

## **Volunteering helps Parker County**

The United States has been shaped by ordinary people who have volunteered to give their time. They have given their energy to overcome challenges such as wars, through disasters to the everyday acts of compassion and purpose that have helped to make change in their country, communities and organizations.

With busy lifestyles and family demands it can be difficult to find time to volunteers. However, the benefits of volunteering are great, for you and your family.

In 2015 there were 62.6 million people who volunteered through or for an organization at least once. More women volunteered than men. The largest age groups of volunteers are adults' ages 35 to 44 years old and approximately 26 percent of the volunteers are teenagers. Volunteers spent hours in schools and shelters, hospitals and hotlines, and faith-based and community-groups. They are the everyday heroes who show up day in, day out and make a difference for millions of women and men around the world.

**Volunteering helps Parker County.** One of the better known benefits of volunteering is the impact on the community. Unpaid volunteers are often what hold a community together. Volunteering allows you to connect to your community and make it a better place. It can also benefit you and your family as well.

**Volunteering helps you get to know new friends and different people in the county.** If you are new in a community and even if you are not new and you want to meet new people, volunteering is one way you can. Volunteering strengthens your ties to the county and the communities and broadens your support network, exposing you to people with common interests, neighborhood resources, and fun and fulfilling activities.

**Volunteering is good for your mind and body.** Volunteering can provide a healthy boost to your self-confidence, self-esteem and life satisfaction. It can teach your new skills or strengthen them. Even if you are looking for a job, the experience of volunteering can help your resume and may even help you find a job.

Volunteering can reduce the risk of depression as it keeps you in regular contact with other and helps you to develop a support system. It helps you stay physically healthy. It is especially helpful to older adults. Studies have found that those who volunteer have a lower mortality rate than those who do not. Volunteering has also been shown to lesson symptoms of chronic pain or heart disease.

There are many organizations in Parker County who need volunteers you can help them out by giving of your time. You don't have to volunteer every day or every week. You can volunteer is just for a few minutes are week or a month. Whatever you can do will be greatly appreciated.

Parker County Extension is an organization where volunteers are involved at all levels through serving on committees, teaching and helping with programs. These included community volunteers, Extension Education Club members, 4-H members and leaders and Master Gardeners.

In 2015, there were 651 volunteers involved in Extension programs giving 20,021 hours. The dollar value was the equivalent of \$451,473.55.