

the volunteer center of the East Bay

The Volunteer Center—where volunteers and nonprofit organizations connect

Week of Caring 2010 Recap

Last week, 3,136 civic-minded employees from local businesses generously donated their time and energy, and completed over 317 volunteer projects to benefit 86 nonprofit organizations.

The Week of Caring program is a long-standing partnership between the United Way of the Bay Area, the Volunteer Center and the presenting sponsor, Chevron. We deeply appreciate the many months of tireless effort that Karla McCormick and Theresa Hurley of the Volunteer Center staff contributed to recruit nonprofit beneficiaries and match corporate volunteer teams with service projects on such a massive scale.

2010 Participating Companies

- AT&T
- Bank of the West
- Chevron
- Dow Chemical
- Enterprise Holdings
- Enterprise Rent a Car
- Ernst & Young
- JCPenney
- Kaiser Permanente
- Matson Navigation Company
- Nordstrom Rack, San Leandro
- Nordstrom, Walnut Creek
- Public Policy Institute of California
- Richmond Community Foundation
- State Farm, Emeryville
- Wells Fargo



Sam Crossley, volunteer videographer, filming in Mexico.

Talented Filmmaker, Dedicated Volunteer, & High School Student - the Many Sides of Sam Crossley

Lauren Lyon, Program and Communications Director, recently spoke with volunteer, Sam Crossley, about his experience making a promotional video for the Center last winter. Sam, then a high school sophomore, borrowed everything he needed from friends to single-handedly turn our office into a professional photo shoot. You can see his polished, final product on our website, www.HelpNow.org.

LL: *Did you enjoy making a promotional video for the Center?*

SC: I made a few videos before for my church but this was my first one for a nonprofit. It was the most fun project I've worked on because everyone was so nice. At first, I didn't know what to expect. But you gave me almost complete creative freedom. That made it feel like it was my video that I could develop into what I wanted it to be. And it challenged me to put what I believe into a video to draw other people into volunteering. I tried to focus on what I like about volunteering to motivate other people to volunteer.

LL: *Have you ever volunteered before?*

SC: I volunteer a lot with my church. Often it's feeding people, talking to homeless people in the park, or making sandwiches. We also make annual mission trips to Mexico to build houses.

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Chrissy Wilberg of the Contra Costa Humane Society, left, meets with Jim Gessling, a Know How Network Volunteer; David Stegman of the Contra Costa Humane Society, and Carol Ann Barber of the Know How Network. Photo by Dan Rosenstrauch.

Skilled Volunteers Put Their "Know How" to Good Use

Bonnie McDonald had practiced law for several years, and when she retired she decided to spend her time differently and serve her community. "I wanted to do something more substantial," Bonnie says. She found an opportunity that would allow her to utilize her expertise through the Know How Network (KHN), a program sponsored by the Volunteer Center of the East Bay. In her new volunteer role at Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa, Bonnie provides legal advice for seniors and helps them resolve their problems.

The Know How Network matches the skills of volunteers 55 and older with short-term projects benefitting local nonprofit organizations. Volunteers typically spend two to four hours a week for one to three months on a project -- the commitment is discussed and agreed to by the volunteer and the nonprofit organization, says Carol Ann Barber, KHN Program Manager. "We work with people who have some of the key skills that nonprofits have a hard time recruiting for," says Ann Wullschleger, KHN Program

Director. "We bridge the gap between volunteers who want to use those skills and nonprofits that need those skills." Writing grants, website development, project management, graphic design, information technology, marketing and public relations and accounting are among the most needed volunteer skills, according to the KHN program managers.

The downturn of the economy has resulted in layoffs of professionals now looking to use their skills or learn new skills between jobs or as they transition to new careers. This is why the flexible schedules and short-term projects attract volunteers to KHN, says Alissa Fencsik, KHN Program Manager.

Bonnie says volunteering with KHN gives people an opportunity to leverage their professional skills to make a difference for those in need. Find more information about KHN at www.KnowHowNetwork.org.

NOTES FROM OUR

"Social networking", we all hear the phrase every day. The local news wants us to connect with them on Facebook or Twitter and who hasn't heard of someone connecting with old classmates from high school? It's popular with students, millennials, Gen-Xers, Gen-Yer's, and "heaven forbid" their parents. It's the way a lot of folks stay connected around the world but let's not lose track with how we really stay connected. When I think of social networking, I think of the conversation with a World War II survivor that makes his



The Many Sides of Sam Crossley
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LL: *What keeps you engaged in volunteering when you've got so many other activities competing for your time?*

SC: I find volunteering to be fun. It evokes a good feeling that you did something nice for someone for nothing in return. Every time I volunteer, I meet people that I tend to become friends with for the rest of my life. I met one of my best friends through the church volunteer program. All of my good friends have come through volunteerism.

LL: *Why would you recommend volunteering to your fellow students & friends?*

SC: Volunteering fills you with joy. And it makes you think about what you're doing with your life more. You become less selfish and more involved with other people. You become a better friend. What I've learn is it's not about me; it's about the people that I'm helping.

2nd Year of AmeriCorps Volunteer Infrastructure Program Promises to Be Bigger & Better

Last year, the Volunteer Center jumped at the chance to participate in a new, pilot project, the Volunteer Infrastructure Program. Conceived in response to the economic downturn, it was designed to add volunteer support to nonprofit organizations that saw a sharp increase in demand for their services for low-income children and families. The program was a big success and we are proud to bring it back for a second year.

"Essentially, we've developed a program that turns our AmeriCorps Members into "consultants" who are able to help our nonprofit partners improve their volunteer programs," says Lauren Lyon, Program Director for the Volunteer Infrastructure Program.

"When they start, our AmeriCorps members are new to volunteer management. During their service year, they receive over 150 hours of

professional training and coaching from the Volunteer Center while working full-time within our partner organizations. By the end of the year, they've become highly effective volunteer coordinators and project managers," Lauren explains.

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Our AmeriCorps "consultants" are able to act as catalysts for sustainable organizational change. They assess existing volunteer programs, develop plans to improve them and create new procedures to ensure that the organization is ready to engage more volunteers. They also recruit 100 new volunteers throughout the year.

Last year, AmeriCorps members increased the volunteer program capacity in partner sites by an average

of 25% during six-month placements. We plan to exceed these results by building on lessons and placing this year's six AmeriCorps members in yearlong placements.

Returning AmeriCorps member Zaylia Pluss remarks, "I enjoyed my first year of the AmeriCorps Volunteer Infrastructure Program because I was able to support and build the volunteer programs at two nonprofits (Alameda Point Collaborative and Berkeley Youth Alternatives) while learning and growing both personally and professionally."

She says, "It was due to the job market and my positive experiences with the Volunteer Center and the AmeriCorps program that I decided to come back for a second year, and I am loving it so far!"

Our 2010/2011 nonprofit partners include: AIDS Project East Bay and CivicCorps Schools in Oakland, Juvenile Hall Auxiliary in Martinez, Opportunity Junction in Antioch, and The Salvation Army and STAND! for Families Free of Violence in Concord.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

day (and mine) because I listened to his stories. I think of tutoring a 5th grader and hearing about how her math test went today. I think about a volunteer team repainting a shelter and the stories they are swapping about how rewarding the project is. I think about the homebound senior who can't wait for a visit from the library program volunteer to talk about her latest book. That's social networking!

Let's spend a little less time on our computers, Blackberries and iPhones and a little more time building our real social networks!

All that said, I know what a "Tweet" is and, of course, you can follow the Volunteer Center at facebook.com/VolunteerEastBay and twitter.com/VolCtrEastBay to read about the latest volunteer projects and news.

—Lorraine Meuleners



AmeriCorps members from left: Cecily Wild, Erin Wright, Ursula Machado, Zaylia Pluss, and Eric McPherson. Not pictured: Joclar Dala.

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Attention Students!

We've heard that many schools require community service but sometimes it's difficult to find volunteer opportunities when you're under 18 years old and want to volunteer without a parent. We understand this is a frustrating problem and we're ready to help.

We searched through our database of volunteer projects and tagged 200+ service opportunities available to students 13-17 years of age. Then we added a button, "For Teens," to our homepage, www.HelpNow.org, that provides a direct link to the projects available to students. Problem solved.

Support the Volunteer Center

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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