

Why I Volunteer?

When I was asked to write an article about why I volunteered to serve on the Transportation Committee of the Advisory Council on Aging (ACOA), also known as the Senior Mobility Action Coalition (SMAC), my immediate answer was that it's scheduled meeting times fit with my schedule. As a volunteer on the ACOA, we are requested to actively serve on at least one committee, and SMAC best worked with my schedule.

A better question is "Why do I Volunteer?" The answer to this question is more about me and my belief that we are all better off if we all give back to our communities and try to help those in need. I was brought up to believe that society functions better when we work together for the common good. As I am now semi-retired I find I have more time to devote to civic activities and I am enjoying it tremendously. My volunteer activities currently include; Contra Costa Advisory Committee on Integrated Pest Management and its Decision Making Sub Committee, the ACOA and SMAC, Teaching Qi Gong, Cane Self-defense at the Danville Senior Center and Cooking for the Danville Senior Center as well as collecting donations and serving at Christmas of Everyone. In addition I have just been selected by Danville to serve as their representative on the Advisory Committee for the County Connection.

Volunteering hasn't just been something to do after retirement. During college I volunteered as a tutor to other students and participated in organizing and conducting the first Earth day Celebration at Cal State Long Beach. During my working career I volunteered and held leadership roles in the Air & Waste Management Association and the Institute for Professional Environmental Practice. This was my way for giving back to my profession and to meeting so many engaged professionals. These roles required a lot of effort but also gave back a feeling of accomplishment in doing work to further my profession.

I have met so many great volunteers who leave me in awe at how much they are giving back and I find my uplifted just working with them. A few years ago I listened to a lecture by the Dali Llama where he espoused the idea that: "If you want to be happy, help someone". He is right, I do feel happy when I am helping others