

HOSPICE *of the* VALLEY

Bereavement Literature

VOLUNTEERS REAP REWARDS OF SERVICE

One of our Valley's most valuable resources is volunteers. Volunteers are the thoughtful citizens who make this community a better place to live, one activity at a time.

Imagine what our lives would be like without coaches who teach our children to play ball, parents who help put on school fund-raisers, or all of those committed volunteers who provide food and clothing to those who are less fortunate throughout the year.

The list of community needs may seem endless, but thankfully, so are the numbers of Valley residents who find time to make life a little better for everyone around them.

Volunteering isn't just about giving. In fact, most volunteers will tell you they receive far more than they give. Volunteering connects us with the community, builds our self-worth and teaches social responsibility to our children. Volunteering is an opportunity you shouldn't pass up.

If you've wanted to volunteer, but don't know how or where to begin, the Volunteer Center of Maricopa County is here to help. That's our motto: We help volunteers, volunteer.

Our job is matching your skills, passions and lifestyle with non-profit agencies throughout the Valley. Twice each year, we publish a Volunteer Directory that can serve as your guide to volunteering. The Spring/Summer issue is hot off the press and includes more than 500 non-profit agency listings, which are categorized by issue, making it easy for you to zero in on the area of need that you hope to impact.

This year, for the first time, the Volunteer Directory is also available on the Volunteer Center Web site at www.volunteerphoenix.org. We also have a hotline to assist you in your volunteer efforts. Call 1-800-VOLUNTEER.

To find the most rewarding volunteer experience, consider the following:

- Consider what's most important to you. Volunteers find the greatest satisfaction when they are making an impact in specific causes or issues that are close to their hearts. Let your heart be your guide, and you'll find a volunteer experience that matches your needs as well as the needs of the agency.
- Consider your skills. Don't take anything for granted when considering just what you can offer as a volunteer. Think about your hobbies, interests and skills. Your love for books could be just the encouragement needed by someone who has never learned how to read. Your technology savvy could be all that's needed to help an agency meet its financial goals. Your infectious personality could brighten the life of a senior who hasn't smiled in years.
- Consider your schedule. Unlike a job, you have the power to set your own hours when it comes to volunteering. There are volunteer opportunities for everyone, whether you want to volunteer your time weekly, monthly or on an occasional basis. It's better to start slowly than to commit yourself to a volunteer schedule that neglects your family or frustrates your co-workers.

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- Consider where you would like to volunteer. If you want to find a volunteer opportunity near work or home, the Volunteer Directory lists volunteer opportunities by geographical location.
- Consider others who might be interested in volunteering with you. Think about looking for volunteer opportunities that are suitable for your family, friends or co-workers to do as a group. Volunteering as a group brings people closer together, creates lasting memories and encourages ongoing volunteerism for everyone involved.

By volunteering, we become part of the solution for enhancing the quality of life in our community. Whether we reach out to a family member, a neighbor, a local school, or the community as a whole, we are impacting others' lives through ours.

- Maggie King, Executive Director, Volunteer Center of Maricopa County, in The Arizona Republic, May 8, 2000