



Volunteers IN PLANO

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DEAR VIPs, VIP SUPERVISORS AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS:

This year's VIP Recognition Celebration theme, "Reflections", was dedicated to three exceptional volunteers who passed away in 2006: **Toni Queen**, **Marge Baker** and **Mary Iovinelli**. Each of their lives was a reflection of humanitarian endeavors, balancing personal and community service. As part of our Volunteer Recognition Celebration and National Volunteer Week, we asked you to share reflections of your service with us. The Encarta Dictionary defines reflection as, "a careful thought, especially the process of reconsidering previous actions, events or decisions; an idea or thought, especially one produced by careful consideration of something." Reflecting on your service could be part of your daily activities or just a one time event.

"Each of us is here for a brief sojourn; for what purpose he knows not, though he senses it. But without deeper reflection one knows from daily life that one exists for other people."

Albert Einstein

Toni Queen, Marge Baker and Mary Iovinelli all felt the importance of community and giving back. Every moment in time was valued as a gift to them, and I hope my life can be as full as theirs. They will be remembered always for their dedication and energy.

- **Toni Queen** enlisted in the Navy in World War II. She had a career as an analytic chemist for Texas Instruments for 30 years. Toni had an amazing work ethic and unwavering good character. She felt "if you don't get out and do something, you're going to stagnate... you're going to fall apart." Most people remember Toni as always having a smile on her face, bringing us jokes and stories each time she came.
- **Marge Baker**, a 30-year veteran of Texas

Instruments' Legal Department, was an incredible person. I'm convinced she stayed as busy in her retirement with her volunteer work as she did during her long career. Marge was a friend and confidant to many, always ready with a reassuring word or a shoulder to cry on.

- **Mary Iovinelli** was a transplant from Chicago. Mary had a recipe of the month in the Senior Center Newsletter for many years. She was the first manager of the snack bar at the Plano Senior Center. Of course, we all will remember Mary as being super sweet and making the BEST homemade pizza and Italian cookies. She was a very special lady who everyone loved.

What Are the Benefits of Reflection?

Research shows we learn from doing, but we learn more from thinking about what we do. Reflection can give us a sense of renewal, provide meaning to the experience and help create a sense of accomplishment. Your reflections will also provide us with a history of our volunteers, and your feelings and experiences with the City of Plano. The Northwest Service Academy in Portland, Oregon says reflections help integrate service into the rest of one's life – developing a "spirit" of service and civic-mindedness.

Respectfully,

Robin Popik

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"A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions."

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

WHAT'S INSIDE...



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VIP RECOGNITION CELEBRATION

Those who had donated 30-plus hours to the City of Plano in 2006 were invited to join Mayor Pat Evans and the City Council for the **VIP RECOGNITION** Celebration honoring their volunteer service. The Guest Speaker was nationally-recognized storyteller **Elizabeth Ellis**. Elizabeth is a versatile and riveting storyteller whose journey has taken her from her local library to as far as New Zealand. She was selected as a "Listener's Choice" at the 30th Annual National Storytelling Festival and a Storyteller-In-Residence at the International Storytelling Center. Elizabeth was the first recipient of the John Henry Faulk Award from the Tejas Storytelling Association and the Circle of Excellence Award from the National Storytelling Association.

Refreshments were provided courtesy of **On the Border** and **Starbucks at The Shops at Legacy**. Door prizes were announced throughout the evening. The special musical guest of the evening was guitarist and vocalist **Tania Cordobés**. She is well known in the Dallas area for her Latin American and pop music talents.

Many volunteers wrote notes in advance and brought them to post on **the REFLECTION WALL**. Volunteers are



encouraged to continue sharing their experiences in writing. If you would like to do this, please send your information to us via e-mail or mail

(we would love a small photo of you as well). Writing suggestions include: what you do as a volunteer; what you like about being a volunteer; and what volunteering means to you. Please help us capture your wonderful stories and experiences, so we can record the history of our valuable volunteers – YOU!

For the fiscal year 2005-2006, the VIP Program had a total of 5,200 volunteers, approximately 1,000 a month, who contributed 77,673 hours valued at \$1,218,316. Since the 1983 inception of the program, volunteers have contributed 1,059,086 hours to municipal initiatives valued at more than \$12 million.

Volunteer of the Year Awards Nominees include many VIP's

TAG TEAM ENCOURAGES SENIORS TO STAY CONNECTED



Residents in a care home, nursing home or assisted-living home are often moved by family members to Plano from their long-time homes in other cities and states. In many cases, residents have left long-time friends and don't know anyone in their new settings. **Elaine Pachthofer, Jane Kline** and **Laurie Barnett** have been providing special care home programs for a number of years, gathering residents together to share in a time of entertaining and stimulating learning. "They bring fellowship to the care home, along with a way for the residents to get to know each other," explains Susan Rhoads, Library Links coordinator. "Sometimes a resident is touched by something the volunteer has said and responds with his or her own experience.

Then another resident may say something, sparking a conversation and camaraderie between the two people, developing into a real friendship. This is the best kind of contact to bring to care home residents."

The **Library Links with Seniors (LLS)** volunteer chooses a theme, building stories, jokes, articles, quizzes, food, music, poems or whatever medium fits around the theme. "The volunteer prepares programs to suit the group and takes requests for programs from the residents," explains one activity director.

These three volunteers, Elaine, Jane and Laurie, have been presenting care home programs since the inception of LLS in 1999. In 2006, they donated a combined 358 hours and presented programs to 647 care home residents. We can't say "thank you" enough.



STRIVING TO HELP ADULTS BECOME PRODUCTIVE



Literacy for Life (LFL) Volunteer **Janice Schieffer** strives to help adults become productive members of the community by building literacy skills and self-esteem. For the past six years, Janice has been an invaluable asset to the LFL program. Since she began,

she has tutored four students in a one-on-one setting and donated more than 1,100 hours. "Her patience, understanding and appreciation for other cultures have enabled her to create special bonds with her adult students," says Sharon Lozier, LFL coordinator. "She has been creative with her instruction tools and techniques, which have both enhanced and motivated her students' learning of the English language and the American culture."

Janice has also taken on many extra volunteer projects with LFL. She attends tutor roundtables where she listens to new tutors, shares insights and gives advice. Janice helps plan the mandatory tutor training workshops, prepares materials and assists with student

roundtables, giving students a demonstration of online Language programs.

In 2006, she taught training workshops and participated in the "Tutor Talk" segment. "Janice's training segments bring added value to the new tutors, since peer training reinforces the relevance and timeliness of the information. She brings a wealth of knowledge to the training segments as she shares relevant observations from her life and tutoring experiences," said Sharon.

When the program coordinator position was vacant, Janice provided invaluable support to the part-time clerk administering the program by assisting with tutor training workshops, coordinating materials and providing additional training segments. Janice also helped administer assessment tests to adult students entering the program and other miscellaneous office tasks. During this transition, the overall quality of the LFL program and training remained excellent.

Her volunteer service extends to the Richardson Chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the League of Women Voters, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).



SCOUTING THE WAY FOR FAMILY TREE TRACKERS



People from all over North Texas visit the Harrington Library to pursue their research on families through the Genealogy Collection. During her 10+ years, **Pat Mitchell**, volunteer coordinator for the **Genealogy and Texana Collection**, has trained

dozens of volunteers and recruited new volunteers who in turn provided genealogy reference service. This program, our Collection and the Reference Department at Harrington Library depend greatly on Pat's well-orchestrated volunteers to provide this specialized service to both our community and to many neighboring communities," explained Cheryl Smith, Public Service Librarian. Pat provides encouragement to the staff of the Genealogy Collection and to the reference staff of Harrington Library. With her specialized skills, Pat assists everyone from new researchers to advanced researchers during the building of their family tree.

"Pat interviews, orients and schedules the volunteers to assist patrons with genealogical research and generously fills in the gaps on the schedule along with her regular shifts. Pat creates a monthly volunteer calendar for our genealogy patrons and makes sure it gets published on the Plano Library Web site. She shelves books, recommends new books for the collection, and has helped create an area of state bibliographies because she felt this would be of great assistance to the patrons," includes Cheryl. Along with her time, Pat also donates books and periodicals to the Collection which makes it very personal to her.

Pat's longevity shows her loyalty to the Collection and to patrons. Her ease in working with people makes the volunteers and staff feel comfortable and appreciated. Pat also volunteers at her church and the Labyrinth Theatre. Pat's position as Volunteer Coordinator equals a full-time job in the library system, but her energy, knowledge and love for genealogy are immeasurable.



KEEPING PLANO CLEAN & GREEN WITH ENTHUSIASM



Rachael Carranza has been an outstanding liaison between Phi Theta Kappa (PTK), **Keep Plano Beautiful (KPB)**, and the **Environmental Education and Community Outreach Division**. Rachael and PTK have collaborated with KPB on several

events. The outstanding results are a testimony of Rachael's remarkable coordination and motivational efforts.

PTK volunteers helped to address over 2,000 visitors to the Plano Balloon Festival, encouraging them not to litter, distributing pocket ashtrays to smokers, helping visitors play a "Litter Toss" game and encouraging them to report litterers with litter report sheets. The Yard Spruce-Up project helped 22 seniors when PTK volunteers mowed lawns, trimmed edged, weeded, and planted flower beds. Rachael contacted the Collin County Committee on Aging to get the names of additional homeowners needing yard help. PTK volunteers also met with the seniors and distributed "care

packages" of mugs, candy and notes. To say the homeowners were delighted is an understatement.

For Fall Scout Fest, these volunteers set up and staffed tables, enthusiastically sharing their knowledge through demonstrations and hands-on craft activities with 500 Scouts and family members. Educating youngsters to be good stewards of the environment is a key element of our department. "Rachael was not only able to energize and motivate a team of volunteers for all these events, but her leadership in "digging in" and volunteering herself provided a terrific role model for others in her group," said Casey Eckert, Keep Plano Beautiful Coordinator.

The Environmental Education and Community Outreach Division appreciates Rachael and the PTK students' involvement in the Plano community and look forward to their assistance with Great American Cleanup, Live Green in Plano Expo and the Community Garden.

Rachael is also involved with Meals on Wheels, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of North Texas, World Vision and KCBI Radio Station.



DIRTY TALENTS GROW GREAT REWARDS



Master Composter **Susan Norton** has been a role model in promoting the **Master Composters'** mission to educate, motivate and involve the public in composting. As co-president of her homeowners' association, she focuses on educating

neighbors on landscape drought management by inviting speakers to explain the use of compost and how it stores moisture in clay soil, making it accessible to plant roots. As a member of the Pioneer Park Senior Home Garden Planning Team, Susan uses her Master Composting skills to help coordinate a garden for Plano Community Home. "Her enthusiasm for composting has been contagious. Susan recruited her husband, Colby, to the Master Composting Program and her four children (all scouts) to help with the Pioneer Place project, multiplying her impact while teaching basic composting principles to residents by involving Scout groups

in the work," explains Deb Bliss, Environmental Education Coordinator.

A desire to help feed local hungry people motivated her to adopt a plot at the Plano Community Garden, where she and Colby work seven compost bins. Working alongside other gardeners has allowed her to educate and involve them in making and using backyard compost. When green grass was a scarce resource, Susan and Colby started an "office" pile, using spent coffee grounds and shredded paper. They have built and donated a screen to sift finished compost.

Susan served on a committee to provide input to Plano's **Oak Point Park and Nature Preserve** and has been actively involved in several volunteer organizations. Susan is always ready to get involved in a new gardening project. As an advocate, she works to spread the message of the benefits of compost and its positive impact on issues of local hunger, water conservation, senior recreation and natural space preservation while reaching out to people from diverse cultures, ages and life experiences.

SAFETY'S NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT



Bill Fell has made a significant impact on our community's safety. He has become one of the most inspiring volunteers in Collin County, making volunteering a full-time job.

Through the **Plano Police Department's Handicap Parking Program**, Bill enforces handicap parking laws through education and citation of violators. He conducts the state-required initial training of our volunteers. "He has become known as the handicap parking expert in this area and now assists Rockwall PD with the training of their volunteers and their officers in this area, and has been contacted by another department to help them too. He has put together a great presentation on his own time and stays current with the new laws, so much so, that officers and prosecutors have tapped his knowledge in this area," says Sergeant Jeremy Whatney.

As a **Citizens Assisting Plano Police (CAPP)** volunteer, Bill utilizes his amateur radio skills to perform an "observe and report" function. He mans the Skywatch (portable

observation towers in parking lots), educates residents about crime prevention and assists with radar speed surveys to free up sworn officers for more important tasks. As a member of **Plano Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association**, he assists the Police Crime Prevention Unit during emergency events via the **Crisis Support Teams**.

His support extends to the Collin County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) and Crime Prevention Unit, where he is helping to start the CCSO Volunteer Program, which will use volunteers to perform outstanding warrants research and to verify county sex offenders residence and employment data.

Jason Lane, Collin County Homeland Security Bioterrorism Coordinator, points out, "as a member of the Amateur Radio Emergency Services, Bill serves as the liaison to the Collin County Emergency Operation Center. He played a key role in the activation and response to the F3 tornado that struck Collin County in May, 2006."

Bill also serves the **Plano Fire Department**, National Weather Service and the Geriatric Wellness Center of Collin County.



DOUGLASS SENIOR INSPIRES HER COMMUNITY



Eleanor Evans is a faithful leader of the Douglass Community, always willing to give her time wherever needed. Eleanor has been a part of the **Douglass Community Center (DCC) Seniors** for four years, serving as president for

three years. As the president, she has brought great motivation, inspiration and hope to this group. Her enthusiasm encouraged members to continue being a part of the organization. Eleanor has been significant in getting the DCC Seniors recognized through many activities. She encouraged the group to adopt the Plano Day Care, and provide parties for children. She is involved in **DCC Girl Talk** and the **Young Ladies of Distinction Pageant**. She convinced sponsors to assist the DCC Seniors with special event functions. Douglass Community Center Recreation Coordinator Dianne Dillon remarked, "She always tries to uplift everyone, even when she has obstacles in her life. For

example, she had knee surgery; I contacted her about one of our members who was ill, and she came to the meeting to organize what we could do to assist the ill member. She is definitely an extraordinary lady."

As a pillar of her community, she loves giving unconditionally of herself. She is a loving mother and grandmother who cares for her grandson after school. She has become the unofficial neighborhood Granny also, providing snacks and tutoring for those children whose parents are not home when they get out of school. Her community and neighbors call her home and yard the "United Nations for the Douglass Kids." Eleanor and her friends visit nursing homes to see old friends or just brighten the day of someone who is ill.

Webster defines commitment as "transforming a promise into reality," and that is what Eleanor Evans does every day.



CITY ADVOCATES RECRUITING EMPLOYEES INTO SERVICE



Employees from the City of Plano have long been committed to community. **The Workplace CARES Program** is a planned, managed effort by employee volunteers who seek to motivate and enable others to become involved in the community.

Workplace CARES projects support action and encourage others to help. Programs include: School Mentoring, Adopt an Angel, Job Shadowing, Success Closet, Canned Food Drive, Salvation Army Bell Ringers and School Supply Drive. "Employees volunteering together strengthen work teams and build employee skills, as well as contribute to professional development," explains City Manager Tom Muehlenbeck.

City volunteers say the **Salvation Army Bell Ringers** program "is a great experience for a great cause." This year, 35 Workplace CARES volunteers raised \$6,534.79 for the Salvation Army during the four Saturdays they rang the bell, tying for the highest collection of any group.

This year the **Adopt an Angel** program assisted more than 62 people with holiday gifts, food, coats and blankets. Families and children in need come from Children's Medical Clinic, City of Plano employees and the Geriatric Wellness Center of Collin County. An Adopt an Angel volunteer said, "I had the opportunity to deliver the gifts and food to the family. It really humbled me. As I was driving back to work, I felt good about what we had done and understand even better the meaning of giving and expecting nothing in return."

The City holds a **Food Drive** in October, placing boxes in the libraries, City facilities and fire stations. The food is distributed to Plano food banks. In February we collect clothing (**Success Closet**), donated to Crissa's Closet to support Hope's Door. During the summer, the City sponsors a free **Summer Lunch** program for children, one to 18 years old, **who do not receive prepared lunches at home**. This year, 8,470 meals were served by City and community volunteers.

Once a year, City of Plano officials find themselves with new shadows – the shadows of the Williams High School Student Leadership Group. Students follow a designated City official, as the day-to-day workings of the City unfold before them. This is the seventh year the City has hosted the **Job Shadowing** program. City Manager Tom Muehlenbeck states, "We enjoy interacting with the students and hope this experience helps them to learn more about their City government and how much our community needs their talents and skills." This is just a sampling of activities promoted through the City's Workplace CARES program.

WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT THE APRIL 17 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR LUNCHEON.

"The meaning of things lies not in the things themselves, but in our attitude towards them."
Antoine de Saint Exupery



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