Volunteer Spotlight
From Tutoring to a Chameleon!!?

Helping people is in Rich Burand’s nature. After a 26-year career in nursing at Mt. Sinai Medical Center, he decided to hang up his scrubs and take a new direction.

As his father was a school teacher, Rich realized his passion was to help children improve their reading skills. He contacted Greater Cleveland Volunteers and was connected with a staff member providing an “endless” list of opportunities in the education field.

He chose to become a tutor at Bedford’s Glendale School (where his wife graduated) and has been there five years, teaching one-on-one, or to small groups. Volunteering twice a week in one-hour increments, he believes in encouraging the students as they practice with letters and numbers. He tells them, “We all make mistakes. They don’t make pencils without erasers.” Rich enjoys great relations with the principal and staff and is able to share his compassion with students.

Always looking for new experiences, in 2016 Rich added duties at the Cleveland Botanical Garden, another partner agency of Greater Cleveland Volunteers. He started on a Sunday 7:30 a.m. custodial shift (“dawn patrol”) and then began working for a horticulturist.

Cleveland Botanical Garden has dozens of classes for young people. Rich now teaches “Is It Alive?” and “Plant Parts” geared to kindergarteners. He is also part of the “Creature Feature” program, presenting animals such as Ernie - the popular, show-stopping chameleon - (in his picture) and a tenrec, an unusual hedgehog-like mammal from Madagascar. In addition, Rich feeds the animals and releases butterflies every Friday. Becoming an animal interpreter was never a life goal for Rich, but this is where his journey has taken him.

For others considering volunteering, Rich says, “You don’t know what you’re missing. What I get paid you can’t put in dollars and cents. You don’t know what you’re going to experience today. Be open.” He thinks former teachers are prime candidates to be volunteers. “You never know where the gratitude is coming from, but it’s always genuine.”

Greater Cleveland Volunteers Flower Sale

We are excited to announce that we have teamed up with Dean’s Greenhouse for a special springtime flower sale that will bring beauty to our yards, help us forget about the cold winter months and provide support to our programs and services. Please review the insert with all the sale details. Share with your family and friends. The sale is for the entire month of May.
What’s happening next?

National Volunteer Week is April 7-13 this year. This special week is designated to recognize the contributions that volunteers make in our country. Nonprofit organizations could not provide services without the help of volunteers. Greater Cleveland Volunteers has more than 2,000 volunteers making a difference throughout our community.

We appreciate all that our volunteers do and will celebrate their efforts at our annual volunteer recognition event on Wednesday, April 17th at the Embassy Suites, 5800 Rockside Woods Boulevard in Independence. This is a very special day as we will thank all of our volunteers for their service and recognize several with special awards. I hope you will be able to join us.

The theme of this year’s recognition event is “Thank you for making the community bloom” and will feature a springtime theme.

With the arrival of spring, we start to gear up for our busy volunteer season. We are recruiting volunteers to help at many events this spring and summer. Volunteering for a one-time event is a great way to help without making a significant commitment of time. Volunteers can see a list of events we are seeking volunteer for and sign up to help at: https://greaterclevols.vsyslive.com/pages/tool:any.vol.joblookup:ZPLG8BJG8RYTAT98

Thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers who give of their time to help our community!

Joy Banish
Executive Director

We’re Connected:
One of our partner agencies

The Phillis Wheatley Association

We welcome the Phillis Wheatley Association as a new partner agency!

Established in 1911 as a multiservice community center to serve the needs of children, youth, families and the elderly by empowering individuals and families to succeed and build a thriving community free from poverty.

Currently they are recruiting tutors for their STEP Program located at George Washington Carver School in Cleveland.

This literacy based program focuses on increasing the reading skills of 1st-3rd graders. Training, lesson plans and guidance are supplied to each tutor. Volunteers are needed Tuesday and/or Thursdays from 12:50-2:50 p.m.

Contact Hannah at 216-391-9500 x 2122 or hdriscoll@greaterclevelandvolunteers.org

Making things happen:
Meet one of our Funders

Greater Cleveland Volunteers thanks The Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation for its support of our AARP Foundation Experience Corps after-school literacy tutoring program. This program serves students in two Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland sites, Luis Munoz Marin and Franklin D. Roosevelt schools.

Char and Chuck Fowler created their family foundation in 2001. The foundation is committed to improving the lives of residents of Northeast Ohio through support of programs working to transform lives in education, healthcare, and the arts. It is funded exclusively by contributions from Char and Chuck Fowler and their daughters Chann and Holley.

The foundation values innovative ideas and has a willingness to support organizations that want to try new things. In addition, they believe in having relationships with their grantees that allow for honesty, flexibility and open communication.

When Greater Cleveland Volunteers expanded its Experience Corps program into the after school setting we were looking for funders to help support this new endeavor. The Fowler Family Foundation was willing to help us in this effort and we are very grateful.
Community Outreach: Addressing the Opioid Crisis

It is hard to turn on the news and not hear about the Opioid Crisis in the United States. Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health suggests opioid misuse is increasing among older adults. The epidemic is nearly doubling among Americans over the age of 50. Some staggering statistics to consider:

- Adults between the ages of 45-54 had the highest death rate from drug overdose (30 deaths per 100,000).
- Overdose death rates increased the greatest in adults aged 55-64 (4.2 deaths per 100,000 in 1999 to 21.8 per 100,000 in 2015).

Why Are Opioid Overdose Deaths Increasing Among Older Adults?

- General population is getting older.
- Older adults are more likely to be prescribed opiates.
- Older adults are uniquely vulnerable.
- 42% of medications taken by older adults are obtained from family or friends.
- Less than 50% of older adults discussed the risk of addiction with their health care provider.

For these reasons, Greater Cleveland Volunteers has teamed up with the Ohio Senior Corps Association to safely dispose of unused prescription drugs. The benefits of participating include:

1) Eliminating the possibility of prescription medications being taken by someone other than the intended patient.
2) Promoting safety within your own home.
3) Being environmentally safe, so the drugs do not end up in a landfill or water supply systems.

If you are a volunteer aged 55+, we can help you dispose of medications properly. A limited supply of “Dispose Rx” packets are available from our office. You MUST be willing to complete a short survey within one week of using the packet. Contact our office at 216-391-9500 x 2110 if you would like this packet to help you safely dispose of unneeded or expired prescriptions.

Let’s work together to get medications disposed of safely!

Our Young Professionals (YP) group spent Saturday February 16th volunteering at MedWish, one of our partner agencies.

The YP volunteers took a tour of the 3-floor warehouse, sorted, counted and packaged donated medical equipment and supplies that are sent to developing countries.

If you are a young professional age 21-35 and are interested in volunteering, networking and the development of the YP’s of Greater Cleveland Volunteers enroll online or contact Melissa at 216-391-9500 x 2130 or melick@greaterclevelandvolunteers.org.
Volunteer Recognition

Thank you for making our Community Bloom!

On Wednesday, April 17th we will be celebrating our volunteers at our annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon.

Embassy Suites by Hilton
5800 Rockside Woods Blvd.
Independence, OH 44131

Lunch and Program begins at 12:00 p.m.

Invitations were mailed in March to our volunteers that have served 1+ hours in 2018 and was reported by the nonprofit agency where they served.

Reservation deadline: April 2nd

Event questions: Melissa Elick 216-391-9500 x 2130
melick@greaterclevelandvolunteers.org

Greater Cleveland Volunteers is funded in part by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the U.S. Department of Justice and the State of Ohio

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