

About Your Volunteer or Community Work ...

Your Name and City and State of residence

Mari Villavicencio
Seminole, FL

Favorite Organization that you volunteer and why.

The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast - I have a special connection to the elderly, to me the elderly are like newborn babies, they need lots of love, in many cases they don't know how to express their needs, and so it's important to have lots of patience and compassion for them, just like a newborn baby. I am very comfortable with the death process, and in many cases the family is so overwhelmed during this period that I feel honor to serve them as an instrument of respite, so they can go home and take a break or just go for a walk, knowing that their love ones are not alone.

Second favorite organization, if applicable, and why.

I don't have a second favorite, I am always open to step into what feels right at the moment, God and my intuition are my guidance. This year I have volunteered and organized the DB Peru's Toothbrush Drive. I also volunteered for a day with Habitat for Humanity and the United Way Pledge Day through my work. At the beginning of the year I was part of the "Care Corps" group at a church that I no longer attend.

Blessings/Gifts you receive from doing this type of service.

Many, many blessings. Experiencing the gratitude from family members of my Hospice patients, just to know that a few hours of my time is giving others so much peace of mind is very fulfilling. Also this type of service fills me up with Joy and gratitude which in exchange I bring home to my dear family.

How do you balance your busy daily life with this type of service

I have a very supportive family my partner and children know how important this is for my own personal and spiritual growth. I don't see it as a burden because the rewards of a big smile, or just a gaze of pure love into the eyes of a person that is afraid of the unknown is breathtaking and worthwhile every minute of my time. To bring serenity and peace to places is what brings me right back to balance.

Who or what inspires you to follow this volunteer path.

I was raised by an aunt (I called her mamama) who was always doing things for others, strangers, family and children. I remember her sitting at her table teaching little kids how to read and do math. She always told me to give to others without any expectation of getting something material in return, just out of LOVE without any expectations, and that's what I love to do today.

Tell us a memorable story about your gift of love.

I received a call from the Care Corps coordinator that there was a lady in the Hospital that didn't had any family members in town and needed some contact with people, if I

could give her a call and chat with her for a bit. I remember that I had the day off and was driving with my daughter, so I told her you know I am not going to give her a call, I will buy her some flowers and a card and go and visit personally and act like I am a family member or a friend. So I did, I bought this beautiful plant with this gorgeous yellow flowers (lily's maybe). So I go to the Nursing Home and there she was, very fragile and weak, when I got there I told her that I was from the old church that she used to visit and that I wanted to visit her because I knew she didn't had family in town. She was so happy to see me and she loved the flowers and card. I kept visiting her for a while until she went home, she took the plant home. She was my inspiration to start working with Hospice, I knew that there are more people like her in Nursing Homes and Assisting Living Facilities that don't have anyone that visits them.

Organization information:

The Hospice of the Suncoast of Florida

Website <http://www.thehospice.org/>

Name: Habitat for Humanity

Website: <http://www.habitat.org/>

United Way

Website: <http://national.unitedway.org/>

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About Your Supported Charities ...

List the favorite organizations that you support donate/tithe and why:

This year I've contribute financially or donated to the organizations below, I don't have an agenda for my tithing, I send my tithes monthly to wherever feels right at that moment. I try not to judge any organization, once again I follow my heart.

United Way, SPCA of Tampa Bay, American Cancer Society, Donated Books for the Haitian Children, Hospice of the Suncoast of Florida, Goodwill, Salvation Army, American Diabetes Association, Aldergate "Angel Stitches", World Wildlife Fund, Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation – Timmy's Fund", Toys for Tots, St. Petersburg Free Clinic, 2006 Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity, DB Peru, Largo United Soccer Club Organization and Scholarship Fund, Plan USA, The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Heifer International

Who or what inspire you to follow this giving path:

Rev. Pat King is my true mentor in my giving & receiving path, she is the most loving and giving person that I have ever met, she is an example of how circulation flows and what unconditional love is all about. Her favorite saying is: "You Just Can't Out give God". and I love it!!!!