

FEATURE

VOLUNTEERS:

The Spirit of America

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TECH. SGT. RUBY ZARZYCZNY
437AW/PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Getting connected with the community, learning about various career opportunities while making new friends, networking your way into a paid job, sharing your knowledge and escapades, passing time while your spouse is away, inspiring children to achieve their goals, sharing a smile with a needy soul, and giving back to your community can be achieved in just one action – volunteering.

April 27- May 3 marks the 30th annual National Volunteer Week, and this year's theme is "The Spirit of America."

During this week, Charleston AFB recognizes volunteers for their contributions to the base and local community.

"Charleston has approximately 140 active volunteers, not including the seasonal volunteers like the athletic coaches at the Child Development Center," said Mr. Mike Burden, 437th Mission Support family support consultant and volunteer coordinator.

"Approximately 34,848 volunteer hours were 'worked' within the last 12 months," said Mr. Burden. "The hours the volunteers worked are worth approximately \$575,000 of savings to CAFB if we had to hire individuals to work those hours."

"We have volunteers in the Family Support Center, Medical Group, Child Development Center, Base Legal Office, Fitness and Sports Center, Health and Wellness Center, Base Library, Youth Activities, Outdoor Recreation, the Consignment Shop, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, and the American Red Cross," said Mr. Burden. "The retirees activities program has a lot of members who actively volunteer in all of these areas too. A lot of the volunteers volunteer in more than one area."

Volunteers are recognized in a number of ways throughout the year. One method is the Recognizing Achievement through Volunteer Excellence or R.A.V.E. card, which gives volunteers discounted merchandise and services at base facilities, according to Mr. Burden.

"The Consignment Shop recognized the hard work of its 22 volunteers with a brunch at the club April 22," said Mrs. Carol Mummey. "The Consignment Shop has raised more than

\$7,000 toward nine scholarships that were presented to seven high school students and two military spouses by the Officers' Spouses' Association on April 24."

The 437th Services Squadron Family Members Program honored more than 80 people who volunteer in the Child Development Center and Youth Center with a luncheon at the club Tuesday.

"The volunteers at the CDC and the Youth Center volunteer approximately 30 hours a month and have contributed over \$250,000 worth of their time making the Youth Program a possibility," said Lt. Col. Tracy O'Grady-Walsh, 437 SVS commander.

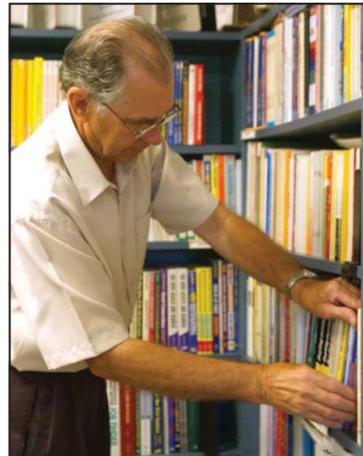
Colonel O'Grady-Walsh, along with Mr. Timothy Garrahan, 437 SVS Family Member Program flight chief, Ms. Debbie Ross, CDC director, and Ms. Denise John, Youth Program director, presented certificates of appreciation and originally-designed blue coffee mugs with gold trim to their volunteers.

There are many reasons people volunteer. Some volunteer to learn new skills leading to a paying job. The 437th Medical Group, in partnership with the American Red Cross, provides approximately \$4,000 worth of general medical assistant training to eligible people who are willing to volunteer for six months at the clinic while they are being trained.

Others have different reasons.

Mr. Bill Jones, along with his wife, Marion, volunteers at the Family Support Center. Mr. Jones has been volunteering in the Discovery Center for about eight years.

"I volunteer because I want to repay the kindness CAFB showed us when our house was flooded in the 70's, and the kindness shown you just can't put a price on," said Mr. Jones. "I also volunteer to stay busy and involved with people. It keeps your outlook on life and your health better, and it gives you a reason for getting out of bed and enjoying life."



Mr. Bill Jones, Air Force retiree and volunteer, organizes returned books for the Discovery Center Library. Mr. Jones likes to volunteer because it keeps him involved with people and gives him a better outlook on life.



Second Lt. Robert Corley, one of 25 volunteer coaches for Charleston AFB Little League, leads his team the Yankees onto the field during the opening day ceremonies.



Volunteers like Mrs. Lucille Burton provide customer service at the pharmacy pick-up window. Mrs. Burton loves working with people, and volunteering keeps her involved in the community.



While volunteering at the Medical Group, Ms. Holly McDonough learned to conduct throat cultures on patients at the clinic.



Ms. Pamela Lynch conducts a patient history at the clinic. She is volunteering full-time for six months at the 437th Medical Group in an American Red Cross medical assistant program.



Eighty years young, Mr. Joseph Mestink has been volunteering at the 437th Security Forces Squadron pass and identification office since 1991. He verifies the individual's ID and reason to enter the base, and then issues a pass. Mr. Mestink, a World War II veteran, retired from the Air Force in 1971 and now works pass and ID at the Rivers Gate. He says he enjoys volunteering because he likes getting out and meeting people and staying connected to the the military community.