

Our View: Building our community through volunteers

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The Union Editorial Board



The world, it would seem, is crumbling around us.

Plenty of businesses couldn't handle the closure the coronavirus forced on them. Others, though slowly reopening, likely will find they can't succeed either.

Then there's us, the people who live in this community, who have lost their jobs or had reduced wages.

COVID-19 has affected everyone. Even if you're not directly hit, a family member or friend has been.

That's why it's more important than ever, if possible, to volunteer.

This past week The Union has featured stories about nonprofits — groups in western Nevada County that rely on your free time and donations to fulfill their mission.

With regular schedules and incomes falling around us, it's important to focus on the organizations that fill the gaps. Especially right now, when there are more gaps than ever.

The list of nonprofits that need your help is too long to list here. Our county is filled with nonprofits that exist to help people and our community. At least one of them will fit your skills. If you can volunteer, please do.

Fire preparedness organizations always need help. You can educate yourself about how to make your home defensible, meet like-minded people and together improve the safety of all our neighborhoods.

Firewise communities help keep ourselves and our property safe. Food banks keep us fed, especially in times like these.

The Food Bank of Nevada County and the Interfaith Food Ministry provide necessary services to people who need it the most. They've seen the number of folks who need food jump since the coronavirus destroyed jobs and slashed wages.

You might not be able to volunteer at a facility, or stand outside while helping people get the food they need. But maybe you can help financially. The burden to have enough food each week is only growing, and each one of us has a part to play.

We just have to find where we're supposed to stand on the stage.

Think about the arts our county has to offer. Music in the Mountains, The Center for the Arts, the Miners Foundry Cultural Center, the Nevada Theatre and countless others — you might have volunteered with them before the pandemic hit. You'll have that chance again, hopefully soon. Before that chance arrives, consider helping our arts community with a donation.

An artist needs an audience. And we, the audience, need to be there for the artists, now more than ever.

Or maybe the environment is your thing. The Bear Yuba Land Trust is asking for help with its Forever Farms project. The South Yuba River Citizens League has a river ambassador program, which sends volunteers to the river to talk with people about litter and safety issues.

This time of year, with the river running fast and cold, it's essential people know about the dangers.

Alternatively, you could find yourself at a Project H.E.A.R.T. meeting. It's a small group of people struggling to escape drugs and alcohol, helped by local service agencies. Maybe you know someone who attends and could use some assistance. Maybe you could volunteer with one of the agencies involved.

Volunteerism doesn't have to be big picture, the whole nine yards, save the world in a flash, wide strokes. It can be some artwork you made, given to a nonprofit. It can be clearing brush for an elderly neighbor who can't afford to pay for yard work.

The world may appear to be crumbling, but that's only true if we let it. The institutions we've created are only as strong as we are.

When things start to crumble, we must mend them, putting the pieces back into place.

One helping hand at a time.

The weekly Our View editorial represents the consensus opinion of The Union Editorial Board, a group of editors and writers from The Union, as well as informed community members. Contact the board at EditBoard@TheUnion.com.