

The Value of Volunteers

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Volunteers are an important part of our society. All of us benefit from the work of volunteers. A successful lifestyle includes becoming personally involved in volunteer activity in our community. The word 'volunteer' comes from the same root word as 'volley' and carries the idea of being shot, as a volley of arrows. Volunteers are people who aim for a target in a concerted effort to benefit others. They do so from their own free will.

Another meaning of volunteer comes from the idea of being willing. Frederick Buechner states that "I know that while time seems to be the big barrier, in fact uncovering my own willingness is the challenge--willingness (the root meaning of the word *volunteer*) to get going, to get out there, and to find "the place where your deep gladness meets the world's deep need. I never seem to do as much as I'd like " (Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Seekers ABC*. (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993), p.119.)

At Sandy Lake Academy it is our volunteers who keep the school running and provide the extras that make education special. They have a belief in Adventist education that leads them to sacrifice their time and energies and many times their personal finances to ensure a better programme at the school.

We have our daily volunteers who supervise the student janitors, prepare bulletin boards, clean closets, vacuum floors, listen to students read, etc. Then there are the volunteers who have taken charge of our spiritual activities—our chaplaincy team. They organize occasional morning worships with our students, visit Bible classes to answering spiritual questions, plan outreach activities, pray daily for all students, and give special support where needed for a variety of needs. Another group of volunteers plan special events—our annual fund-raising banquet, Seniors' Valentine banquet and other special events. Without their willingness, we would not be able to have many of the improvements that we have seen over the past few years. What about the maintenance of the school and the grounds? Volunteers do it all.

When it comes to awards, who deserves the most outstanding awards? My vote goes for the volunteers! Without them, our schools would not survive.