



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK 2020

APRIL 19-25

Standing Apart But Still Connected Through Volunteerism

Contributed by the Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County

We are all living in a new reality with shelter-in-place. While some of us are continuing to work, others are facing unemployment and worrying about rent. While some of us are crowded with the kids at home, others are living alone and scared to leave the house. Whatever your new day-to-day has become, it is an adjustment for us all!

At the Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County we are reassured by the volunteers in our network that have phoned or emailed over the past few weeks to find out how they can help their neighbors during this unprecedented time. We live in a community of people who care and we are grateful that we can connect people with nonprofit and community organiza-

tions that are currently providing essential services to people in need.

At the Volunteer Center, we are now providing food distribution for the mental health community, grocery shopping support for seniors, recruiting volunteers to staff our county emergency shelters, enlisting volunteers to sew masks for county operations, and providing COVID-related resources for fellow nonprofits. We need your help to carry these tasks forward.

We have worked with our community partners over the last several weeks to identify safe ways for volunteers to contribute to emergency efforts and have developed a volunteer guide that is now available on our website.

Volunteers can view

the emergency guide and sign onto the COVID-19 Volunteer Registry, to be matched with a community program that needs healthy volunteers to provide services at scvolunteercenter.org.

In particular the Volunteer Center is working closely with the County to support their effort to provide additional refuge for the unhoused population in Santa Cruz County. Two new shelters have opened to accommodate more people, allowing for increased access to basic needs and space to permit social distancing. With this expansion, volunteers are needed to support the day-to-day operations of the new emergency shelters in Santa Cruz and Watsonville. There are opportunities to help cook meals, distribute

food, and take requests for essential supplies from residents.

Additionally, the Volunteer Center has developed a list of "volunteer opportunities you can do from home" for those who would like to give back while limiting interactions with others. This list includes sewing fabric masks for the County Health Services Department to be distributed to volunteers meeting critical needs, making cards for isolated seniors, or fundraising for the 40th Annual Human Race Online Giving Campaign.

Drawing on our 40-year history of hosting the Human Race, we know that community generosity has never wavered and therefore we've shifted this year's race to a 100% virtual

fundraising campaign. The Human Race has always been a ray of hope and this may be the most important race we have ever held. Some community programs will not survive this crisis without critical support to help keep the lights on.

Donations can be made to more than 80+ nonprofits, schools, or community groups at humanracsc.org.

While today doors may be shuttered, we still have the power to power to sustain the programs we love and rely on by volunteering or donating to the causes we care about. We are at a historic crossroad and our new reality, for better or worse, will change us. What we do right now matters.

Every year we have the opportunity to

connect more than 12,000 volunteers with community needs and even in this challenging time, volunteers have remained undaunted. Standing apart but still connected, we will come through this.

As we continue our lives in this new reality, remember that community service comes in many forms, and even small gestures can make a big difference during this time of uncertainty. Taking the time to call a neighbor, prepare food for a housemate, or play a family game are simple ways we can stay connected and lift the spirits of those around us, wherever we are.

Learn more at www.scvolunteercenter.org or email serve@scvolunteercenter.org



Making Real Connections..... Wherever you are.

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU –Despite these challenging times, Santa Cruz County volunteers, YOU continue to AMAZE and inspire us. Thank you for your undaunted COMPASSION for your neighbors.

Your DEVOTION, COURAGE, and FORTITUDE spur us forward each day. Standing apart but still connected, together we are forging new paths, applying fresh TALENT and CREATIVITY to solve unfolding problems, and helping our community build ADAPTABILITY and resilience. You are PATRIOTS for GOODWILL & KINDNESS and together we are building a better tomorrow.

Volunteers Fight on the Front Lines

Contributed by Second Harvest Food Bank

Volunteers are currently on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis. Every day these individuals are serving our community by distributing meals at local soup kitchens, delivering groceries to seniors who cannot leave their house, making masks, doing errands for elderly and so much more.

Even though Second Harvest's regular volunteer program at our warehouse is on hold due to COVID-19, about 90% of our partner agencies continue to support their client populations with food

from the Food Bank. These are local non profits who work with specific populations, like the elderly, those experiencing homelessness, veterans, and more. They are staffed mostly by agency volunteers and we are so grateful for their commitment to continue to provide healthy food to those in need, especially now.

We also want to thank the California National Guard and the California Conservation Corps volunteers. When they arrived at our warehouse in

March and April we were blown away by their experience, work ethic, and positive attitudes. Both organizations have been continuing to work on our “front line” in the warehouse and at the large community food distribution.

Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County want all volunteers, wherever they serve, to know they truly are the heartbeat of our community, especially in times such as these.



Volunteers are the heartbeat of our entire community, especially right now.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

What is Virtual Volunteering?

Millions of people across the globe volunteer every year.

Busy working professionals may wonder how nearly one billion people across the globe find the time to volunteer. One way charitable men and women can pitch in even if they're pressed for time is to try their hand at virtual volunteering, which makes it possible to lend a hand without leaving home.

Charitable organizations will always need volunteers to pitch in on project sites, but they also need support in other areas. Virtual volunteers can help perform behind-the-scenes tasks that are essential to the survival of charitable organizations.

Nonprofit organizations can benefit greatly from virtual volunteers, who can perform tasks like website design and data entry from the comforts of home on their own time. Virtual volunteers also can help out during fundraising campaigns and strategizing sessions that can help organizations meet their goals. Anyone with a computer and internet access can become a virtual volunteer, regardless of how busy their schedule is. In fact, many working professionals may find it's easy to fit volunteering into their schedules if they do not have to travel to a project site or the office of a charitable organization.

Virtual volunteering also can make it possible for charitable men and women to help overseas organizations, helping to eliminate the hurdles created by geography and time zones.

Virtual volunteering can benefit volunteers as well as the organizations they help. Jayne Cravens, author of “The Last Virtual Volunteering Guidebook,” spent years studying the benefits of virtual volunteering. Cravens ultimately concluded that virtual volunteering can benefit volunteers in various ways, including allowing them to volunteer with multiple causes and organizations and even affording them more time to volunteer. Cravens also discovered that virtual volunteering makes volunteering possible for disabled men and women or people who live in especially remote areas.

Men and women interested in becoming virtual volunteers should contact a favorite charity to discuss how they can begin lending a hand today.



photo contributed



photos courtesy of Second Harvest Food Bank

How Families Can Volunteer Together

The efforts of volunteers often go unnoticed, but the thoughtful men, women and children who give up their free time to support worthy causes do a lot to bolster their communities.

Volunteering also pays dividends for the volunteers, and not just because they're helping to strengthen the communities they call home. According to the Mayo Clinic, research has shown that volunteering can lower rates of depression and promote better physical health compared to not volunteering. In addition, an analysis of data from the Longitudinal Study of Aging found that individuals who volunteer have lower mortality rates than those who do not.

With so many benefits to volunteering, it's no wonder that fami-

lies often seek ways to volunteer together. Such efforts can be a great way to spend time together and give back to a community, all the while affording families a chance to reap the many rewards of volunteering. The following are a handful of potential volunteering opportunities that families can consider.

LITTER CLEANUPS

Many national and local organizations aim to combat plastic pollution via beach cleanups, and these efforts welcome volunteers of all ages, making them ideal ways for families to give back together.

But litter is not just a problem for oceanfront communities. The organization Keep America Beautiful notes that 66 million pounds of litter and recyclables were collected

in 2019.

COMBAT HOMELESSNESS

Volunteering at a nearby homeless shelter is a great way for families to help this often underserved segment of the population. Contact a local homeless shelter to learn about specific volunteering opportunities, which may involve preparing and serving meals and involvement in other services shelters offer.

CLOTHING DRIVES

Clothing drives not only benefit the homeless, but they also help people who simply don't have the means to purchase new clothing.

Volunteering together is a great way for families to give back to their communities.

Easy Ways to Volunteer and Give Back to Your Community

Easy ways to volunteer and give back to your community

Millions of people across the globe volunteer every day. Without the selfless efforts of volunteers, many charities would be forced to cease operations. Volunteering can be as beneficial for volunteers as it can for the organizations they help. For example, the Mayo Clinic Health System notes that research has indicated volunteering leads to lower rates of depression while providing individuals with a sense of purpose. With so much to gain from volunteering, it's no wonder that so many


people across the globe volunteer. According to the United Nations Volunteers program, global estimates place the number of worldwide volunteers at 970 million. It's never been easier to volunteer and begin helping your community. Adults and children who want to join the nearly one billion strong global volunteering community need not look far to get involved. The Corporation for National Community Service notes that the following are some easy ways to volunteer in your community.

- Work in conjunction with a local food pantry to organize a food donation drive.
- Work with a local emergency response organization to produce and distribute disaster-preparedness kits.
- Help fellow community members save money by collecting and sharing information about free tax-preparation services.
- Volunteer at an animal shelter.

When it comes to volunteering, the opportunities are as endless as the benefits of giving back to your community.

- Serve meals at a local shelter or community kitchen.






COMMUNITY BRIDGES
PUENTES DE LA COMUNIDAD

Thank you

to all our dedicated
Community Bridges volunteers!
Your commitment during this time
inspires us and helps us build a
thriving community, together!



communitybridges.org

Dominican Hospital Volunteers: A 65-Year Legacy

Contributed by Dominican Hospital

Since 1955, the Dominican Hospital Volunteer Program has been creating rewarding opportunities that inspire growth and enrich patient care.

Our incredible group of volunteers serves as the hospital's ambassadors, cheerfully assisting visitors at our reception desks and staffing the hospitality cart. They also have the chance to work in a variety of areas throughout the hospital, receiving first-hand experience of what it's like to work in the health care field.

Celebrating its 65th anniversary this year, the program was established to provide

leadership both in raising funds to support hospital programs and in the field of hospital volunteerism. The focus has recently moved away from fundraising, which is now expertly managed by the Dominican Hospital Foundation.

Since records were first kept in 1965, the program's donations to the hospital total more than \$2.25 million. The monies are donated to the Dominican Hospital Foundation and thus far have supported the hospital's Katz Cancer Resource Center, patient education, physical therapy, paramedic equipment (and other equipment used throughout the

hospital), renovation projects, the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit nursery, and cardiac catheterization labs.

In 2019 alone, Dominican Hospital volunteers gave more than 16,000 hours of service. Our oldest volunteer is an impressive 92 years old, while our youngest volunteers are just 16.

This National Volunteer Week, the Dominican Hospital family of nurses, medical staff physicians, and employees give thanks to the many women, men, and young adults who so generously give their time and talent to further our mission of a healthy community!

Volunteering is at the Heart of Healthy Aging

Contributed by Grey Bears

"Old age," Bette Davis once said, "is no place for sissies." Had she known about Grey Bears at the time she might have added, "and is immeasurably enhanced through volunteering."

Grey Bears offers more than 20 meaningful ways to volunteer – from gleaning orchards, prepping, assembling and delivering bags of groceries, and composting, to refurbishing computers, researching books, running a thrift store register, and helping in the office. A whopping 800 volunteers, the majority of whom are age 60+, donate 80,000 hours of service each year to keep Grey Bears on track.

Volunteering is just plain good for us. When surveyed, the vast majority of Grey Bears volunteers report feeling a sense of accomplishment, that they're making a difference in the lives of others, having fun, meeting people and socializing, and improving their own lives.

The COVID-19 crisis has crystallized the importance of the Grey

Bears signature Healthy Food program that continues to deliver brown bags of fresh produce and healthy staples to 3,900 seniors each week. Grocery store food rescues, daily distributions and healthy hot meals nourish thousands more.

"Thank goodness for our volunteer drivers," says Office Manager, Sharon Gross. "More than 200 new seniors have signed up in the past few weeks. We make sure that our volunteer drivers know who has been added to their routes – including door-to-door deliveries – and that the bags are delivered each week."

One of the biggest challenges during this crisis has been the loss of sales due to the temporary shuttering of the Grey Bear thrift, electronics and book stores that support the Healthy Food program. According to Grey Bears Executive Director, Tim Brattan, the community has stepped in to help fill the funding gap.

"It's going to take a while as a community to figure out when and

how we move forward. The generosity of individuals, foundations and businesses has been amazing and is so needed. Their collective support inspires our work and the community need we serve."

Over four decades of service Grey Bears food delivery and resource conservation programs, recycling and reuse operations, events, classes, senior support groups, and repair cafés make our community stronger, healthier and more sustainable. And at the heart of it all are volunteers.

Grey Bears shows that our aging community is not a burden but an asset, a natural resource with a diversity of skills, talents and boundless ways to contribute. Their hopes, dreams and ambitions are as vibrant and strong as ever. We believe that the future should be something to look forward to, at every age.

To donate, volunteer or sign up for the Grey Bears Healthy Food program visit greypears.org or call 831-479-1055.



Thank you, Dominican volunteers, for 65 years!

Dominican Hospital nurses, independent medical staff physicians, and employees honor the many women, men, and young adults who generously give their time and talent to further our mission of a healthy community.

Visit dignityhealth.org/dominican



Dignity Health®
Dominican Hospital



PHOTO: POPPY DEGARMO

Thank You

for your support during the COVID-19 crisis.

Together we:

- Deliver 2.2 million pounds of healthy food
- Engage 800 amazing volunteers
- Reuse 1,500 tons of donated items in our thrift stores
- Divert 6,200 tons of electronics, Styrofoam and recycling from landfills
- Connect thousands of seniors in classes, support groups and events

+Recycling Centers

- 2710 Chanticleer Ave, Santa Cruz Open Every Day, 7:30-3:30. Free Drop-off of e-waste, appliances, metal, styrofoam (EPS#6) & more.
- Ben Lomond Transfer: Redeem your CRV, Mon-Sat, 10-2:30
- Buena Vista Landfill: Open Mon-Sat, 7:30-2:30



Grey Bears
connect sustain recycle

HEALTHY FOOD FOR SENIORS • RECYCLING CENTERS

THRIFT STORE • BOOKS • ELECTRONICS
CLASSES • EVENTS • REPAIR CAFÉS
VOLUNTEER • DONATE



BEST THRIFT STORE
BEST SPECIALTY GIFT STORE
BEST BOOK STORE (RUNNER UP)

2710 Chanticleer Ave, Santa Cruz 95065 /// (831)479-1055 /// greypears.org