

VIP Insider



Dear VIP Members & VIP Supervisors,

Now that the New Year's Eve ball has dropped, it's time to roll out the changes for 2009. VIP is experiencing many transformations - adding personnel, utilizing an online management software, revamping the recognition programs, increasing our internship program and so much more. I'm not sure where to start!

A Special Farewell to Judi Gradt



After 12 years with the City of Plano, including six in the Volunteer Resources Group, **Judi Gradt** has decided to retire. She hopes to spend many hours in her garden, hence the reason we gave her a fancy hat for her retirement (see photo left). Judi also plans to exercise with her husband, Rick, dote on her five grandchildren, travel and, of course, volunteer. Judi is an old-timer at volunteering. She has been active in the Environmental Services program, assisting at the Household Chemical Reuse Center, as well as taking composting and *Live Green In Plano* classes. She has also signed up to shelve books at Haggard Library. **Judi has been a driving force in the Volunteers In Plano program and we will surely miss her.**

Welcome Corina Sadler and Alana O'Brien

Corina Sadler joined the group, in March 2008 after receiving her Volunteer Management Certification and bachelors degree from the University of North Texas. Corina has four years of senior recreation experience where she worked with senior volunteers and planned programs. Having volunteered with many nonprofit organizations in Collin County, Corina has a true interest in promoting the value of citizen participation in Plano. In the short time she has been here, Corina has become the computer guru, helping me and many of the VIP supervisors set up online schedules and adjust to our new software. She has also taken over placing the teens and working with a number of different departments.



(continued on page 6)

Volunteer Satisfaction Survey Results Say It All!

During the fall of 2008 VIP conducted a survey of active volunteers and received 204 responses. Seventy two percent said assignments matched their needs and supervisors are effectively communicating with them. Forty percent responded they would enjoy recognition at a department level, so 2009 will mark the first year VIP will host departmental recognition events, instead of a City-wide event.

A growing number of volunteers are accessing information on the Internet. Forty percent said the VIP Web site is very important and they are interested in reading the newsletter and annual report online. Sixty three percent prefer receiving communications through e-mail rather than regular mail. VIP will continue to distribute newsletters by mail for those without e-mail.

Half of those surveyed volunteer five to 15 hours per month. The top three favorite aspects of volunteering are: 1) receiving personal satisfaction; 2) associating with others; and 3) assignments meet personal goals. Eighty one percent of VIP participants are happy in their current placement and plan to continue. For those few volunteers no longer volunteering, the top two reasons for leaving were: 1) time commitment and 2) moving out of the area.



Same Web site, New Functions!

In 2008, the Volunteer Resource Group made a move towards going green by purchasing an online volunteer management software package called Volunteer². The software will help staff recruit and manage volunteers in a more efficient, effective and engaging manner.

Volunteer² will enhance the VIP program by making it easier for citizens to access available opportunities, register online, sign up for shifts, track volunteer hours, cancel shifts and learn about new opportunities quickly. Applications will be stored in the software, cutting down on paper usage. Staff will be able to share data with supervisors without making copies and be able to send out correspondence, newsletters and updates through e-mail to volunteers.

Current volunteers have a new Volunteer² profile and will be provided a username and password by their supervisors or can request their information from VIP. Information input via our new software cannot be distributed or seen by the public.

The software integrates with the VIP Web site, www.volunteersinplano.org, to offer a streamlined process for volunteers to contact VIP and get started volunteering.

Each City department utilizing volunteers has a special account which allows supervisors to better manage opportunities and volunteers in real-time! The staff will also benefit with access to highly accurate reporting that will reflect the contributions and efforts of our many volunteers.

Don't have Internet access or a computer? No problem, VIP will continue to maintain your records and hours through your supervisor and send out printed newsletters and correspondence to your home.

Questions? Please contact Corina Sadler at 972-941-7617 or corinas@plano.gov.

Powered by **myVolunteerPage.COM**

ALREADY REGISTERED?

To log in as a volunteer for a particular organization or to access your personal profile, type in your username and password and click "Login Now".

USERNAME:

PASSWORD:

[Forgot your password? Click here!](#)

LOGIN NOW

CARES Volunteers Give Back to Plano

Employees of the City of Plano have long been committed to community service and giving back to the citizens of Plano. Our employee volunteer efforts have truly made a difference in the community during the past 13 years. We want to thank each of you who have participated.

Since the start of the Workplace CARES program (City Advocates Recruiting Employees into Service) in 1995, City of Plano employees have given more than 4,100 hours and untold resources to mentoring Plano students; providing food, clothing and school supplies to those in need; assisting with the Plano Balloon Festival; and helping make the holidays brighter for local families, children and seniors.

Workplace CARES is driven by an employee volunteer committee and employee feedback is vital to the success of the program. In a recent survey of City employees, 43 percent of respondents said they have participated in the Workplace CARES program in the last five years. More than 50 percent take part in the program for the opportunity to serve the community and 45 percent choose to give their time and resources to the community exclusively through Workplace CARES programs. One hundred and seventy City employees have volunteered with the program for five years or more.

This year's CARES programs impacted the community and schools through the active support of *School Mentoring, Adopt an Angel, Job Shadowing, Success Closet, Canned Food Drive, Salvation Army Bell Ringers* and *School Supply Drive*.

VOLUNTEERS IN PLANO YEAR-END REVIEW

**Total number
of volunteers = 8,214**

Hours donated = 99,083

Total value = \$1,833,036

**Since the inception of VIP
in 1983, volunteers
have contributed
1,242,314 hours
to municipal initiatives
with a value of \$22,982,809**



Interns Provide \$51,000 Value to City

According to Independent Sector, a nonpartisan coalition of America's charitable sector, an hour of volunteer time is worth approximately \$18.50. Based on this data, interns working for the City of Plano this past year gave more than \$51,000 in time and effort.

During the 2007-08 fiscal year, the City of Plano hosted 15 interns in five departments including: the Police, Park Planning, Building Inspections, Health and the Libraries. Interns worked on special projects and assisted with day-to-day operations.

The Volunteers In Plano (VIP) Program hopes to increase the number of internships within the City this year. "Our goal is to give interns real responsibility, real work and real opportunities to help them jumpstart their careers," explained Robin Popik, Volunteer Resources Supervisor. "They will have experiences they can't find in a classroom and their skills will take shape in our departments with our teams."

Internships offer a way for students to test drive careers, explore different businesses, expand their knowledge and learn leadership skills. They give students once-in-a-lifetime opportunities and provide employers with distinct advantages. Internships are excellent recruiting tools and provide better trained employees. They also encourage partnerships with educational institutions and facilitate the development of new talent.

College academics are just one part of preparing for a future career. Internships provide hands-on experience and show employers that students have taken the extra step of learning more about their chosen career. Best of all, they introduce supervisors to their next generation of employees.

For more information on internships with the City of Plano, please contact Robin Popik at robinp@plano.gov.

Meet Plano Interns...

Carl Heath



Building Inspections intern Carl Heath gave more than 500 hours. "This is my first work experience, so I did not know what to expect. I have been pleasantly surprised," explained Heath. "The assignments have given me insight into setting the intricacies of sharing equipment and working in a team environment."

"Carl has been a valuable addition to our teams," said Tony Han, Plan Review and Permit Services Manager. "He has been instrumental in helping us archive important blueprints and documents relating to buildings constructed throughout the City."

"My supervisor was a great mentor," Heath continued. "He not only taught me about architectural codes and teamwork, but introduced me to experiences that will help me throughout my career, such as Toastmasters."

Jacob Reach

Jacob Reach recently received his master's degree in Public Administration from Texas Tech University. During his 300-hour internship, Reach created data files and maps, collected field data and inventoried park facilities using GPS equipment.

"I learned to create maps with GIS software, read plans and other geospatial skills," said Reach. "It's a universal skill that I can use in any number of departments." Reach now works for the Texas Education Agency reviewing, approving and assisting with discretionary grants. He learned the value of his internship while interviewing.

"I was told during my interviews that potential employers are excited to know that I learn and adapt quickly," said Reach. "That combined with taking the class showed I put a lot of work into my interest."



Mother/Daughter Team Relishes Time Volunteering

Team volunteering offers benefits not often found when volunteering solo, like accomplishing bigger tasks faster, reinforcing the concepts of team work and building friendships. But rarely does team volunteering get any better than when the team involves a mother and daughter. Joyce Freeman has found volunteering with her daughter, Abby, to be an incredibly worthwhile experience.

“Volunteering as a team through the North Dallas Chapter of the National Charity League (NCL) with my 17-year-old daughter Abby, has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life,” said Joyce. “It has allowed each of us to see a side of the other that we would not normally see at home during the tumultuous teen years. If I could give any mother advice, it would be to make time to volunteer with your child.”

During the past five years, this mother-daughter team has been volunteering with numerous organizations and has surpassed Abby’s goal of 100 hours per year that she set as a 6th grader. Their favorite volunteer experience is working with the City of Plano’s Therapeutic Recreation Program, a program that helps special needs children and adults enjoy leisure activities.

“We at the City of Plano are very lucky to have great volunteers like Abby and Joyce on hand to assist and encourage the participants as needed,” explains Addy Hjarpe, Therapeutic Recreation Coordinator. “Abby and Joyce are very dedicated and enthusiastic, which shows in the way they care for the kids. They bring excitement and imagination to the programs. And they are always there as support for the staff.”



Joyce and Abby agree that part of the reason they love the program is Hjarpe. “Addy cares deeply about each of her many volunteers and has been such an inspiration,” explains Joyce. “She really nurtured Abby’s skills and boosted her confidence level so that today she is just amazing with children of all levels of ability and need.”

Plano Animal Shelter’s MLK Service Day a Great Success

On January 21, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, seven volunteers came out to help with an early spring cleaning at the Plano Animal Shelter. Nancy Cate, Kathi Cavanagh, Molly French, Linda McCullough, Laurie Jo Prager, Louise Paz and Gail Stelter all found plenty to do as they dusted, swept and scrubbed cages. The Shelter staff reported, “the shelter is sparkling and the staff and volunteers had a fun day!”



Kathi Cavanagh, animal shelter volunteer coordinator explains, “caring for the needs of Plano’s animal population is tremendously rewarding for our pets and volunteers. Many enjoy providing meaningful exercise and socialization for our dogs, while getting them ready for adoption. Others take pleasure in caring and cuddling the cats, showing them extra affection while they wait for a new home. The time volunteers spend with an animal can truly make a difference on whether the animal is adopted or not.”



From October 2007 to September 2008 shelter volunteer numbers have increased:

- ◆ 69% in total volunteer hours
- ◆ 47% in total number of volunteers
- ◆ 37% in average monthly hours
- ◆ 66% in volunteer retention
- ◆ 42% in long term volunteer retention

Welcome (continued from page 1)



Alana O'Brien came to us from the Volunteer Center of North Texas (VCNT) where she served as the Collin County Agency Relations Manager. Alana has more than 15 years experience in community relations and volunteer recruitment, training and management.

Prior to working for the VCNT, she was Executive Director of the Mayfield Graves County YMCA in Kentucky and worked for the American Heart Association in Dallas and Tennessee. For seven years Alana managed the charitable budget and employee volunteer activities for a Ford Credit Call Center with more than 2,500 employees.

Alana earned her bachelor's degree in marketing from Louisiana State University in Shreveport and resides with her family in Plano.

Alana has only been with us since December 1, but has already jumped in to write our newsletter and to develop a new look for our annual report. I look forward to working with her to revamp our employee volunteer program Workplace CARES and our departmental recognition programs.

Feel free to stop by and say hello to both of them.

Respectfully,

Robin Popik

Volunteer Resources Supervisor

**City of Plano
Parks & Recreation Department
Volunteer Resources Group**

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Volunteer Resources Supervisor**

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**Volunteer opportunities
can be found on our
Web site at
www.volunteersinplano.org**



Congratulations Robin Popik for being elected to the ALIVE Founding Board

ALIVE (Association of Leaders in Volunteer Engagement) serves to enhance and sustain the spirit of volunteerism in America by fostering collaboration and networking, promoting professional development and providing advocacy for leaders in community engagement.

www.volunteeralive.org/index.html

City of Plano
Volunteer In Plano
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