world.”

I spend much of my morning working with several other volunteers putting up drywall. One of the most difficult and time consuming parts of building a house, drywall installation takes strength, patience and a little

bit of ingenuity. One of my roles is to help measure pieces of drywall, including the cut outs for electrical outlets, telephone and cable jacks.

One of the actual skilled laborers at the project, a man who donated his services to install alarm prewiring in the house, helps me measure out the areas on the drywall that need to be cut out. When the drywall goes up and the holes actually match up with the outlets, it is a proud moment for me. The closest I've ever come to construction is watching *This Old House* on PBS.

Another time consuming aspect of drywall work is spackling over the screws to ensure a smooth area for when the paint is applied. Beth Payton, who works for an affirmative action human resources firm, spent most of her morning on a ladder spreading "mud" on the screws holding the drywall to the ceiling.

"It's a great sense of community with people," says Payton. "We all can make the time."

A friend of Payton's recently began working at the Mesa offices of the East Valley Habitat for Humanity, and she asked Payton to join her as a volunteer at the house. Payton had previously done some volunteering with HFH.

"It feels good, and it's fun – even digging the trenches for the sewer is fun," she remarks. "I have a lot of family in town and a lot of people don't. I can't imagine not having a big support group to depend on, so it's really nice to know you can be there for someone who needs you."



## THE BEST DAM PHONE CALLS

**I**t is Saturday morning and Clemson is about to beat Georgia Tech in a thrilling college football game. Just the second full week of the season, I am looking forward to the day's schedule of great games, including Michigan at Notre Dame. Life is good.

Like millions of people around the country this day, I plan to be glued to the television overdosing on touchdowns and tackles. The only difference is that I am also going to volunteer my time for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

For the past 10 months I have been volunteering my time to worthy causes across the East Valley, each time venturing out to the organization's facility. On this day, however, I volunteer my time without leaving my sofa.

The irony is not lost on me as I watch these remarkable college athletes treat their bodies like crash-test dummies. Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, often disabling disease of the central nervous system, that in its most advanced state can lead to such conditions as paralysis and loss of vision. According to the Desert Southwest Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, one in every 1,000 residents of Arizona and Southern Nevada has MS – about 6,000 of your family, friends and neighbors.

For the past 17 years, the local chapter of the MS Society has raised money to combat the disease by hosting a bike tour called “The MS 150 Best Dam Bike Tour.” Last year the tour raised \$725,000 in income and in-kind donations. This year on Nov. 2-3 an expected 2,000 riders will make the trek from Phoenix to Gila Bend and back.

Casey Ambrose is the event manager at the Desert Southwest Chapter of the MS Society. When I called to offer my time she easily rattled off a handful of tasks I could do to help with the fundraiser. In fact, the tour wouldn’t be possible without the 500 plus volunteers who help out, primarily during the two days of the tour itself.

“It’s a massive undertaking in terms of logistics,” says Ambrose. “We are always in search of volunteers, especially on the day of the tour. There are always things to be done, but it’s a lot of fun.”

Ambrose has the huge task ahead of her of calling each team captain to remind them of several upcoming pre-tour events and to offer them fundraising tips if they need some assistance. When I suggest she let me make the calls I can almost hear the sense of relief in her voice.

“We want to make sure each participant gets one-on-one attention, but we are such a small staff,” she explains. “Making calls helps us significantly because communication is key for us.”

With the remote control in one hand flipping back and forth between the Michigan game and the USC game, and the telephone in the other hand, I begin making calls. Ambrose has sent me several background sheets on the tour as well as clear instructions on what

needs to be communicated. There are 85 names on the list of team captains.

My task is simply to remind the team captains about the upcoming team captain rally and the start of the first team challenge week during which the MS Society offers the riders incentives to turn in any money they have already raised and to recruit more participants. I also remind them to visit the tour web site often to stay up-to-date on information about the ride and to call the MS Society office if they have any questions about the tour.

Ambrose also provided me with several fundraising tip sheets so I can offer the tour participants guidance if they are having challenges raising money. She even includes a great list of pointers on how to raise \$700 in seven days by breaking down requests into smaller chunks.

The calls go quickly and smoothly. I reach many of the team captains, all of whom listen to my pitch and thank me for calling. When the rider isn't home, I leave a succinct message on their voice mail touching on all of the salient points.

One of the best parts of the assignment is seeing the various names the riders have thought up for their teams. Some of my favorites include the Three Peddling Amigos, the Phoenix Flyers, the Dead Geckos, the Shift Heads and Holy Spokes. Many of the teams are made up of coworkers from various Valley companies and organizations like SRP, Medtronic, Microchip and the Chandler Fire Department.

The MS Society also finds volunteer opportunities for people with the disease. Ambrose says it gives the tour participants a chance to connect with someone who actually suffers from MS.

“The individuals with MS do different types of volunteer services,” she says. “Everybody knows somebody that suffers from MS but so little is known about the disease.”

I get through 50 calls over several hours, all the while enjoying Notre Dame’s stunning win versus Michigan and USC’s blowout over Colorado. Not a bad way to spend a Saturday afternoon.

## BIGS AND LITTLES

**L**isa Foncechia comes from a large family. She has three sisters, and although these days most of her family is scattered around the country, she remembers how important it is to have a support system growing up.

Fourteen-year-old Tia also knows the value of a loving and supportive family. She comes from a big family too – a family that doesn't have a lot of resources and sometimes isn't able to give Tia the attention she craves. And, like a lot of teenage girls, Tia faces choices nearly every day that will shape her future, for good or bad. Fortunately for Tia, she has a unique friend and mentor in Foncechia.

Tia and Foncechia were matched up five years ago through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona, a non-profit agency that provides one-to-one friendships to children in need of additional positive role models in their lives. They get together a couple of times a month at events sponsored by the organization, or to take in a movie, or sometimes just to hang out and talk.

“I think my being in her life creates a balance for her,” says Foncechia, a property manager who lives in Mesa. “Her mother is raising three kids who are now adolescents, this year she's going to be in high school and she has a lot of weight on her shoulders.”

Foncechia said Tia can bounce things off her to get an adult perspective without it being her mother. She thinks it's important to have people in your life beyond immediate family to talk to.

“It can make or break a kid if they feel they have no one to talk to,” says Foncechia.

On a Saturday morning in early August, Tia and Foncechia are participating in one of the many organized functions hosted by Big Brothers Big Sisters for their “matches.” Roy’s Restaurant in Scottsdale is hosting more than 50 matches for a design your own pizza party – the fifth straight year for this popular Big Brothers Big Sisters event.

Roy’s opens its doors early for the private event, donates food, drinks and staff time and even provides gifts and games for the kids. Some of the matches signed up a year in advance for the pizza party, according to Andrea Petrof, Community Events Manager for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona.

“We try to sponsor events so they’re not having to come up with something to do every weekend,” says Petrof. “But at the same time being a big brother or sister can be as simple as washing a car or going to the grocery store together.”

Petrof, who organizes all of the “match” events for Big Brothers Big Sisters, says most of the organized events fill up quickly.

“This event is popular because it gives the kids a chance to interact with other kids in the program,” she says. “We have a waiting list for most of our events, but especially this event.”

Bruce Freedle of Phoenix came to the pizza event with his little brother Brandon. Freedle, a financial

planner, has been a big brother since January. He and 11-year-old Brandon met at a charity event last Christmas (where Freedle got to play Santa) and soon after he inquired about becoming a big brother.

“I had been thinking about becoming a big brother for a long time so I asked some of the people who were in charge of the event about it and that’s how it started,” he says.

Brandon and Freedle spend time together nearly every week. Activities have included baseball and basketball games, swimming, camping and going to the movies. Later this summer Freedle says he hopes to be able to take Brandon to Six Flags Magic Mountain in California.

Freedle explains he feels a special bond with Brandon because the youngster reminds him of himself.

“I get a lot of satisfaction out of spending time with Brandon,” he says. “I was a lot like him, as far as size, and I really feel good about trying to guide him and be a mentor.”

For Brandon’s part, he is just excited to be at the restaurant and has his eyes on some of the prizes at the gift table. Among the raffle prizes are autographed pictures of Diamondbacks first baseman Mark Grace and Suns forward Shawn Marion.

“I think community service is something that’s very important and we need more people to get involved,” says Freedle, who is quick to point out that there is a long list of young children in the Valley waiting to be matched up with a big brother or sister.

Like Freedle, Lauri Martineau is fairly new to Big Brothers Big Sisters. An administrative assistant at Intel, Martineau has been big sister to six-year-old Lasha since February. Recently married, the Chandler resident is

hoping to have kids of her own soon and spending time with Lasha has given her a real-life lesson in parenting.

“It’s like a practice run for me,” she says. “Can I be a good influence on this child and can I teach her things?”

Lasha and Martineau have taken full advantage of all the events planned by Big Brothers Big Sisters. The two have gone ice skating and have taken in a hockey game. Over the Fourth of July weekend they went to Prescott Pines for a weekend of activities and crafts. Martineau raises horses and she’s teaching Lasha how to ride and care for the animals, something Martineau says will help teach Lasha about responsibility.

The common theme mentioned at the pizza party by many of the adult participants is that being a “big” is as much a learning experience for them as for the children.

Foncechia said having Tia as a little sister has created an extension of her family and even gives her an excuse to be a little kid again in a lot of ways. She remarks that often Tia is able to give her a younger person’s perspective on issues she faces in her life.

“She’s always there for me, whenever I need anything,” says Tia. “I consider her part of my family.”

## STUFF THE BUS

**I**n July the back-to-school ads begin assaulting our eyes and ears with all the things kids need to begin another school year. Clothing, school supplies, backpacks and even Palm Pilots are on sale everywhere I go. I can remember how proud I felt walking onto campus the first day back to school when I was a kid, wearing all the latest fashions.

Sadly, each year thousands of children in Arizona don't experience that feeling. In fact, they're lucky to have any new clothes at all, let alone a new backpack and a fresh box of No. 2 pencils. However, thanks to some great corporate sponsors and a non-profit organization called Communities in Schools, less fortunate children across the Valley will know what it's like to start a new school year with everything they need to be successful. And maybe more importantly, they also receive a lesson in the kindness of others.

Stuff The Bus, a program organized by several radio stations along with Fulton Homes, is now in its third year in the Valley. This year the folks behind Stuff The Bus hope to outfit more than 3,000 Valley children with new backpacks, supplies and clothing for school. To do so, they count on the generosity of individuals and corporations, as well as hundreds of volunteers.

One of those volunteers is Jim Davis, a member of the Kiwanis Club of Phoenix, who is working at Stuff

The Bus for the second straight year when I join him at the information table as a volunteer on a recent Saturday. Davis and his wife Linda are explaining the program to shoppers at the Arizona Mills shopping center in Tempe where Stuff The Bus takes place.

“People don’t realize how much need there is here in the Valley,” Davis says. “Some of the kids whose names you see up on this bus don’t get regular meals everyday much less have new clothes to go to school. This is a big need that has to be met and who is going to do it if it’s not going to be us?”

Davis is one of many Kiwanis members volunteering for Stuff The Bus this day. The Director of Operations at local telecommunications company Inter-Tel, Davis spends his shift helping people select names of needy children from the school bus parked near the food court. He also blows up helium balloons to hand out to kids who are passing by or waiting in line to get autographs from the Arizona Cardinals players and cheerleaders who are on hand to help out.

Working at the donation table itself is one way volunteers can get involved with Stuff The Bus; however, much of the real work is done behind the scenes in an empty storeroom located deep within the recesses of the shopping center. This is where the backpacks go to be inspected, sorted and prepared for delivery to the children.

“Each backpack has a child’s name, age, grade and clothing size,” explains Lyn McDonough, Communities in Schools Program Director. “We go through each backpack and make sure they have at least one of everything. We put each backpack onto a sorting table and look to see what’s inside and make sure the sizes are correct.”

McDonough is working in the back room coordinating the activity of several more Kiwanis volunteers who are sorting through the hundreds of backpacks that have already been donated. She says people do a great job picking out items but sometimes they don't get all the items the kids need. The first backpack we open has plenty of clothing, but not so many school supplies. This particular backpack will go down the makeshift assembly line and items such as a notebook, pencils, a ruler and toiletries will be added.

"Intel donated 1,100 backpacks," she says. "The corporation bought the backpacks and their employees stuffed them. They had stuffing parties all last week. Many of the Intel employees also added personal notes to the children."

I find several more volunteers sorting through the piles of backpacks donated by Intel. Becky Nilsen, the CEO of Desert Schools Financial Services, is working alongside Murry Johnsen, a machine shop employee -- both are Kiwanis members.

"I like to volunteer for any project that helps kids and this is totally focused on kids," she says. "You look at the child and their age and it's kind of neat to see what other people have given out of the goodness of their heart to these kids."

Nilson says her company is very involved with Stuff The Bus, in part because Desert Schools Federal Credit Union (DSFCU) Chief Executive Officer Susan Frank is also the current Kiwanis president. Along with providing volunteers, DSFCU provides additional drop-off locations for school supplies. If you can't make it down to Arizona Mills, you can drop off supplies at any of the 17 DSFCU branches across the Valley.

In 2000 Stuff The Bus handed out 1,300 backpacks to kids, and in 2001 the organization collected 2,700 stuffed backpacks in the Phoenix metro area.

“This year we’re going to send 3,000 kids back to school with a backpack and the supplies they need to start their school year off right,” says Julie Iacobelli, Executive Director of Communities in Schools. “These are kids that are coming from 25 Valley schools we call under-served, which means that they tend to be low income families who may not have the money to send their kids back to school prepared for the school year.”

Communities in Schools’ mission is to mobilize and connect communities with schools, partnering with low income schools in the Valley to bring resources onto campuses for kids and their families. The organization is coordinating all of the Stuff The Bus activity, making sure the bus is fully staffed with volunteers for four full weeks and then facilitating the delivery the backpacks.

“This is one of our projects that we do because it’s very important that kids go back to school prepared,” she says. “We want kids to be excited about school and it’s not so exciting when everyone else in your school has new stuff and you don’t.”

Stuff The Bus is the non-profit organization’s biggest project of the year. Iacobelli estimates they’ll use somewhere between 250 and 350 volunteers on this project.

“With only nine employees, we rely on volunteers throughout the year, especially on a project of this magnitude,” says Iacobelli.

## TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME

**S**teve Herrada is a man who believes in old-fashioned baseball values. Ask him what he means, and he'll rattle off timeless baseball clichés about hard work, discipline, rules and perhaps most importantly, playing for the love of the game. His baseball heroes have names like Mays, McCovey and Clemente.

Herrada also believes baseball is meant to be played in the summer, a fact that most baseball leagues in the Valley tend to ignore given Arizona's brutal heat. Folks thought he was suffering from heat stroke when he launched the Gilbert Boys and Girls Club summer baseball league two years ago.

"That's what baseball is all about," says Herrada. "We played until our moms and dads called us in from the porch. We didn't care that it was hot."

Coach Steve, as he's called by the kids in the league, is branch executive at the Gilbert Boys and Girls Club. Located on the corner of Elliott Road and Gilbert Road, the club provides after-school and summer activities in recreation, education, peer leadership, computer technology, substance abuse prevention, physical fitness and the performing arts. The baseball league plays its games a few blocks West of the club at the Gilbert Community Center on makeshift fields in a grassy open

space. The Community Center is just north of the vacant land that will soon be home to a new facility for the Gilbert Boys and Girls Club, although the organization has not yet reached its fundraising goals.

Coach Steve invited me to be a volunteer coach one afternoon, a day when the temperature was expected to reach 112 degrees. I grabbed my cap and glove, filled a plastic bottle with cold water, and headed out to the ball yard.

The league is made up of boys and girls between seven and 10, from a variety of East Valley cities. I help Coach Steve organize the kids into pairs to begin warm ups, and soon everyone is playing catch, including myself. I haven't played organized baseball since my Little League days, but baseball is a game of tradition and the drills haven't changed. A few minutes of catch, a little infield practice, and soon we are ready to play ball.

Coach Steve assigns me to a team, introduces me to the kids, and tells me to head out to the mound – I am going to pitch!

My battery mate is another volunteer, Mark Weldon, whose 10-year-old son Mark is on one of the teams. I toss him a dozen or so warm up pitches, then get ready to face my first batter. As I am about to fire in the first fastball of the night, the opposing coach yells to me that I am supposed to pitch on one knee. "That's what the mat is for," he yells. So much for the fastball.

"The league really focuses on skills and fundamentals," Weldon tells me between innings. A graphic artist and web developer at Arizona State, this is his son's first year in the league. "I liked that right from parent orientation they said they were not going to tolerate parents getting out of hand."

Weldon says what he likes most about the Boys and Girls Club league is that it has a professional staff with a high level of dedication. He also says the league focuses more on camaraderie rather than competition.

Once I figure out how to pitch from one knee, I start to get into a groove. Before long the Diamondbacks in black uniforms are beating the Diamondbacks in white uniforms (This is Arizona after all, and nobody complains when both teams choose to be called Diamondbacks). Were it not for the “10-run rule” the game might have become extremely lopsided.

There are two games being played simultaneously, with what seems like 100 or so parents and friends camped out in the outfield, along the sidelines and, wisely, wherever they can find shade. The ground rules are a lot like many of the street games I played as a child -- a ground-rule double if the ball rolls under a fan’s chair, a home run if the ball clears the trees beyond center field.

When I’m not pitching, I am giving hitting and fielding tips to the kids. After one aggressive batter strikes out, I remind him to keep his feet planted in the batter’s box and to step forward as the ball comes. The next time he comes up to bat he tells me he is going to take my advice, and he promptly pokes a single into left field.

One young man complains when he is assigned to play shortstop for an inning. I tell him shortstop is the most important position on the field, that the shortstop is like the point guard on a basketball team. After making two of the three outs that inning, he smiles at me proudly as he runs past me back to the bench.

“The coaches are extremely patient with the kids,” says Krista Criddle, whose 8-year-old son Ryan plays in

the league. “There are more glamorous places to play, but nowhere where they learn more about values and how to play the game.”

Criddle is a single mom who works as an analyst at America West Airlines. Ryan has been playing sports at the Boys and Girls Club since he was five.

“At the Boys and Girls Club the kids get exposed to different kids and different coaches,” she says. “They learn to value diversity.”

By the sixth and final inning my arm is starting to ache and my knees are sore. With the game out of reach, I retire the last three batters on the white Diamondbacks and earn my first complete-game win. I finally understand how Curt Schilling must feel walking off the mound with another win under his belt.

It was then that someone in the stands reminds me that I am the coach of the white Diamondbacks and I have beaten my own team. Well, as the saying goes, it’s not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game.

## LIFELONG LEARNING

**T**erry Jenkins loves history. A Mesa, Ariz. resident for the past 37 years, she especially likes to share bits of history with children – something she does often as a volunteer at the Mesa Historical Museum.

Jenkins has volunteered at the museum for six years, doing “whatever needs to be done.” Now retired after 26 years working in the Mesa Public School System, she can not only show you historical artifacts at the museum, she can tell you firsthand what it was like.

“I love watching their little eyes when you talk about what it was like back then,” she says. “I can show them what the first washing machine was like and what we had to do to wash our clothes.”

One of her favorite relics from days gone by is the ice box in the museum’s Phelps/Bowen/Morris Room. It doesn’t take much to get her started, and once she begins you might as well sit back and have a listen.

“We had two different people who would deliver our ice and one of them was really nice,” she recalls. “He would chop off a chunk of ice with his special axe and the way he did it it was just like a Popsicle. And the ice back then was so clear, just like a window. Not like the foggy ice today.”

The Mesa Historical Museum is filled with memory joggers like that old ice box, as well as a wonderful collection of exhibits that take visitors back to the first

Anglo Arizona settlers. Tucked away in a remote corner of Mesa just south of the Red Mountain Freeway and East of the Loop 101, the Museum building was originally the Lehi School. Built in 1913, the school was condemned in 1976 and then given to the Mesa Historical Society for use as a museum.

The small staff of the museum relies on volunteers for everything from cleaning the museum to leading tours to working at the front desk. On the day I agree to volunteer at the museum the staff is hosting a training session for volunteers. More than 25 volunteers are spending two days learning all about the museum and how to participate in the many activities open for volunteers.

The staff is so busy with the volunteer seminar that museum Maintenance Man Ernie Alvarez is the only person available to work the front desk. His responsibilities this day are typical of what a museum volunteer might do – greeting museum guests, answering the phone and keeping track of how many visitors pass through the museum’s doors.

I had planned to help Alvarez with his duties, but he has everything under control and soon I find myself wandering through the museum. The museum includes a replica of Fort Utah, the first structure built by the settlers. There is a realistic adobe settler’s house, an adobe one-room school house and many photographs from early Mesa. The museum is also the home of the Mesa City Sports Hall of Fame – where you can view Wilford “Whizzer” White’s 1947 Outstanding Sportsmanship trophy as well as Danny White’s 1976 Westwood High football jersey.

“If we don’t know our history we are destined to repeat it,” says Jonni Judd, volunteer coordinator for the

museum. “We have volunteers from every walk of life and anybody is welcome to come down and volunteer.”

Judd has worked at the museum for five years. She is responsible for managing the volunteer program and also coordinates group service projects.

“I have a lot of boy scouts that come and do their service projects here,” she says. “A young group from the Latter Day Saints church came in recently and painted the auditorium. We’re very grateful for all of the wonderful people who volunteer here.”

The museum is always looking for new volunteers and the staff tries to find activities for any type of volunteer. Judd says the museum’s volunteer base includes all types of people, including retirees, students and the physically challenged.

“Some of the volunteers, even when they are unable to work, want to come down here and just sit and greet people,” says Judd.

Jenkins says she likes the camaraderie with the other volunteers as well as teaching people about history.

“I’m glad that some people fought to save this school and use it as a museum,” she remarks “I get a lot out of it too. You actually sometimes learn while you’re here. I’m still learning.”



## SOUP FOR YOU!

**W**hen I think of a soup kitchen, thoughts of the Depression still come to mind – images of middle-aged men in gray suits with their hats in their hands filling their bellies with whatever scraps were available before heading out to look for work.

Nearly a century later tens of thousands of Americans still rely on community services for their only meal of the day – the difference is these days we're perhaps more jaded about how people ended up in that soup kitchen line.

In Maricopa County, Arizona there are numerous places to get a hot meal if you need one, and most of them depend on volunteers to serve the meals. Unfortunately, most of these facilities also are busier than ever. I decided to spend a few hours at a facility in Mesa to meet some volunteers and see for myself what sort of people find themselves in need of a handout.

I arrive at St. Vincent DePaul's Mesa Dining Room at 9 a.m. one Friday morning. Although the facility doesn't open until 9:30 a.m., there are a dozen or so people outside waiting for the doors to open. I am greeted by Mark Ross, an affable St. Vincent DePaul employee who introduces me to the other volunteers, all of whom are regulars at the dining room.

Ross explains the food handling instructions and assigns me to the first station in the food line, where I

discover my job for the next two hours will be scooping rice and stew onto a styrofoam tray and passing it down the line to my fellow volunteers who will add items such as corn, salad, muffins and brownies. As 9:30 a.m. approaches I developed a knot in my stomach, nervous to face what I imagine will be a line of vagrants, drug addicts and the mentally ill.

“I don’t think much about what got them here, I just know they need a hot meal and I feel good serving it to them,” says Anne Stemnock, an 86-year old volunteer who drives 11 miles each way, three days a week, from her home in East Mesa to serve food at the Dining Room. “After my husband passed away I wanted to keep busy. One of the best parts is working with the other volunteers.”

Stemnock is a vivacious woman with a quick wit and the physical wherewithal to endure several hours of prep work, food handling and cleaning – a feat I find remarkable for a woman of 86 (My legs grow tired after one hour and by the time 11:30 a.m. rolls around I am exhausted). Stemnock takes me under her wing and coaches me along as I distribute food, occasionally chiming in with a “How’s it going down there Lenny?” or a “Lenny, you’re doing great!” After spending time with Stemnock I feel the sudden urge to grab a flight to Florida to visit my grandmother.

When the doors to the Dining Room open at exactly 9:30 a.m. the security guard lets in the first 10 guests and we begin piling up the food and passing the trays down the line. For the next 90 minutes there is a continuous flow of men and women passing through the line for their free meals. I lean over to John Rizzo, the volunteer next to me, and ask him if it ever slows down. He tells me it is actually a rather slow day and that

although today's line is constant it usually moves at a more frantic pace.

Rizzo and his wife Ann drive down from Fountain Hills every Friday morning to work at the Dining Room. Rizzo, a retired New York City utility worker and World War II veteran, just celebrated his 79<sup>th</sup> birthday.

During the two-hour shift Rizzo and I work together like a well-oiled machine. Along the way I learn about Rizzo's life, his children, and his community service work. We discuss movies, politics and Arizona living.

"I've had a really good life and I feel an obligation to give something back," says Rizzo.

With about 30 minutes left in my shift, the line of guests remains at a steady flow. Several of the men and women at the dining room have come back through the line for two, sometimes three helpings. St. Vincent DePaul allows people to come through the line as often as they like, since in many cases this will be their only meal of the day.

It is hard to categorize the guests. They are men and women, young and old, Hispanic, Caucasian and African-American. Some are dirty, others are surprisingly clean.

Yolanda Basile has seen it all at the Mesa Dining Room. The 80-year-old from Mesa has been a regular volunteer at St. Vincent DePaul's for 14 years – before even this dining room was open for business.

Basile stands about five feet tall if that, but if you can measure stature in terms of enthusiasm she would stand 10 feet tall. She is also extremely emotional as she explains why she spends so much of her time volunteering.

"I feel so sad for these people," she says "If I don't help them who will?"

Basile never slows down for the entire shift, and even as I am leaving at 11:30 a.m. she is running around cleaning and putting away food trays. After 14 years she has the routine down to a science, making sure everyone knew what they need to do before they close down the dining room and leave for the day. As I walk toward the door I stop her to say goodbye and she says in her fiery Italian New York accent, “You coming back next week?”

So, are the guests at the Mesa Dining Room a tattered bunch of drug addicts, vagrants and mental cases? If I learned one thing at the dining room it is this – it doesn’t matter how the people got there, but rather that a good soul is there to offer a helping hand.

## SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME

**I**t is Brittany's last day at the East Valley Child Crisis Center and the other children in the "big kids" unit are planning a going-away party for her. Brittany has been living at the center for nearly two months and the staff is unsure how she is going to react when the on-site psychologist informs her she is going to be placed in a foster home.

Brittany is nine years old, but clearly she is wise beyond her years. She emerges from the counselor's office with a cheery disposition, telling her friends that today is her last day at The Center and that she is going to miss them. After cake and ice cream is served, each of the residents take turns wishing her well and hugging her goodbye.

The East Valley Child Crisis Center provides 24-hour care for newborns through 11-year-olds who for a variety of reasons have been placed at The Center. Some of the children are there because their parents, perhaps because they are homeless or even ill, can't provide basic necessities like food and shelter. Other children are placed in The Center by Child Protective Services after allegations of abuse or neglect.

Regardless of why they are at The Center, all of the children receive clothing, three meals a day, health care,

tutoring and activities – but most importantly they get a safe and nurturing place to live, even if for just a few nights.

“The children are here anywhere from a day to a couple of months depending on the circumstances,” explains Donna Buckles, Director of Volunteer Services for the East Valley Child Crisis Center and my host for a morning of volunteer activity. “We have two shelters, the baby/toddler unit which is birth to three years and then our big kids unit for ages 4-11.”

The Center depends on its network of more than 250 volunteers to help care for the 9,000 plus children who have walked through its doorsteps since the center opened in 1981. Rarely a day goes by when The Center isn’t buzzing with the activity of children, staff members and volunteers.

My morning begins in the baby/toddler room, which on this day is at its capacity of 15 children. Literally within seconds of my arrival in the unit I find myself sitting on a sofa, spoon-feeding a spirited one-year-old boy. He gobbles up the mashed fruit faster than I can offer it and keeps opening his mouth for more.

While the toddler eats, several of the other children waddle over to watch. A three-year-old girl named Desiree with little pig-tails sticking out of her head in all directions climbs up over the back of the sofa and pulls herself up onto my back, holding on with her tiny hands wrapped around my neck.

After the little guy gobbles up two jars of baby food, I stand up and realize Desiree is still clinging to my back. We sit down near a toy shelf and I pull down some building blocks. Soon a crowd of toddlers work alongside me building towers, as Desiree sits quietly in my lap. Two toddlers barely old enough to walk find the cell

phone clipped to my belt and begin pushing buttons randomly. I have set the keyguard so they can't accidentally dial Australia, then hand the phone to the boys and watch with delight as they take turns experimenting.

"The volunteer program is a real important piece of what goes on here because we only have limited staff," says Buckles, who prior to joining The Center in December was an associate pastor at a church in Mesa for nine years. "The volunteers give the children some individual attention. With the older kids they read to them and they play games with them. They bring the quality of care to a higher level."

The Center takes its volunteer program very seriously. Potential volunteers are asked to fill out an application, which includes a background investigation and two letters of recommendation. After an orientation that includes a thorough discussion of expectations and a tour of the facility, volunteers then sign up for a one-on-one interview with Buckles.

"I interview them and find out about them, what their interests are and what their skills are, and I do a brief health screen which is required by law," she explains. "Then they're ready for training. If they are going to be involved with the kids they have to go through the training."

The organization also asks its volunteers for a one-year, one shift-per-week commitment, in part because of the detailed process. It also helps the program run better because the volunteers get to know the staff as well as the guidelines and are more effective as volunteers.

"It makes sense that if you're going to do this, than do it for an amount of time that's going to be significant," she says. "A good relationship develops between the staff and the volunteers and that's very

important. We have outstanding volunteers that are quality people who bring a lot of skills and abilities into The Center.”

Volunteer opportunities at the center include direct care of the babies and/or the big kids, a bedtime reading program, a tutoring program, direct care in the group home, and work in the thrift store or family resource center.

Buckles says she hasn't had to do much volunteer recruiting in her time at The Center because most of the volunteers are referrals from friends, coworkers and the United Way. The Center holds one orientation a month and gets anywhere from 15 to 18 new volunteers each time.

“I think that says a lot about this community and that the people in this community care about children and want to do something to help,” she says. “I think they like our program because it is well organized, they can see that we value them and that we will utilize their unique skills.”

In fact, The Center encourages volunteers with special abilities or skills to bring those skills to the shelter. Recently a group of volunteers that play in a concert band performed for the children. The Center also has a woman who comes in and does gardening programs with the kids, and another who brings in therapy dogs.

I spend several hours at The Center that day and find the experience to be rewarding. In the baby/toddler unit it is clear that most of these kids simply need some attention, and just by getting down on the carpet with them and playing I feel I have made their experience at The Center a little better. Of course, it's true what they say about children, especially the youngest ones, being remarkably resilient.

My shift at The Center ends just after lunch, and I watch as nine-year-old Brittany prepares to leave for her new foster home. As you might imagine, it is a bittersweet moment for Brittany. She promises to return soon to play with her friends at The Center – one can only hope it's as a visitor.



## BOO! AT THE ZOO

I grew up in San Diego, Calif. with the world's greatest zoo practically in my backyard, but I don't recall it having as many fun-filled community activities as the Phoenix Zoo.

Over the course of each year the Phoenix Zoo brings the residents of Arizona camps, workshops, parties, charity events and the extremely popular ZooLights. In October more than 23,000 visitors walked through the gates of the zoo for the annual Boo! At The Zoo Halloween event, where children come to the zoo in costume for storytelling, crafts, a scavenger hunt and even a parade.

Many people are surprised to find out that the Phoenix Zoo is a private, nonprofit institution whose revenue comes from such things as admissions, memberships and donations. Its nonprofit status also means it relies heavily on the community for support – especially when it comes to volunteers.

My family has a membership to the zoo and my son enjoys spending time there, especially now that there is so much for kids to do. With a membership we can drop by just to spend an hour at Harmony Farm or see a puppet show, even play for a while in the playground or water-play area. The zoo has given so much to my family, so I thought it was time to give something back.

I arrive early on a Sunday morning for the second day of Boo! At The Zoo, not knowing what to expect because of the high probability of rain. There is a slight chill in the air, but before long thousands of families begin marching through the gate -- ghosts and goblins and a few Sponge Bob Square Pants imitators in tow.

Volunteers from companies like Basha's, Chase Bank and Salt River Project (SRP) are out in force at the event; in fact, SRP volunteer Cheryl Girard coordinated all of the volunteers for this year's Boo! At The Zoo. Girard told me on the phone prior to the event that I'd be handling "crowd control" in the crafts area, but when I arrive in the crafts area I am given solo responsibility for running the Jungle Jumble booth.

At the Jungle Jumble kids are asked to pick out an animal from a basket and then locate the animal on a large display board with a picture of a jungle on it. Animals are "hidden" in the jungle, giving the kids a fun task that also teaches them about natural camouflage. If the child finds the animal (and they all do, the little ones with assistance from their parents) they get a piece of candy as a reward.

My four-hour shift flies by as hundreds of kids find their way over to my display. The older kids have little trouble finding the hidden creatures, some even come over several times once they realize it is an easy way to stockpile candy. But the little kids, who often spend several minutes searching through the jungle before finding their animal, make the day special. You can see the look of accomplishment on their faces when they find the snake or the turtle or the iguana. When they realize they get to choose from a pumpkin filled with candy as a reward, their eyes light up with delight.

“I love doing this because the kids love it and it’s so much fun,” says Denise Malavasi, a secretary at SRP and the volunteer team leader for the crafts area. “We volunteer so much at the zoo we have a special committee that works exclusively with the zoo.”

Malavasi organized a committee of her SRP coworkers to plan the crafts area for the event, where kids get to make and decorate visors, masks, butterfly bookmarks and Popsicle stick puzzles.

“Usually the zoo decides what crafts to do, but this year they asked us to decide what to do for the crafts,” she says. “I sent out a note to anyone at the company who I knew was at all crafty as well as the regular zoo volunteers. We had a couple of meetings and presented the zoo with some ideas.”

Steve Drummond, who works in Investor Services at Chase, also is a team captain for Boo! At The Zoo. He and his fellow Chase employees run several carnival games for the children to win treats. The Boo! At The Zoo volunteer event is part of Chase’s global days of service, which is set up to encourage all Chase employees to volunteer in the community.

“You get all these kids in their costumes and they just have a blast,” says Drummond. “It doesn’t matter whether they win or lose because everybody gets something. The kids’ smiles are what makes it all worthwhile.”

Drummond says the rain makes things a little interesting, but the kids don’t seem to mind and neither did he. It sprinkles on and off throughout the morning, and at least once rains as hard as I’ve ever witnessed living in Arizona.

“Most of us at Chase get involved in different community projects,” he says. “It’s really a nice thing when you don’t have to go out and dig for stuff to do.”

Most of the kids at Boo! At The Zoo are taking their Halloween costumes for a test drive and there are definitely some noticeable themes. There is a parade of ladies in gowns, everyone from Belle to Rapunzel. The little boys range from action heroes like Anikin Skywalker and Batman to pirates, police officers and firefighters. Without question, however, Spiderman is the favorite among the boys, leaving me pleased that despite a world full of Pokemon and Power Rangers a small piece of my own childhood remains popular.

Volunteering at Boo! At The Zoo is simple and fun. About the hardest part is getting to the zoo by 8 a.m. on a Sunday morning. As for the Phoenix Zoo, it makes things easy for volunteers who’d like to give their time throughout the year. The zoo has a very organized and coordinated volunteer program, led by a paid volunteer coordinator.

Marjorie Fink has been the zoo’s volunteer coordinator for two-and-a-half years. She took the job after her husband passed away and after having been a volunteer at the zoo for nearly 30 years!

“We have 240 regular volunteers and then we have other groups of volunteers that work special events,” says Fink. “We have about 15 different things you can do, even administrative work if you don’t want to work with the animals or the public.”

But it’s the chance to work with the animals that brings out many of the zoo’s volunteer corp. Lisa Peyton, a pharmacy technician from Mesa, is on hand for Boo! At The Zoo because the special event needed extra

volunteers, but she recently became a zoo volunteer because she loves animals.

Peyton was visiting the zoo with her family and asked a park ranger about volunteering. She called up and volunteered.

“I’m a single mom with three kids and I had been working two jobs, but I recently quit my part time job and I said to myself I was going to do something I wanted to do,” she says. “There’s lots of things to do as a volunteer at the zoo.”

Peyton has gone through animal handling training so she can present some of the animals to zoo visitors. She spent time on the African Savanna learning about the different animals on the trail, as well as in the South American themed Forest of Uco.

Fink says most people spend about a year volunteering before they start handling animals, but there are some animals that volunteers can work with as soon as they start.

“You can get trained right away to handle bugs and snakes and scorpions and other small animals,” she deadpans.

Well, I didn’t get to handle any hissing cockroaches or Boa Constrictors during my volunteer time, but I did have a great time and afterward my wife and son joined me at the zoo to experience Boo! At The Zoo for themselves. The zoo is definitely a place where volunteering is a fulfilling and educational experience.



## PART II



## RESOURCES



## **ORGANIZATIONS PROFILED IN THIS BOOK**

The Phoenix Zoo  
(602) 273-1341 Ext. 6370  
[www.phoenixzoo.org](http://www.phoenixzoo.org)

East Valley Habitat for Humanity  
28 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Mesa.  
(480) 649-6232  
[www.eastvalleyhabitat.net](http://www.eastvalleyhabitat.net)  
[www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org)

Mesa Historical Museum  
2345 North Horne, Mesa  
(480) 835-7358  
[www.mesaaz.org](http://www.mesaaz.org)

National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
Desert Southwest Chapter  
(480) 968-2488  
[www.dsw.nmss.org](http://www.dsw.nmss.org)

St. Vincent DePaul  
Mesa Dining Room  
(480) 649-0081  
[www.stvincentdepaul.net](http://www.stvincentdepaul.net)

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Arizona  
(602) 264-9254  
[www.vbbbs.org](http://www.vbbbs.org)  
[www.bbbsa.org](http://www.bbbsa.org)

East Valley Child Crisis Center  
(480) 969-2308  
[www.childcrisis.org](http://www.childcrisis.org)

Communities in Schools of Arizona  
(602) 252-5312

Creating A Difference  
(480) 329-8322  
[www.creatingadifference.org](http://www.creatingadifference.org)

Boys and Girls Clubs of the East Valley  
(480) 820-3688  
[www.clubzona.org](http://www.clubzona.org)

Boys and Girls Club of America  
[www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)

Chandler Library  
(480) 782-2815  
[www.chandlerlibrary.org](http://www.chandlerlibrary.org)

Friends of the Libraries USA  
[www.folusa.org](http://www.folusa.org)

Arizona Library Friends  
<http://users.redrivernet.com/friends>

Kyrene School District  
(480) 783-4003  
[www.kyrene.org](http://www.kyrene.org)

Junior Achievement of Arizona  
(480) 377-8500  
[www.jaaz.org](http://www.jaaz.org)

Save The Family  
(480) 898-0228  
[www.savethefamily.org](http://www.savethefamily.org)

The Centers for Habilitation  
215 West Lodge Road, Tempe  
(480) 838-8111  
Concord Senior Center  
(480) 990-1875

The Volunteer Friends of Channel 8  
(480) 965-4636  
[www.angelfire.com/az/vfoce/](http://www.angelfire.com/az/vfoce/)

La Mesita  
Make A Difference  
(602) 973-2212  
[www.makeadifference.org](http://www.makeadifference.org)



# **NATIONAL VOLUNTEER RESOURCES**

## **Points of Light Foundation**

The Points of Light Foundation, founded in 1990 by former President George Bush, is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that promotes volunteerism.

[www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)

## **America's Promise**

America's Promise, founded by Retired General Colin L. Powell, desires to mobilize people from every sector of American life to build the character and competence of our nation's youth by fulfilling Five Promises: 1. Ongoing relationships with caring adults - parents, mentors, tutors, or coaches 2. Safe places with structured activities during nonschool hours 3. Healthy start and future 4. Marketable skills through effective education 5. Opportunities to give back through community service. [www.americaspromise.org](http://www.americaspromise.org)

## **The Charity Channel**

The on-line community of the voluntary sector.

[www.CharityChannel.com](http://www.CharityChannel.com)

## **Serve Net**

The premier web site for service and volunteering.

[www.servenet.org](http://www.servenet.org)

### **Idealist**

The place to help yourself and others.

[www.idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org)

### **Internet Nonprofit Center**

[www.nonprofits.org](http://www.nonprofits.org)

### **Nonprofit Times**

The leading business publication for nonprofit management

[www.nptimes.com](http://www.nptimes.com)

### **Catholic Network of Volunteer Service**

Short-term and long-term programs available in the U.S. and abroad.

[www.cnvs.org](http://www.cnvs.org)

### **Campus Compact**

Campus Compact engages colleges and students in both on and off campus community service.

[www.compact.org](http://www.compact.org)

### **Do Something**

Do Something promotes national community action and awareness for youth within their environment. Offers training program, grants, and assistants for community leaders.

[www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org)

### **Youth Service America**

Youth Service America (YSA) is a resource center and premier alliance of over 200 organizations working to increase the quality and quantity of opportunities for youth to serve locally and nationally.

[www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org)

### **USA Freedom Corps**

During his 2002 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush called upon every American to get involved in strengthening America's communities and sharing America's compassion around the world. He called on each of us to dedicate at least two years over the course of our lives to the service of others. He included all Americans because everyone can do something, and he created the USA Freedom Corps to help all Americans to answer his call. Visit [www.usafreedomcorps.gov](http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov).

### **VISTA**

Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) is a full-time volunteer program for men and women from all backgrounds who commit themselves to helping low-income individuals and families in the U.S. to improve their lives.

[www.friendsofvista.org](http://www.friendsofvista.org)

### **Help Your Community**

A community coalition is an alliance of local groups who share a desire to create positive change in their community. Such groups band together to solve a problem and make their community a safer, healthier, and happier place for all to live. There are thousands of coalitions across the country working to improve the quality of life in their communities. Visit [www.helpyourcommunity.org](http://www.helpyourcommunity.org).



## **CITYCARES PROGRAMS**

CityCares affiliates, known as "Cares" or "Hands On" organizations, engage over 250,000 volunteers in direct service to their communities each year. CityCares was formed in 1992 to serve as the umbrella organization for local CityCares organizations. The primary mission of CityCares is to provide support for and strengthen the existing CityCares network, while fostering the development of new CityCares organizations.

The CityCares national web site can be found at [www.citycares.org](http://www.citycares.org)

### **Boston Cares**

167 Milk Street, Box 200

Boston, MA 02138

Ph: 617-263-2273

Fax: 617-476-3169

[www.bostoncares.org](http://www.bostoncares.org)

### **Chicago Cares**

300 West Adams

Suite 300

Chicago, IL 60606

Ph: 312-780-0800

Fax: 312-780-0801

[www.chicagocares.org](http://www.chicagocares.org)

### **Cleveland CARES**

PO Box 201518

Shaker Heights, OH 44120-9998

[www.clevelandcares.org](http://www.clevelandcares.org)

108 | Len Gutman

### **Community Impact**

(Serving the SF Bay Area)

721 Central Avenue

Mountain View, CA 94043

Ph: 650-965-0242

Fax: 650-965-7851

[www.communityimpact.org](http://www.communityimpact.org)

### **Greater DC Cares**

1411 K Street, NW

Suite 1200

Washington, DC 20005

Ph: 202-289-7378

Fax: 202-289-4108

[www.dc-cares.org](http://www.dc-cares.org)

### **Hands On Atlanta**

1605 Peachtree Street, Suite 100

Atlanta, GA 30309

Ph: 404-872-2252

Fax: 404-872-2251

[www.handsonatlanta.org](http://www.handsonatlanta.org)

### **Hands On Birmingham**

PO Box 59284

Birmingham, AL 35259

Ph: 205-251-5849

Fax: 205-251-5849

[www.handsonbirmingham.org](http://www.handsonbirmingham.org)

### **Hands On Charlotte**

1616 Central Avenue Suite 200

Charlotte, NC 28205

Ph: 704-333-7471  
Fax: 704-333-1866  
[www.handsoncharlotte.org](http://www.handsoncharlotte.org)

**Hands on Columbus**  
P.O. Box 1216  
Columbus, GA 31902  
tel:706-649-3384  
Fax: 706-649-3388  
[e-mail: sargent@mchsi.com](mailto:sargent@mchsi.com)

**Hands On Greenville**  
8 W. McBee Ave, #2  
Greenville, SC 29601  
Ph: 864-242-4224  
Fax: 864-242-0509  
[www.handsongreenville.org](http://www.handsongreenville.org)

**Hands On Memphis**  
1544 Madison Suite 100  
Memphis, TN 38104  
Ph: 901-725-2132  
Fax: 901-725-2139  
[www.handsonmemphis.org](http://www.handsonmemphis.org)

**Hands On Miami**  
3250 SW 3rd Avenue  
Miami, FL 33129  
Ph: 305-646-7200  
Fax: 305-646-7205  
[www.handsonmiami.org](http://www.handsonmiami.org)

### **Hands On Nashville**

P.O. Box 40652  
Nashville, TN 37204  
Ph: 615-298-1108  
Fax: 615-298-2397  
[www.hon.org](http://www.hon.org)

### **Hands On Orlando**

199 E. Welbourne Avenue  
Winter Park, FL 32789  
Ph: 407-740-8652  
Fax: 407-740-4192  
[www.handsonorlando.com](http://www.handsonorlando.com)

### **Hands On Parsons**

P.O. Box 1210  
Parsons, KS 67357  
Ph: 316-421-6550 x1632  
Fax: 316-421-6550 x 1702  
[www.handsonparsons.org](http://www.handsonparsons.org)

### **Hands On Portland**

P.O. Box 4922  
Portland, OR 97208  
Ph: 503-234-3581  
Fax: 503-232-4894  
[www.handsonportland.org](http://www.handsonportland.org)

### **Hands On San Francisco**

330 Townsend Street, Ste. 137  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
Ph: 415-541-9616  
Fax: 415-541-7716  
[www.hosf.org](http://www.hosf.org)

**Jersey Cares**

PO Box 2425

Morristown, NJ 07962-2425

Ph: 973-644-4952

Fax: 973-397-2992

[www.jerseycares.org](http://www.jerseycares.org)

**Kansas City Cares**

8016 State Line Rd.

Suite 206

Leawood, KS 66208

Ph: 913-381-2655

[www.kccares.org](http://www.kccares.org)

**LA Works**

570 West Avenue 26, Suite 400

Los Angeles, CA 90065

Ph: 323-224-6510

Fax: 323-224-6518

[www.la-volunteer-org](http://www.la-volunteer-org)

**Make A Difference**

5151 N. 19th Ave., Suite 200

Phoenix, AZ 85015

Ph: 602-973-2212

Fax: 602-973-9233

[www.makeadifference.org](http://www.makeadifference.org)

**New Orleans Cares**

855 Wilson Dr.

New Orleans, LA 70119

Ph: 504-883-8231

Fax: 504-484-6695

[www.neworleanscares.org](http://www.neworleanscares.org)

112 | Len Gutman

**New York Cares**

116 East 16th St, 6th Floor  
New York, NY 10003-2112  
Ph: 212-228-5000  
Fax: 212-228-0686  
[www.nycares.org](http://www.nycares.org)

**Pass-it-Along**

P.O. Box 457  
Sparta, NJ 07871  
Ph: 973-726-9777  
[www.pass-it-along.org](http://www.pass-it-along.org)

**Philadelphia Cares**

100 S. Broad Street Suite 630  
Philadelphia, PA 19110  
Ph: 215-564-4544  
Fax: 215-564-4543  
[www.philacares.com](http://www.philacares.com)

**Pittsburgh Cares**

535 Smithfield Street  
702 Oliver Building  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
Ph: 412-471-2114  
Fax: 412-456-2212  
[www.pittsburghcares.org](http://www.pittsburghcares.org)

**Volunteer San Diego**

4699 Murphy Canyon Road  
San Diego, CA 92123  
Ph: 858-636-4135  
Fax: 858-492-2016  
[www.volunteersandiego.org](http://www.volunteersandiego.org)

**Rochester Cares**

900 Clinton Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14620  
Ph: 585-576-3793  
Fax: 585-244-8142  
[www.rochestercares.org](http://www.rochestercares.org)

**Seattle Works**

2123 East Union Street  
Seattle, WA 98112  
Ph: 206-324-0808  
Fax: 206-324.0817  
[www.seattleworks.org](http://www.seattleworks.org)

**Volunteer Central**

2300 North Charles St., 2nd Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
Ph: 410-366-6030  
Fax: 410-366-6032  
[www.volunteercentral.net](http://www.volunteercentral.net)

**Volunteer Impact**

23077 Greenfield Road  
Suite LL10  
Southfield, MI 48075  
Ph: 248-559-4950  
Fax: 248-559-4948  
[www.volunteerimpact.org](http://www.volunteerimpact.org)



## **VOLUNTEER CENTERS**

The Volunteer Center National Network (VCNN) helps mobilize people and resources to find creative solutions to community problems. Volunteer Centers are conveners for the community, catalysts for social action and key local resources for volunteer involvement. They bring people and community needs together through a range of programs and services based upon community needs, demographic area, population size, and other factors.

The Volunteer Center National Network boasts membership of more than 450 Volunteer Centers. To locate a Volunteer Center near you call 1-800-VOLUNTEER or visit the Points Of Light web site at [www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org) where you can view a complete listing of Volunteer Centers across the nation.



## **FURTHER READING**

Chicken Soup for the Volunteer's Soul: Stories to Celebrate the Spirit of Courage, Caring and Community by Jack Canfield (July 2002)

Visions of Charity :Volunteer Workers & Moral Community by Rebecca A Allahyari (Oct. 2000)

Volunteering in New York City: Your Guide to Working Small Miracles in the Big Apple by Richard Mintzer (May 1996)

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Volunteering for Teens by Preston Gralla (April 2001)

Make a Difference: Your Guide to Volunteering by Arthur Blaustein (April 2002)

Volunteering: 101 Ways You Can Improve the World and Your Life by Douglas M Lawson (May 1998)

Volunteering: How Service Enriches Your Life--And How Its Unexpected Halo Effect Boosts Your Career by John Reynolds (Sept. 1999)