2016 SPRING Newsletter

CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS

This week at Greensboro Urban Ministry, we are celebrating our volunteers and their vital work. It’s National Volunteer Week, and these folks are definitely worthy of all the shout-outs we can share! Every day, we are grateful to the men and women who give their time and talent to us. In a year, some 2,000 volunteers will work with us.

The value of an hour of volunteer time is about $23, according to the Corporation of National and Community Service. This means our volunteers’ time amounts to a contribution of nearly $1.5 million! We simply could not do all that we do without this dedicated service.

The first volunteers arrive in Potter’s House Community Kitchen before the sun is up, cooking and serving breakfast for our shelter guests. The last ones leave late in the evening, after serving dinner, sharing support or leading recovery meetings.

Many of these folks have served with us for years. Bernard McCoy is a great example. For 14 years, he has led a weeknight support meeting at our West Gate City Boulevard campus. Bernard, who is a professional cook for Guilford County Schools, also prepares and provides a much-appreciated meal for the meeting participants.

Gin Reid Hall, director of Pathways Center for families, describes the many groups and individuals who serve there as the shelter’s “backbone.” To touch on just a few things these folks do, they prepare meals for families, deliver baskets to the children for holidays, tutor, and provide childcare and nutrition workshops.

Around the corner, at Partnership Village, faithful groups offer these same supports to the previously homeless men, women and families who live in the complex. Ruth Anderson, director of The Servant Leadership School, has coordinated after-school tutors for a decade now. This year, these same folks are also building a club program at the school where Partnership Village children attend. Debate, knitting and other enrichment are opening more windows to the world for these elementary students.

At Greensboro Urban Ministry, we serve our guests – and we also sincerely seek to serve those who are called to fight the scourge of poverty in our community. We appreciate each of you and your call to build a community where all are fed, housed and whole. And through our collective efforts, we share and grow together, with our guests, to make this vision a reality in Greensboro.

Rev. Myron Wilkins, Executive Director

CHECK OUT MORE ONLINE:

- More volunteer stories from the front lines
- Results from the Leadership Semi-Annual Food Drive
- As winter ends, the White Flag and WE shelter wrap-up
- Like our page on Facebook and follow us @GSOUrbanMin on Twitter
COLLECTIVE IMPACT

“Collective impact”... words a friend used to explain to me about some committee work she was doing through her place of employment. It is the idea of a committed group from different sectors coming together with a common agenda for solving a specific social problem.

Collective impact is the term that I would use to best describe our work and ministry together in caring for those outside in frigid weather. Back last fall, we met (GUM, Interactive Resource Center, YWCA, First Baptist Church, and city representatives) to begin work on assessing needs for the winter of those in housing transition; thus began the work of the White Flag Emergency Plan team. The plan we designed was to make sure that nobody would suffer from freezing weather -- especially overnight. It was exciting to work with different agencies for the good of those who can be easily overlooked.

I was grateful to be invited to the table to represent the voice and interests of Greensboro and want to be a part of the work and ministry for helping those in need.

Through our partnership with GUM, we have come to learn more about the needs of our community. FBC was invited into a relationship to help and love on our most vulnerable neighbors. Our partnership includes providing canned goods for the food pantry, serving dinner at Pathways, walking in the CROP Walk, working with the White Flag team, hosting the annual Feast of Caring, and so many other ways.

For real change to take place in our community it requires the work and ministry of all of us. Collective impact is an encouraging and efficient way for us to tackle some of our greatest community needs.

Rev. Kim Priddy, Minister to Missions and Community Outreach at First Baptist Church, describes herself “as a huge fan of the work and ministry of GUM.”

GETTING CONNECTED

Excerpt from a Volunteer Reflection by Judy Newlin

I became involved 18 years ago with Greensboro Urban Ministry (GUM) when the Girl Scout troop I led provided weekly babysitting for a young mother who was a GUM client and a student in nursing school. Our help gave her time to study and ultimately helped her graduate. Seeing the seeds of giving back grow in such an important way for this young woman was so exciting!

As a school teacher for 29 years, I sowed many seeds and tended the seeds of volunteers that grew into great opportunities for my students. Especially where children are concerned, everyone wants to help. Sometimes, however, people don’t know how to help and be effective.

That’s why an organization like GUM is so valuable. GUM has a longstanding trusted relationship with the community. GUM provides the structure and flexibility for people to turn passion into practical action. In some way, small or large, we can all help.

We just have to help people get connected, and there’s such power in numbers. At Partnership Village, our successes come through the combined efforts of many congregations, volunteers and staff. If there’s a challenge, it’s met – we don’t always know how or why, but it’s met. Someone finds a church bus; a couple finds, cleans and mends yard-sale sleeping bags. Someone else raises money for swimsuits and tennis shoes. Before you know it, we’ve got a whole group of kids going to a sleep-away camp for the first time.

Read the rest of Judy’s story on our website, www.greensborourbanministry.org/volunteer/stories.

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