

Letter to the editor

Written by Erin LeBlanc

Reader encourages volunteerism

Dictionary Definition of VOLUNTEER:

vol·un·teer/ vol·un·teer / Show Spelled [vol-uhn-teer]

noun 1. a person who voluntarily offers himself or herself for a service or undertaking.

2. a person who performs a service willingly and without pay.

Living in a small town we tend to often see the same people volunteering for events, etc. I personally enjoy volunteering and helping out. It is rewarding and fulfilling to be a part of something that you give your time and sometimes knowledge for.

I have also learned that after a while, you can get burned out and may need to take a break and let someone else take over for a while, then step back in when you feel "rested."

I have heard ads on the radio asking for volunteers for a variety of places: nursing homes, hospice, children's groups, dinners and events. As the new year starts, it would be wonderful to offer yourself to make that commitment and take that opportunity to share your time with someone else.

Rewards of volunteering

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Volunteering offers many rewards. In addition to improving your community and advancing causes that are important to you, volunteering can help you develop and grow as a person.

Other rewards and benefits of volunteering include:

—Establish networking contacts and meet new people.

—Learn or develop skills.

—Share your skills with others.

—Enhance your résumé and gain work experience.

—Build self-esteem and self-confidence.

—Provide a sense of accomplishment.

—Show your concern for the community.

—Make a difference in someone's life.

Many people also find that volunteering is a great way to express gratitude for help they received from an organization in the past.

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Recently I was volunteering at an event that provided free food to individuals and families, and because of a few incidents beyond our control, several people waiting began to complain about one thing or another. Now, all of us that were participating were volunteers, we were all there sharing our time away from our families, work, other daily activities—even the person who works tirelessly to bring this service each month to our communities and coordinate everything, is a volunteer.

This sent a shock of emotions throughout some of us that overheard the negative remarks. I challenge those that feel they can look into the eyes of volunteers and not be thankful for what they do—to make that commitment as this new year starts and call a business or service and give your time and energy to something—it truly is rewarding.

Erin LeBlanc

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