

Autumn 2007

Volume 1, Issue 7



Pinellas County Volunteer Services



WE'RE ON THE WEB!
www.pinellascounty.org/volserv

Current Opportunities

- Help decorating the Florida Botanical Gardens
 - Special Event Driver
 - Animal Service Volunteer
 - Welcome Center Assistant
 - Brooker Creek Volunteer
 - Weedon Island Weekend Warriors
 - Heritage Village Gift Shop
 - Auxiliary Rangers
 - VIP - Volunteer In Parks
 - Garden Maintenance
 - 4-H Volunteers
 - Master Volunteer in Food and Nutrition (*new position)
- <http://www.pinellascounty.org/>

Have you considered?

....Supporting one of these special walkathons throughout the year?

- Walk to Cure Diabetes, March 8, 2008 at Ft DeSoto
- Relay for Life, April 2008 at Bright House Field
- Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, October 2008 at N Straub Park
- HeartWalk, November 2008 at Raymond James ,Tampa

This is a great way to raise money for a good cause along side Pinellas County Employee Volunteers and gain some exercise benefits too!

Volunteering Offers Health Benefits *by Sandy Herron*

As many of you know, one of my favorite quotes is the one from Gandhi which reads, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." It turns out that volunteering for something close to your heart may indeed change you as well! A new report states that older Americans who volunteer receive significant health benefits from their charitable efforts, including added years to their lives. People have often attested to feeling good after volunteering, but recent scientific research has shown that there are real tangible health advantages gained through giving to others. When individuals volunteer, they are more likely to live longer, as well as happier according to the report.

Besides raising life-expectancy rates, it says, volunteering can

help lower rates of depression. Additionally, people who volunteer recover from illness faster than those who do not. The Corporation for National and Community Service does not specify what type of volunteer activities specifically lead to health benefits. But Stephen G. Post, a professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, in Cleveland, who has studied the link between altruism and good health, says that opportunities to be a mentor to young people have been shown to help older Americans.

Here in Pinellas County, one can assist with educational activities at the Extension or relieve stress and gain some exercise and expand ones horticultural knowledge by volunteering at many of our parks and preserves or at the Florida Botanical Gardens. Vol-

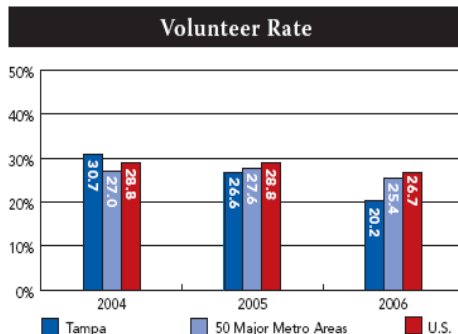
unteering at the St. Pete/Clearwater airport would hone ones social skills and allow a bit of day dreaming about that special trip to take one day. And no one could dispute the unconditional love that would be gained by volunteering with the dogs and cats at Animal Services.

The findings are relevant today as baby boomers begin to reach retirement age. That generation is expected to contribute a lot of time and money to charitable causes after they retire, and the report suggests that opportunities can be crafted to maximize the possible health benefits.

The 17 page report, *The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research*, is available free online at <http://www.nationalservice.org>.

Tampa Bay Area

The Tampa metropolitan area includes Tampa (FL), St. Petersburg (FL), Clearwater (FL), and surrounding areas.



Trends and Highlights

- Tampa had an average volunteer rate of 25.8% between 2004 and 2006, compared with 21.8% in Florida.
- On average, Tampa had approximately 570,000 volunteers, who served 72.5 million hours per year between 2004 and 2006.
- For more detailed information on volunteering, go to www.nationalservice.gov.

Volunteers...extending our reach.

A Healthy Perk for You!

The Wellness center is an exercise on your own facility and is a free benefit to all long term County volunteers. The center is located in the basement of the old Courthouse at 324 S. Ft. Harrison Avenue, in downtown Clearwater.

The center has a full circuit of Nautilus exercise equipment, stationary bicycles, rowing machines, elliptical fitness cross trainers, dumbbells, treadmills and stair climbers. Rooms are furnished for aerobics and other types of exercise classes. The center contains a reception area, showers and locker amenities.

Volunteers exercise at their own risk and access to the center is by an access I.D. card which is issued after an orientation has been completed.

Benefits of membership

- Group exercise classes
- Free weights
- Nautilus equipment
- Cardiovascular equipment
- Daily use lockers
- Showers
- Wellness resource library
- Individualized exercise programs
- Fitness assessments

Hours of operation

Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

The center is closed on weekends and all county holidays.

How to become a member of the Wellness Center

An orientation of approximately 30 minutes is required. At the orientation, a brief tour of the facility is given and paperwork is completed to gain an access I.D. card.

Call the Wellness Coordinator at 464-3768 to reserve a spot.



"A good beginning makes a good end."

English Proverb

Attention Bright House cable customers, effective December 11th Bright House is moving Pinellas County Government television to **channel 622**. If you have basic cable service you'll need a converter box from Bright House to see your government in action. If your Bright House cable comes from the wall straight into your TV or VCR, you probably have basic cable and need a box. Bright House will charge you \$1 a month and installation is free. Each TV will need its own box. For more information call **Bright House at 727-329-5020**. Don't miss the best in government television coming soon to channel 622.

Send your funny, true-to-life stories about volunteering to:
Volunteer Services, c/o Dan Shannon
333 Chestnut St., Clearwater, FL 33756

Humor in the Volunteer Corps

Not so long ago while volunteering in the wedding/events program at Extension/Florida Botanical Gardens, I was trying to make a great impression on a totally sophisticated and charming engaged couple. They were enthralled with the grandeur of the Wedding Garden and the beauty of the Magnolia Reception Room.

As we concluded our garden walkabout, the bride posed this question: "What is the most common reason couples choose not to have their wedding here?" At that precise moment, almost on cue, a sleek black racer scurried across the great lawn in front of us.

Without missing a beat, the groom responded, "Hon, I think I've got your answer." - submitted by Dan Shannon

Coordinator's Comments from Sandy Herron



It has been said the men suffer from a "mid life crisis" and women pursue a "mid life purpose". I think when it comes to our wonderful volunteers we are fortunate that all seem to be pursuing the vision of making their communities a better place to live.

I have recently been chosen to lead a team of volunteers to Kenya in January 2008. I am very excited to be able to "extend our reach" far beyond the borders of Pinellas County

or even North America.

Our team of eight will be working with mainly women outside of Nairobi teaching basic health care and mentoring in business skills. Since disease is so prevalent in that corner of the world many of them are the sole support of their families.

It is my hope to learn more about altruism, diversity, and organizational properties/ teaching skills that we can apply to our Pinellas County Volunteer

Corps to make it even better than it is today.

I will proudly wear my blue *Pinellas Employee Volunteers* T shirt in Africa—globally "extending our reach".

Sandy Herron

Coordinator
Volunteer Services

"The cure for anything is saltwater - sweat, tears or the sea."

Isak Dinesen

Visit us at:
www.volunteers.org