

Ready to volunteer?

VIP and the Assistance Center – *two great places to start*

I really think I have one of the coolest jobs in the world...writing the volunteering column that appears each month in the pages of *Plano Profile*, telling our readers about the dedicated volunteers within our community and the incredible organizations they serve.

In preparing to write this column each month, I meet the most amazing people! I have written about teens serving in food pantries. I have written about moms serving in their daughters' Girl Scout troops. I have written about retirees serving in hospitals. No matter what their age, these volunteers are dedicated to giving back to the community serving in animal shelters, museums, schools, nursing homes, and more.

No matter who I talk to, no matter what their career or volunteer involvement, their message is the same: no matter how busy you are, find your passion, find a volunteer opportunity that matches that passion, and then go for it. Give back. If you have one hour a month or

struggle to make ends meet each month, even if you are so busy that you barely have time to think—find a few moments and find a way to give back. Find that passion within you. Do you love animals or children? Do you have medical experience or an interest in local history? Do you know others involved in volunteering? Ask around...you'll be amazed at the opportunities that are available, no matter what your income, time constraints, or stage in life.

And do I follow my own advice? You bet I do. I've been interested in volunteering since I was in high school. I was busy then, and I'm even busier now. I am a wife. I am a mom. I am a freelance writer. But I've volunteered in every kind of setting from a local TV station to a regional history museum.

I've volunteered marketing and public relations services, and I've scrubbed classrooms at my daughter's school. And it seems that the busier I am, the more time I find to give. For in the giving, I am blessed. Blessed to serve organizations that I believe in. Blessed to give a part of myself. Blessed to receive those intangible gifts from those I have been serving. Blessed to make a difference in my community.

For in the giving comes the power in knowing that every action, no matter how small, makes a difference.

Many organizations would not exist without teams of passionate, outstanding volunteers. Are you a social media guru? An administrative task whiz? Do you like getting out in the community, meeting new people, fundraising and talking to others? I guarantee a nonprofit or community group near you is seeking volunteers

in a variety of areas. Whether you have a few hours a month or tons of time each week, you will find an opportunity that fits your skills and your passion.

So, how will you make a difference? Start today! Want to volunteer, but aren't sure where to begin?

Here are two contacts to get you started: **City of Plano Volunteers in Plano (VIP)**, Robin Popik, Volunteer Resources Supervisor, 972.941.7114, RobinP@plano.gov.



Amy Sandling Crawford has been following the volunteer community for *Plano Profile* since 1998.

hours and hours per week. Give back.

For in the giving, you'll receive more than you give. Serving in the community will give you the satisfaction in knowing you're helping an individual, furthering a cause and ultimately making a difference in the community and in this crazy, big world overall.

Even if you are now or have been served by some of these same organizations that use volunteers, even if your budget is tight and you

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The Volunteers In Plano (VIP) Program is committed to encouraging citizen participation within the city of Plano. The program matches volunteers with opportunities within the city that match their interests, skills and availability.

Assistance Center of Collin County 972.422.1125 assistancecenter.org.

The Assistance Center of Collin County brings carefully qualified and prompt short-term assistance to individuals and families in financial crisis to help them regain self-sufficiency. A wide variety of volunteer opportunities are available.

Editors note: Amy Sandling Crawford is a freelance writer specializing in marketing, public relations and creative writing. She enjoys spending time with her family, reading and volunteering in the community. Read more about her writing pursuits at crawfordcreativegroup.com.