

## Volunteering Offers Something for Everyone

By Shelly Kaiser, United Way Volunteer Connection Director

What could a high school junior, a working mom of three, a 68 year-old-retiree and a recently unemployed office manager all have in common? All of these descriptions fit the profile of today's volunteer. Young or old, working or unemployed, highly skilled or offering general labor, having large blocks of time to give or only available sporadically, today's volunteers come in all of these different forms.

Most people are surprised to find out how easy it is to fit volunteering into their lives. As a volunteer, you can put in as much (or as little) time as you want. You don't necessarily have to make a commitment—you can do occasional one-time jobs, like spending a Saturday morning caring for a community garden, serving lunch at a senior dining site or pitching in at a run/walk to raise money for a good cause.

There's a fulfilling volunteer job for everyone. If you want to use your developed skills or try something new, you can. If you like to work with children or the elderly, have a desire to help the homeless, or prefer working with animals over people, a volunteer opportunity that matches those interests is waiting for you.

And volunteering is just plain fun. People start volunteering for a lot of different reasons, but they usually stick with it for one very simple one—they have a good time. The feeling of being part of a team, a chance to do what you enjoy most, taking a break from your normal routine, and the friendships that develop long after the volunteer job is finished are some of the things people like best about volunteering.

To highlight the variety of individuals actively volunteering and the many ways they are choosing to make a difference, the Wausau Daily Herald will begin featuring a snapshot look at local volunteers in an on-going "Helping Hands" segment. Watch for it to appear later this month. You will see that volunteers come from all walks of life and are doing work that perhaps you hadn't imagined was available.

Whether you've never volunteered or are a veteran volunteer eager to explore new opportunities, check out what's available locally at [www.unitedwaymc.org](http://www.unitedwaymc.org) or by calling 2-1-1. United Way Volunteer Connection and RSVP are free services to help you find your volunteer match, whatever your age, interest and availability.

Who is today's volunteer? It's you, it's me, it's your next door neighbor, and it's your co-worker. It's ALL of us working together.