

Volunteers in Plano

Dear VIP Volunteers and Supervisors,

Have you ever really thought about the word "advocacy"? Most of the time we think about it in reference to speaking on behalf of someone or a situation we care about.

The word "advocacy" has interesting connotations and an even more interesting outcome. The Latin origin actually is in two words: ad vocare, or literally "to give voice to" someone or something.

It suggests supporting an action, encouraging others or promoting an activity. As volunteers, you are advocates for the City of Plano. You not only get great work done, you help to fulfill our mission by contributing to the organizational performance. As VIP supervisors, you take time to direct and oversee individual volunteers. You support and encourage their activities which enhance City services. From data entry to photography to puppet shows, VIP's perform functions might be deferred or not implemented because of a lack of manpower or resources.

Thank you for contributing your skills, expertise, fresh ideas and objective viewpoints. **When it comes to Plano, Texas, everyone counts!**

This year our VIP Recognition Celebration will be held Tuesday, April 12, 2005.

Invitations will be going out to those volunteers who have donated over 25 hours to the VIP Program between January 2004 and February 2005.

Come share the evening with our wonderful volunteers, Mayor Pat Evans, City Council Officials, City Manager Tom Muehlenbeck, department heads and City staff. Enjoy the humor of Anne Barab, our guest speaker, and music from Broadway to pop by Ivan Kaufman and Home Bass Production, plus great food and door prizes.



Anne Barab

Anne Barab is rumored to be the lost love child of Mark Twain and Lucille Ball. Anne is an information entrepreneur who speaks to organizations that realize positive, optimistic, engaged people are good for business. Anne brings hilarious insight about getting along productively with the people in your life to thousands of people. Her concrete techniques and great strategies for improving your performance mindset will last a lifetime.

Respectfully,

Robin Popik
Volunteer Resources Supervisor

Judi Gradt
VIP Administrative Assistant



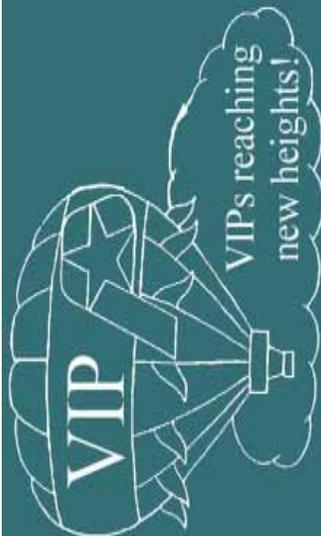
Pretending to be a bioterrorism victim is not usually anyone's plan, but for 60+ volunteers, it was all in a day's work.

Homeland Security initiatives have placed an increased emphasis on the value of Plano's active volunteer community.

In December the City's two-day, full-scale emergency exercise facilitated by the Texas

Engineering Extension Service benefited from the use of 60+ volunteers. Serving as victims and family members, these individuals lent increased reality and first-responder training opportunities to the exercise. During this time the City activated the Emergency Volunteer Reception Center (EVRC). This center is to be utilized in times of disaster to marshal and to coordinate effective volunteer efforts. Volunteers worked alongside the City's public safety officers and networked with regional agencies to test the system, resources and reactions under stress.

Thanks to all the volunteers who devoted their time and efforts in making the Full-Scale Emergency Exercise a success in December 2004!



VIP



2005 Volunteer of the Year Nominees

Seniors-In-Action

by Dell Kaplan

Do you know 19.5% of Plano's population is older than 50 years of age? Is it any wonder that the City has a Senior Center!



It's not just about being active participants-it's also about being active volunteers. In 2004,

170 **Senior Center** volunteers gave of their time to help others at the Center and in the community, contributing 15,676 volunteer hours. These hours represent a dollar value to Plano and the surrounding areas of \$194,138.

Many activities simply would not exist without committed volunteers who provide the extra manpower that allows us to offer additional classes and services to the community. Staff can set up and coordinate classes and events, but cannot be everywhere at once to make them happen. This is what the volunteers do - they make it happen, "The volunteers made a positive impact on Plano's seniors, giving them an opportunity to have fun, feel valued, learn, stay fit and share with others," explained Dell Kaplan, Senior Center Supervisor.

Volunteer greeters and front desk assistants provide information to the 300-400 daily visitors and callers. Volunteer librarians stock books, videos and magazines and help find special book or explain how to use the Optelec ClearView magnifier to patrons with vision problems.

Need a gift? The Yellow Rose volunteers will show you what the local senior crafters have in their shop.

Hungry? The 42 Snack Bar volunteers make and serve over 1,000 lunches monthly cost diners as little as \$1. Morning coffee, snacks and a delicious lunch are prepared by some, while other volunteers gather baked products from local supermarkets to share with the senior community.

Hildred Stillwell, is an all around volunteer, helping in the kitchen, greeting visitors, singing and even knitting. Hildred says, "I enjoy my work and being with everyone. I lost my husband in February and everyone has been so supportive and helpful. I just go where I'm needed."

Seniors are leading active and more independent lives because Senior Net volunteers have taught them how to



access the Internet and send emails to friends and family.

Performing groups sing and dance at senior facilities in the community. SeniorKnit volunteers have furnished over 2,200 handmade items to medical facilities in the area.

Social, Fitness and Educational volunteers organize weekly dances, lead exercise classes and teach defensive driving. Social groups headed up by senior volunteers include the Red Hat Honeys, Pacesetters and Amity Club--they give members a chance to socialize with old and new friends. Volunteers coordinate bingo games, bridge tournaments, and golf and bowling events.

AARP volunteers trained in tax aide help seniors fill out and file their Income Tax forms annually.

Plano Senior Center Advisory Council volunteers, serve in an advisory capacity to staff, conducting fundraisers to buy equipment for the center and present fun activities for seniors such as spaghetti dinners and pancake breakfasts.

Retired and semi-retired people utilize the life and work skills and knowledge they have developed over the decades by volunteering at the Plano Senior Center. The diverse range of opportunities gives anyone 50 and older a choice of activities appropriate to their age, interests and capabilities.

Many volunteers are busier now than they were before retiring, volunteering at hospitals, mentoring children, and helping City staff accomplish more with less cost to taxpayers. They are helping raise grandchildren, and some are still working in order to maintain independent lifestyles. But still they volunteer, their goal being to give back to the community what they have gained in life. They are committed, dependable and reliable, touching lives and helping others wherever they go.

Tom Grant, kitchen volunteer coordinator, says "Volunteering gives me an outing I enjoy and the comradery of helping where I can. It gets me out of the house and a way to be with my friends."

2005 Volunteer of the Year Nominees

There's A New Kid on the Block at Douglass Community Center

by Dianne Dillon



A new kid on the block in the computer software and services industry,

JDN Solutions, Inc. hasn't wasted a minute getting involved in the community. Created in 2002, JDN Solutions has already found its foothold through activities that range from helping children individually to sponsoring groups at Douglass Community Center.

JDN Solutions helped organize and sponsor the 1st annual Young Ladies of Distinction Pageant last year, as a way to enhance young ladies' writing abilities. JDN Solutions donated time and effort to coaching the girls with proper pageant etiquette and dance routines. They also co-sponsor the Girl Talk Organization at Douglass Community Center. JDN members volunteer for monthly and bi-weekly meetings, local and out-of-town field trips, workshops, lock-ins and tutoring at the Center.



"JDN has displayed their dedication to giving back to the community and supporting our youth. I know that I can always count on the support from their organization," said Dianne Dillon, Recreation Coordinator. In addition to their work at the Center, JDN also sponsored two children last Christmas. Not only did the organization fulfill all the children's wishes, they also provided

motivational speakers to encourage the children to accomplish their dreams despite their situation.

"They really care about the children in our community and work hard to ensure each child they encounter understands the importance of education," Dillon said. "They believe that our children are future leaders of tomorrow."

*For fiscal year 2003-04
5,000+ volunteers contributed 75,762 hours,
carrying a value of \$1,017,956.
Since VIP's inception in 1983, volunteers have contributed 900,762 hours
to municipal initiatives valued at over \$9.6 million dollars!*

What does 400 pounds mean to you?

by Casey Eckert-Luker



To **Dan Kunsch**, it equates to the pounds of trash he collected last year while keeping St. Marks' adopted highway litter-free. Casey Eckert-Luker, Keep Plano Beautiful Education Coordinator, said the Adopt-A-Highway program coordinated through Keep Plano Beautiful only requires participants to clean their highway once every four months. But Dan cleaned St. Marks' road 17 times, which is more than four times the required minimum.

"Dan has proven to be very dependable, conscientious and steadfast in his desires to keep his adopted road litter-free," Casey said. "His individual leadership efforts toward community improvement serve as an example of how one person can influence others to become engaged as well."



Dan has received Keep Plano Beautiful's "Most Cleanups Completed" award for the past two years. Casey added that Kunsch also proudly wears his orange vest while cleaning his highway in hopes of inspiring other motorists to become involved.

Volunteers in Plano

VIP SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR NOMINATION

Please complete form and mail, fax, or email to Robin Popik by April 1, 2005. City Manager, Tom Muehlenbeck will be presenting the award to the winner at our Recognition Celebration on April 12, 2005.

Name of Nominee: _____ Department _____

Nominated by: _____ Phone Number: _____

Relationship to nominee, e.g. volunteer, employee reporting to, co-worker, supervisor: _____

Describe why the nominee merits consideration for recognition in terms of how well he or she supervises volunteers. Where possible, give examples of how well he or she gives direction/instructions, trains volunteers, expresses appreciation for good work, encourages suggestions, provides suitable working conditions and resources, and considers the needs of volunteers.

Describe how the nominee has contributed to the City of Plano's ability to better meet the needs of our citizens through the creative, efficient and effective use of volunteers. Consider the benefit to the volunteer, the impact on City employees' workload and the effect on services to the taxpayer.

Use blank paper if additional space is required.

Mail, fax or emailed information to the below address by April 1, 2005.

Volunteer Resources Group
1409 Avenue K
Plano, TX 75074

Phone # 972-941-7114
Fax # 972-941-7469
email robinp@plano.gov



2005 Volunteer of the Year Nominee

Jean Jones knows what the true meaning of giving is - she's a teacher.

by Dianne Dillon



As a new teacher, she's made quite an impact, as displayed by her accomplishment of receiving 2002-2003 Beginning Teacher of the Year award at Sigler Elementary School.

Not only does she teach, she goes above and beyond her demanding job through her involvement within the community - which ranges from tutoring at the Douglass Community Center to providing Christmas gifts to needy families.

"Mrs. Jones' presence at the Douglass Community Center has made a great impact on our Summer Tutoring Enhancement Program," said Dianne Dillon, Recreation Coordinator. "The summer program enrollment and



Jean Jones

participation of our community kids has increased because of her presence." Jones provides tutoring and mentoring for youth at Douglass Community Center, as well as helping students prepare for their TAKS tests and their science fair projects. Dillon said Jones gives the children at the Center a feeling that someone really cares about them. Her loving and caring ways have allowed the children she serves to be comfortable and open with her.

"I get more out of volunteering than I contribute," says Jean. "I get a sense of satisfaction, meet new children and learn new things. The most important lesson I've learned through volunteering is to recognize the needs of others and to count your blessings."

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy

child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. That is to have succeeded.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

VIP Newsletter by:
Robin Popik
email: robinp@plano.gov
website: www.planotx.org/vip/

Please call the Volunteer Resources Office, (972) 941-7436, with changes to your name, address and phone number.



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City of Plano
1409 Avenue K
Plano, TX 75074
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