

the volunteer center of the East Bay

The Volunteer Center—where volunteers and nonprofit organizations connect

Share the Spirit Donations Climb in 2010

The Volunteer Center, in partnership with the Bay Area News Group and the Dean Leshner Foundation, sponsors the Share the Spirit Fund to which readers of the Contra Costa Times and Oakland Tribune can make monetary contributions benefitting local nonprofits.

Donations to the fund support children, teens and families with gifts, food and necessities. For example, one nonprofit used their Share the Spirit grant to purchase blankets and gift cards for their low income students and their families.

This year the fund received donations from 731 generous donors totaling \$151,774. This was a 15% increase over the amount donated in 2009. "It's heartwarming to receive donations from the same people year-after-year. Many of the fund's donors have been giving regularly since 2004." said Program Director, Karla McCormick.



Rich Knowles, volunteer, and Alissa Fencsik, Know How Network Program Manager, review a potential project.

The "New Volunteer" Professionals 55+ Offer Highly Needed Skills Pro Bono

The Volunteer Center's Know How Network program fosters skills-based volunteerism. As this new service pattern emerges, more people are interested in volunteering their professional skills on short term high impact projects at nonprofits. Because the Baby Boom generation is driving the trend, we've incorporated the Know How Network under our Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) that coordinates volunteers age 55 and above.

Know How Network volunteer Rich Knowles is a highly skilled and experienced problem-solver with extensive background in business management and computer technology including 20 years at the Federal Home Loan Bank in San Francisco. When Alissa Fencsik, a program manager for Know How Network, tapped Rich for a significant project at Senior Outreach Services neither of them knew just how successful the project was going to be.

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She's Always Been an Independent Woman



Jan Jackson, volunteer bookkeeper for the Volunteer Center of the East Bay.

It started when she and her best girlfriend left their home in Olympia, Washington and moved to San Francisco. It was 1960 and they were just out of high school and ready to start a great life. There were lots of jobs and they both found work within a couple of days. And she's been in the

Bay Area ever since.

Who is she? She's Jan Jackson, the volunteer bookkeeper for the Volunteer Center!

Jan's never looked back and has had a wonderful career as an accounting professional – working for Greyhound

Corporation, Varian, and several large law firms in San Francisco. A busy professional, she and her husband also raised two sons but she still found time to volunteer. She started with Share the Spirit in 2005 and has continued to volunteer her time since then with several other stops along the way.

In 2008, the Volunteer Center needed a part-time bookkeeper and who better to do the job than Jan; she's been doing it ever since. When asked why she was such a dedicated volunteer, she said "I've had a wonderful life and really enjoy giving back to the community. I just can't imagine being retired and not volunteering time in some way for the good of others."

Karla McCormick, Program Director for The Volunteer Center said: "The Volunteer Center is so fortunate to have Jan. With more than 30 years of accounting experience, she brings great value to our organization. We are so grateful for her five years of service. Jan epitomizes exactly how retirees can help nonprofits by sharing their professional skills!"

Youth in Action – Holiday Craft Program for Underprivileged Children

The Volunteer Center hosts a teen volunteer program called the Youth Action Council (YAC). The Council consists of local high school teens who volunteer for one-time projects they choose, manage and lead.

YAC is a great way for teens to sample a variety of opportunities that can lead to future careers and skills development while learning about local community issues. YAC provides the opportunity to make an immediate impact. Let's see how:

Hailey is an 8th grade YAC volunteer; she loves crafts and working with children. She asked to lead a holiday craft project to combine her passions. We contacted the family coordinator for Habitat for Humanity East Bay, and



Isabel Paez said YES!

The families that receive homes through Habitat are still very low-income and most of the children have never made craft projects. Hailey created the craft ideas, purchased the supplies and led the project. The Habitat children could hardly wait to begin -- and sit next to a teenager – to make a "new best friend." The opportunity for the children to make

something fun was all the reward the YAC volunteers needed.

Project Lead Hailey could hardly wait to ask if she could lead a craft project for the Habitat children every holiday.

"I have been part of the Youth Action Council for two years. Last December, I did a project that was very meaningful. Many of these kids hadn't had any experience with crafts before, and it got me so excited at every smile they showed and their enthusiasm. I love working with the Youth Action Council and all of the great opportunities that it provides for volunteering."

Right now she is working on a spring craft party. The Habitat children are already asking when they get to see their teen friends again.

NOTES FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

From the news and financial media, we are constantly hearing references to the “new normal.”

In our world at the Volunteer Center, the “new normal” is certainly different than the normal of three years ago. There are greater demands and fewer resources. Local organizations like Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa struggle daily to feed the increased number of hungry families. As the post-recession dust is settling, we are witnessing changes among the nonprofit agencies we serve as well as the volunteers who commit to support them with their time and talent. While the new normal has created funding challenges for our nonprofits, our volunteer referral process has been a large part of the solution.

The normal we experience today is alive and vibrant! More than 8,500 volunteer hours were donated last year by our extraordinary middle and high school students in our Youth Action Council (YAC). Just as

special are the skilled volunteer hours provided by our Know How Network baby-boomers, 55 and older. We are also thankful for corporate teams who contributed countless hours during the United Way Week of Caring and Chevron’s Volunteer Week. Extraordinary, too, are the contributions made



by our AmeriCorps members who support six separate nonprofit agencies within the East Bay. And our online volunteer referral program is stronger than ever. Visit www.helpnow.org, the volunteer lifeline for over 580 East Bay nonprofits. With a couple of clicks of a mouse, connect with

the nonprofit cause of your choice.

In 2011, as we at the Volunteer Center take stock of our “normal,” it seems much more than new and different. Our “new normal” is about an array of Volunteer Center Programs, all founded in the values of volunteerism and energized by a spirit that insists on being part of our East Bay’s positive response to the challenges we each face. We are so proud to be part of these solutions and so thankful to all of our many donors and supporters who appreciate the unique role we play in connecting volunteers with the extraordinary causes that are meaningful to those they serve... and those who serve them.

- John Tarman, Executive Director

John came to the position of ED last fall after serving for two years on our Board of Directors. He recently retired from the California Interscholastic Federation after 20 twenty years of service culminating in his position as Assistant Executive Director and CFO.

The “New Volunteer” - Professionals 55+ Offer Highly Needed Skills Pro Bono

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The project goal was to consolidate six different databases -- one for each of the Senior Outreach Services programs -- into one master database. Knowles credits his listening skills in helping him understand what functions the staff at Senior Outreach needed from their database plus his belief that “training computers to do what people want” is the best path to success.

It certainly was the case on this project. Rich had to define -- in detail -- individual user expectations. Combining his knowledge and experience with keen listening skills,

Rich closely defined the programming details, wrote the program and handled the data conversion. The outstanding results have been measurable in time and money saved plus very happy people at Senior Outreach Services.

Under the guidance of two talented program managers, Alissa Fencsik and Carol Ann Barber, the Know How Network has placed 31 skilled volunteers, completing 27 projects at 20 nonprofits in Contra Costa County. They work with the volunteers and nonprofits to ensure a successful

project. They assist the nonprofit by helping them identify the project and define clear guidelines, deadlines and deliverables. At the same time, they recruit and interview volunteers with a variety of skills. They then assume a matchmaking role -- finding the best fit given the project needs.

If you know someone skilled who is 55+ and interested in volunteering, please have them give us a call. Nonprofits needs include skills in areas such as graphic design, marketing and communications, fundraising, database and technology as well as web design.

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Disaster Network Volunteers



Volunteer Virtually with our Disaster Network

After a disaster, there is an outpouring of community support for those affected. Our Center connects volunteers with opportunities to help with relief and recovery efforts. And we need your help broadcasting this important information!

Our Center will post information about how volunteers can sign up to help with disaster recovery projects. We'll also post information for people who need help. Disaster Network Volunteers use their personal social media profiles to encourage community service.

1. Like us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/VolunteerEastBay>
2. Follow Us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/VolCtrEastBay>
3. When local disaster or emergency occurs, retweet and share disaster information posted by the Volunteer Center if you are able to access the internet.

Questions? Contact Lauren Lyon at lyon@helpnow.org or (925) 472-5768.

Major Supporters

The Volunteer Center gratefully acknowledges our major contributors.

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The Volunteer Center could not operate without the generosity of individual donors. If you would like to support the Volunteer Center, you may send a contribution in the enclosed envelope or donate online at www.HelpNow.org/Support_Donate.php.

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