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Volunteers IN PLANO



Dear VIP Volunteers and Supervisors,

Over time **Volunteers In Plano** has established a heritage, a set of beliefs you might even call our DNA. While this program started back in 1983 with our city officials, it continues to evolve with our seasoned and new volunteers, our growing program and maturing city.

- **WE believe in our volunteers.**
- **WE believe in our employees.**
- **WE believe in a strong sustainable community.**
- **WE believe in building a healthy community.**

“ WE believe together we can make a difference! ”

The power of your reflections, your dreams, aspirations and reasons for being part of this program helps us define our DNA. Here is a sampling of how others reflected on their volunteer service:

“I decided to try volunteering after a 39½-year career at Texas Instruments. I was totally new to the volunteer work and didn't know what to expect when I started my assignment in the Plano Police Department (PPD). It has been a rewarding experience as far as learning new things and meeting new people. Volunteering has benefited me not only personally, but I feel that what I do contributes to the PPD meeting their mission of providing the best service possible to the citizens of Plano.”

-Gloria Chick

“It's all about cats... matching families and cats; seeing the dedication of Animal Shelter officers; finding joy in helping others; and fostering kittens and cats.”

-Nancy Cate (story on page 2)

“As a Homework Center tutor, I help elementary kids with their homework. Volunteering is very important because you can become a role model for younger children. This enables them to grow up with the ideas that volunteering helps many people and that they can make a huge difference in people's lives. I've had many fun and memorable experiences while volunteering and hope to continue to volunteer for a long time. Thank you to everyone who makes this experience so wonderful!”

-Tracy Pyle

“I've always been a volunteer and can't think of life any other way. My experiences as a Small Talk volunteer, facilitating discussions among new immigrants to our city, has been one of the most satisfying things I've ever done. To see quiet, hesitant, new English users 'come out of their shell' and begin to chatter away with confidence brings a smile to my face; and I'm sure to them as well!”

-Elaine Jarvis

“Volunteering for Library Links allows me to spend time with seniors. Since my grandmother lives so far away, I feel I'm giving to someone else's grandparents the way I hope someone else is giving to mine.”

-Laurie Barnett

“One of the things I keep learning is that the secret of being happy is doing things for other people.” - Dick Gregory



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“As Master Composters, we teach composting principles to citizens, maintain demonstration gardens and grow vegetables for the local food bank. To us, volunteering means not only supporting our community, but raising the lifestyles of other residents and helping those in need. Here we emphasize protecting our limited resources and hope the community will see how they can start doing the same thing.”

-Colby and Susan Norton

“Being a Literacy for Life (LFL) tutor has been one of my more rewarding experiences. I have been working with my student for the past nine months. In that time she has been so impressed with the LFL program, she has convinced others to use the Plano libraries for help in learning the English language. I have witnessed incredible progress in her confidence level, where she is now comfortable enough to go to teacher conferences and has indicated they went very well. We have developed a rapport and a new friendship. LFL tutoring requires dedication, but it’s worth it. I appreciate all the support of the City and especially the LFL staff.”

-Paula Casey



“I volunteer with the Therapeutic Recreation Program. I enjoy getting to know the participants, but most of all I enjoy watching them overcome challenges and create their own milestones. Working with each and every participant is an inspiration to me to face my own challenges.”

-Jennifer Bamley

We believe in your opinion. If you want to share your experiences with us, please e-mail them to Robinp@plano.gov.

Respectfully,
Robin Popik
Judi Gradt

“ Volunteerism is the voice of the people put into action. These actions shape and mold the present into a future of which we can all be proud. ” - Helen Dyer

Nancy Cate, the Cat Lady

by *Kathi Cavanagh*

If you have a question about a cat ask Nancy Cate. She is a long-time volunteer at the Plano Animal Shelter who has averaged about 33 hours a month in the cat room. “She not only helps keep the room clean and well stocked, but she gets to know each cat so well that she improves their chances of adoption immensely,” says Debbie New, Volunteer Coordinator for the shelter. Nancy makes the time to learn the personality of each cat; it helps her match the adopter with the cat best suited to them. The time she puts in with the cats, the special treats and the play time she provides make the cats’ lives in the shelter more enjoyable.

Those cats too ill or too young to thrive in a shelter environment have been rescued by Nancy who fosters them in her home. In addition to the multiple kitten litters she has fostered, she also took in a cat with special medical needs and hand fed it until it got better. During the peak of kitten season, her car trunk is always full of supplies in case she has to go home with a litter or even if a fellow foster volunteer needs some extra supplies. She is always willing to give nail clipping instructions to adopters and fellow volunteers.



“When you see Nancy, she always has a smile on her face and is working very hard. Her contribution has made the shelter a better place,” explains Debbie. “Nancy is not only a blessing to the cats but to staff as well. She is wonderful with the public and has provided much needed TLC for the unwanted and homeless cats in our facility.”

Exciting news from the Animal Services volunteer program: Over the last several months, we have been working very closely with volunteers and employees to help implement new opportunities, to set shifts to help volunteers be more productive, to create a new form of recordkeeping and to develop a log-in system for volunteers. In process are new name tags and additional training. Our goal is to have everyone benefit from using the time and talents of the amazing volunteers for the most good. For more information feel free to contact Robin at robinp@plano.gov or new Volunteer Coordinator **Kathi Cavanagh** at Kathi.Cavanagh@viewpointbank.com.



“It’s easy to make a buck. It’s a lot tougher to make a difference.” - Tom Brokaw



Teen Volunteer Uses Love of Children & Books to Get Her Foot in the Door

by Sarah Willis

Teens love to:

- *Help solve problems*
- *Feel useful and valued*
- *Make the world a better place for others*

Christine Hagen began volunteering at Parr Library at the Parr Summer Reading program in 2003. Her duties included preparing crafts, signing up summer readers, sorting books and dusting shelves. “Christine’s dependability and responsibility were impressive. She verified her volunteer schedule and reported for work early.

But what we noticed most was her interaction with young children, peers and adults; she was polite, poised and attentive,” said librarian Sarah Willis. One week Christine accepted a challenging role in the puppet show and handled her part with dexterity and enthusiasm.

Christine was also selected to serve on the first library Teen Advisory Board (TAB) and continued to serve until her senior year, devoting hours to library promotion and literacy in the community. “Christine found a way to combine her puppetry and literacy interest by teaming up with librarian Libby Holtmann and other TAB members to present a puppet show and storytime for It’s a Natural at Arbor Hills Nature Preserve,” explained Sarah. Through TAB she has also made some wonderful friends—one Christine says is definitely a lifelong friend.



By the time Christine graduated from high school, she had volunteered four consecutive summers at Parr. She has considered getting a master’s degree in library science for several years now, but is not quite sure of her career goals just yet. She explains, “I have learned a lot from my volunteer work that I will always take with me. I have become more responsible when it comes to deadlines and it’s helped with my ability to talk to different types of people. I am so glad I had this experience, I wouldn’t have changed a thing.”

Last year when several part time page positions became available, Sarah immediately thought of Christine and encouraged her to apply. Today, Christine is a model ambassador for our library system and a volunteer-to-employee success story.

Way to go Christine!

Volunteer Helps Children to Connect the Past to the Present

by *The Plano Conservancy for Historic Preservation*
www.planoconservancy.org

Jack Durnin genuinely likes to help people. He is a very giving, compassionate person; it's something that comes naturally to him. That's what he likes about volunteering at the Interurban Railway Museum. Located in downtown Plano, the Interurban Railway Museum is housed in a building served as a primary stop on the Texas Electric Railway. Jack loves to tell the story of how rail transportation powered by steam first arrived in Plano in 1872 and forever changed the lifestyle of early settlers who had traveled to this area by covered wagon.

When asked why he likes volunteering at the Interurban Railway Museum, Jack explains, "I enjoy volunteering here because of the camaraderie of the other volunteers, the excitement and energy revolving around the programs being developed and expanded, the enjoyment of sharing my hobby - trains - with many people, and the stimulation of meeting interesting visitors".



As a docent this fall, Jack will tell hundreds of Plano fourth-graders how the rollicking, clickity clack sway of the Texas Electric Railway Interurban Car ran from Denison to Dallas beginning in 1908 and on December 31, 1948

made its last run. Jack and the other docents dress in original railway uniforms to share the stories of the museum's many artifacts with children and adults, as well as a history of Plano. "Jack Durnin loves history, so it is not surprising that the most meaningful part occurs as he works with tours of young people who do not have the personal experience growing up riding trains. He frequently sees the 'light go on in their eyes' as he helps them make the connection of how the trains brought people together, just as the newspaper, TV and the Internet do today. Jack also likes the educational component of his volunteerism which is what 'docent' means," says Maggie Sprague, Co-Director for The Plano Conservancy which provides staff and programs for the museum. Volunteers also explain how the trains impacted rural life and ended the isolation of farm families, as well as the economic impact on Plano and all the towns serviced by the railway.

Retired for some years now, Jack is an avid community volunteer, volunteering with the Lions Club and Plano Public Library System. He is also a City photographer, helps at the Senior Center and does so much more. When you ask him why he is so involved, he says he "volunteers for the money" and then laughs.

Today, the Interurban Railway Museum houses displays, pictures and artifacts from this North Texas transit system. Volunteer docents are needed to share the story with our community Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. If you are interested, please contact **Maggie Sprague at (972) 941-2117 or planoconservancy@earthlink.net**.

“One Day’s Pay” Volunteer Program Helps Harvest Produce for Plano Families



Cadbury Schweppes Americas Beverages (CSAB) has invested significant sweat equity in the Plano Community Garden through their employees’ “One Day’s Pay” volunteer program. Colleagues got down and dirty as they worked to complete the master plan for the garden created through a joint partnership with the City of Plano and Junior League of Plano.

Program Coordinator Helen Dorsey explains, “The garden is a beautiful shared space where Plano residents and volunteers garden together to grow and harvest food for local food pantries.” The City opened the garden about one year ago with 12 plots. Community members then adopted the 18-foot by 4-foot plots and helped to harvest produce for the Plano Food Pantry. During the first nine months of its inception, nearly a ton of food has already been donated. With the new plots that Team Plano installed, they will be able to double that capacity.

Volunteer Cheryl Hlad said, “I truly enjoyed this project and working with the team to accomplish improvements in different areas of the garden. It is great to get out of the office and work with people from different departments within the company and people from the City of Plano. It was a good learning experience to see how an organic planting bed is set up and will help me in my future personal projects.”

Team Plano accomplished all of the projects outlined for phase one, including constructing 12 new raised garden beds, assembling two new shade structures and three park benches, landscaping the front entry bed, planting tree screens along the creek bed and building a split-rail fence. Additionally, a beautification team combed through the entire area removing weeds and litter.

Heather Merchant, Environmental Education and Community Outreach Supervisor said, “We can’t begin to thank all the CSAB team enough for all you have done to help us complete the Master Plan for the garden. We are well on our way now, and what was accomplished was phenomenal!” Some of Team Plano was so enthusiastic they stayed until about 6 p.m. to complete a large, ornate pavilion. Jodi Rea, Junior League volunteer and author of the master plan said, “I am so proud of everyone that helped make these workdays a success, and it really shows in the way the garden looks. We now have several areas to take a break from the hot Texas sun.”

“I approached the City of Plano about being involved because it was the perfect complement to help bring our ‘health and wellness’ theme to life. The garden would make a difference in the community home of our headquarters,” said Helen Dorsey. “And the partnership with the City of Plano has been well received by colleagues, beginning with the kick-off of the Live Green In Plano initiative.”

CSAB was the major corporate sponsor to assist with the launch of the citywide campaign. About 40 of CSAB colleagues worked in teams over a three-day period to distribute “green packets” to more than 3,900 Plano homes. The packets contained practical and easy to understand information about recycling, water conservation ideas and “living green.”

For more information about “living green,” visit www.livegreeninplano.com





Teens come out to volunteer - Summer 2007

Spirit of Volunteerism Rings Loud & Clear for Mocha Moms

Many citizens around the DFW metroplex have heard of Mocha Moms, Inc., but did you know the North Dallas Chapter has supported the Douglass Community Center for over eight years? This national organization, created in 1997, supports mothers of color who choose to become stay at home parents. Today the North Dallas chapter, with 30 members, is one of over 100 chapters nationwide designed to help mothers feel good about their parenting choice.

Michelle Fuller, President of the North Dallas Chapter explains, "In order to be active with the national headquarters, each chapter is required to maintain an active spirit of volunteerism. This fortitude is a pillar by which the North Dallas Mochas firmly abide." The Mochas focus the majority of their efforts on the young ladies of the Douglass Girl Talk program, a mentoring program for girls ranging from age 9 through 12. They meet with the Girl Talk members bi-monthly to discuss such topics as "Body Image" and "Pursuing Your Dreams." They also instituted the Mocha Grams Pen Pal Program in 2006 to help foster a more personal connection between the members of each group. "The Mocha Mom's has been a great value to the Douglass Center, especially to the Girl Talk organization. The group has a giving heart and is willing to assist wherever is needed. They are a very, very committed organization, and we are grateful to have them as part of our volunteer team," explains Dianne Dillon, Douglass Center Recreation Coordinator. The mothers also donate

school supplies, assist with collecting Thanksgiving basket contributions, and recently participated in an ice cream social.

The Mocha Moms of North Dallas sincerely believe in the premise of Dr. Johnetta B. Cole, former president of Spelman College and acclaimed volunteering advocate. Dr. Cole once said, "What you give ought to be in direct relationship to what you've received. If you have been blessed with a great deal, then you have a lot of giving to do."

The North Dallas assemblage was organized in June 2002. They have been volunteering and meeting at the Douglass Community Center shortly thereafter. To join this group or to get more information, please e-mail president@mochamomsnorthdallas.com.





Teens come out to volunteer - Summer 2007

Without community service, we would not have a strong quality of life. It's important to the person who serves as well as the recipient. It's the way in which we ourselves grow and develop..." - Dr. Dorothy I. Height



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