



Presents

**DON'T JUST
SIT THERE;
VOLUNTEER**

DIVERSITY - UNITY - COMMUNITY

The mission of One Planet United Organization is:

“To be a channel helping to create World peace, breaking down barriers that focus on differences, as well as promoting visionary ways to unite all people.”

“Don’t Just Sit There; Volunteer” is one of our visionary ways of fulfilling the mission of One Planet United which is ultimately to unite *all* people. We believe that one of the most powerful tools for a more peaceful world is volunteering. By reaching out and giving your time to those less fortunate, an inner transformation happens in both the “helper” and the “helpee” that connects their hearts to each other thus connecting them at a deeper level with all of humanity. The statement “It is in giving that we receive” fulfills that inner place in all human beings that yearns to help others. We believe that if we begin at the local community level with programs like “Don’t Just Sit There; Volunteer” town by town and city by city will grow to where people can truly become closer as a human family, thus offering a greater chance for true peace in the world..

If you need further help in bringing “Don’t Just Sit There; Volunteer” to life in your community, you can call us at (954) 340-2115 or 1-866-340-2115 or email us at info@opunited.org. We’ll be here to help in any way we can.

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Don't Just Sit There; Volunteer

There is a trend that is continuing to grow in our society of people's desire to reach out and help others who are hurting. Volunteering your time, talents and resources is often a natural response of those who have been fortunate in their lives and have a desire to "give back" to people and communities in need. Sometimes, those who give the most time to others are not those who have been blessed with more, but those whose hearts are full of gratitude and who respond by extending their hands and their hearts.

Volunteers play a major role in all aspects of everyday life and without them, many community initiatives and services would disappear or be greatly reduced. Volunteers provide time, caring, love, and in general, the strengthening of communities. One Planet United believes many of the ills in our society today could be lessened or eradicated if more and more individuals and groups came together to say, "How can I help?"

As part of the mission of One Planet United, we want to be an organization that encourages and promotes the *action* of volunteering as well as provide information, resources and links that an individual or group can use to get started.

What are some of the ills in our society today that could benefit from active volunteering? Some that come to mind are:

- violent crime
- domestic abuse
- suicide
- child abuse and neglect
- addiction

In addition, who are some of the people who would greatly benefit from active volunteers in their community? Some that come to mind are:

- terminally ill children and adults
- elderly people in nursing homes as well as shut-ins
- people with mental and physical handicaps
- single mothers
- unwed mothers
- adults and children who cannot read
- children without fathers
- homeless men, women and children

These as well as many other issues that face our society will more than likely never be eliminated, but there are ways to help in lessening much of humanity's pain and hardship. Often non profit organizations, religious groups and concerned individuals do heed the call and reach out as volunteers to help. One Planet United believes that there are so many more thousands of people that could be helping to make a difference, but might need a little help in getting started.

Some might ask:

“What are my gifts to help someone in need?”

“How do I know who to contact to volunteer to help?”

“I’ve never volunteered before. How do I know if I qualify?”

One Planet United believes if a person becomes involved in a volunteer effort of any kind, an inner transformation takes place in the heart and the soul of that person, thus lighting the spark that happens when we reach out to those less fortunate. Part of that spark will be an inner desire to become a volunteer for life, always on the lookout as to how they can help.

There is a part of volunteering that is often overlooked and that is the benefits to the one who does the volunteering. When we take the time and energy to help someone who is in need, research says that we are affected in very positive physical, emotional and spiritual ways. Volunteering has been referred to as a “Natural Anti-Depressant.” When a person gives their time and energy to another, internally it creates a natural mood elevator. A person will often stop thinking of themselves and put all of their focus on the one they are helping, thus creating an inner sense of well being.

This program created by One Planet United Organization has been designed so that an individual or group will have access to some of the information and opportunities that are available.

Places to find information about volunteering include:

Locally

***City Hall** - Can provide information on some of the volunteer opportunities in your community.

***Local newspaper** - in most local newspapers, there are usually many different listings for organizations that are looking for volunteers. As well, many times there are editorials about certain non profit organizations that tell a lot about what their mission is. You can decide on the fit that would work best for you.

***Local Congregations and Houses of Worship** - most churches, synagogues and other houses of worship already have community outreach programs. You need not be a member of any particular congregation to lend a hand in helping in their outreach programs. Your help would be welcomed with open arms.

***Websites – (both local and national)** – Exact web addresses as well as research through search engines will provide a significant amount of information regarding an organization you want to review and possibly contact. Listed below is a sampling of global organizations websites and a brief description as to what their focus is.

National/International Websites:

www.handsonnetwork.org – Umbrella organization for local city care groups. Connects you with local organizations in need of volunteers.

www.changemakers.net – Change Makers addresses social entrepreneurship worldwide, as well as looks at all forms of volunteerism.

www.giraffe.org – Giraffe organization encourages you to “stick your neck out” for change and to help others.

www.pointsoflight.org – Points of Light Foundation desires to engage more people, more effectively in volunteer community service.

www.1-800volunteer.org – Provides direct connection throughout the U.S. to local volunteer opportunities that match interests, skills, and the common desire to make a difference.

www.freethechildren.com – An international network of children helping children at a local, national and international level through representation, leadership and action.

www.volunteerinternational.org – An up to date search site for international volunteer and internship opportunities.

www.startsomething.target.com – A national volunteerism program for young people. Sponsored by the Tiger Woods Foundation.

Please contact us if you have any organizations that you would like us to add to this current list.

Volunteer Testimonies

Submitted by P.M. Parkland, Fl.

“For me, volunteering helped make a move to a new community bearable and helped me to become involved in that community in ways I never thought possible. Being a volunteer has helped me to be closer to my children whether it is at their school, with their sports team or in our church. No matter if you are filing, stuffing envelopes or answering phones at a charity, it’s a great feeling to know that, at the end of the day, someone has been helped by that organization and you had a part in it.”

Submitted by S.B. Lakeland, Fl.

Imagine our children experiencing their greatness; being connected to all others, giving of their hearts, their minds, their souls. Imagine their feeling of accomplishment, commitment and what is to make a difference in the lives of others. Imagine their feeling of compassion, caring and concern for others who do not have the simple necessities in life. Imagine their concern for even one hungry or homeless person, wondering how can they help? Imagine our children knowing that as long as there are others going without food or shelter that there is a part of us all that is hungry and homeless. Imagine their humility and their pride in knowing how blessed they are and how they are able to share that blessing with others. Imagine our children being creative in ways that only a child can dream of. Our children being resourceful and ingenious in new ways that make our world a better place to live. Imagine our children going to sleep at night feeling like they make a difference and knowing that nothing is impossible even for a child.

Imagine our schools filled with students that know respect and concern for others. Our schools filled with students that know what it is to work together to achieve goals and that when working together nothing is impossible. Imagine our schools filled with children that know what it is to succeed and to see how their success can change things for so many. Imagine our schools filled with children with dreams of making our world a better place, knowing that everything they do impacts the world in either a positive or negative way. Imagine our schools filled with children that know the power of their intentions, children that have an attitude of “what can I do today to have a positive impact on another”. Imagine our schools with children that go home to their parents and with pride tell them what they are doing to help others. Imagine our schools with the most dramatic decrease in violence, drugs and where gangs are replaced with teams. Imagine our schools with groups sharing the tremendous results of their work, celebrating extraordinary success on a regular basis.

Imagine our children going out into the world as young adults, with a solid foundation on which to build. A foundation that consists of not only the basic skills we teach today but also the reinforcement that consists of integrity, vision, willingness and the sincere belief that they are intimately connected to the world they are moving out into. Imagine our young adults more focused on not just what they can do to earn a living financially but choosing a more conscious path, in harmony with the world they’ve imagined since they were a child. Young adults, our future leaders, with a mindset that is focused on the whole rather than the part they would have carved out for themselves. Young adults that will have a collective consciousness that is without parallel, enabling transformation on truly a global level. Young adults moving into positions of great power with full intention to use that power for the good of all. Young adults raising our future generations instilling in them from infancy through their intentions, actions and by example what it is to live in harmony with the universe.

Submitted by K.W. (6th Grade Student) Boca Raton, Florida

I was inspired to become a hospice volunteer because of both of my older brothers volunteering commitments to Hospice. When I volunteer I have a great feeling of accomplishment, knowing that the time I spend working ultimately translates into better patient care. Meeting the family and friends of Hospice patients has helped me to truly understand the enormous comfort and support that Hospice provides.

Volunteering gives me a wonderful sense of fulfillment. It is the one thing that I do in my life that takes me out of my own self and puts me into service to others. Being a Hospice volunteer really completes my life. I enjoy donating my time and plan to make volunteering at Hospice a permanent part of my life.

Adapted from a column written by Jack Bloomfield for Orlando Life Magazine

I wanted to take this opportunity to share my experience of some of the ways my wife and I taught our children the importance of giving back and volunteering. We were members of a great church for many years back home in the northeast that provided numerous ways to get involved in helping others, so our kids got to be a part of many volunteering opportunities. We fed the homeless in New York City, helped out at holiday time in shelters, rebuilt abandon buildings in the South Bronx, and once provided housing for a ten year old girl from Brooklyn who's Mom was in prison and didn't know who her Dad was. As well, our kids were often invited to be part of the decision making process when we were choosing which organizations or individuals to help support financially.

One thing I found out as they got older and began to enter their teenage years was that it wasn't quite as easy to get their attention when it came to discussing their involvement and importance of helping others. As teens often do, they enter the world of self centeredness and reaching out to others isn't exactly on the top ten of their priority list. We still felt it was important to encourage them, even though at this stage of their lives they were much more reluctant to participate in any volunteer activities.

It is at this time as a parent, when they resist most, that you have to become creative. Some would say that when a parent stoops to the level of bribery to get their child to participate in a volunteer project that they are guilty of bad behavior. Well then, I have to admit, I'm guilty. It was back in the mid 90's and my son was extremely unhappy that we uprooted his life and moved from New York to Florida. He was struggling with his new surroundings and was avoiding not only getting involved in worthy causes; he wasn't even trying to make new friends. An opportunity at our new church was being offered to high school kids to go away and attend what was known as "Work Camp." This is a program where four to five hundred teenagers from many parts of the country travel all over the U.S. to rebuild and repair houses in poor and needy neighborhoods. I wanted him to attend this program not only to have the chance of meeting some new kids but to really be able to have a life changing experience working side by side with people who lived in a very different world than he was used to. A world that he had never seen before.

Here's where the bribery part comes in. He had been talking about how much he wanted to purchase a set of fancy rims for his car, but was having a hard time putting up his own money to purchase them. I told him I had a deal he might not be able to refuse. I told him that if he would attend this week long work camp program, which up this point he was totally resisting, I would pay for the rims for his car. It only took him a few seconds to think about it. It turned out to be a deal he couldn't refuse because he agreed to go.

The good news is that the trip was such a positive experience in his life, that he voluntarily attended the next two summers without any push or bribery tactics from my wife or myself. That was eight years ago and he is now a twenty four year old adult who lives on his own in Atlanta. I have to say that although I am very proud of his achievements in his personal and business life so far, I'm most proud of the fact that last year he volunteered to coach a youth basketball team, and just recently began mentoring a young fatherless boy.

We must always teach our children the importance of reaching out to help others and it is best if it starts when they are young. Of course it benefit's those on the receiving side, but it equally benefit's the one on the giving end. It builds good traits like character, integrity, and selflessness but more importantly, it builds a better world for everyone.

Do you have an inspirational testimony that we can share on our website? We encourage you to share your stories or quotes having to do with volunteering and “giving back.” We will read each one submitted and possibly add it to this section of the One Planet United website.

Email them to: inspiration@opunited.org

NOTE:

One Planet United Programs/Templates are continually being updated. Please visit our website often for most recent updates.