

## **OLLI Volunteers: Find Joy and Make a Difference** (continued)

### *Part 2: Rewards and Advice for Volunteers*

Kitty says:

It's all about accomplishing something -- some kind of payoff that means change. In 1974, I played an instrumental role in getting the Right to Food resolution before Congress. I will never forget that feeling. It shaped my whole life.

Through the Verner Board, I am working to increase individual giving and helping others to become fundraisers. It's important work, but many people believe they don't have the skill or temperament to do it. As I always say, "If you're waiting for the skill, you need to get in for the thrill."

At Pisgah Legal, I am thrilled and grateful to watch someone who's never had health insurance in his life walk away relieved and confident. I know I've potentially saved a life. Without health care, he might always be poor.

What advice can these happy, veteran volunteers offer others?

- Don't volunteer if you think you're doing it for someone else...do it for yourself.
- Be willing to explore. Don't be reluctant to leave. If it's not a fit, try something else. It may take a while.
- It's good to be asked, but make sure to check in with yourself that it's a fit for you. Before volunteering, it may be helpful to write the answer to this question: 'What do I want to get out of this volunteer work?'
- Work in service of something you value; that's where you find fulfillment.
- Figure out what your payoff is. I know for myself, I need to see change.
- Tell them up front that you want to put a toe in the water BEFORE making a big commitment. Test it so you can leave without a lot of entanglement or guilt. Remember: "Resentment grows in the garden of expectations."
- Prepare to be surprised!

In July, 2013, a survey was completed to learn about the 'Volunteering Activities/Preferences of OLLI Members.' That survey revealed some interesting facts. Most OLLI members (82%) volunteered in the greater Asheville community over the preceding year with the majority (57%) having volunteered both in the greater Asheville community and for OLLI. When asked about the type of volunteering (continuous/ongoing or one-time/short-term activities), 70% chose a mix of each.

Volunteerism for OLLI members spans a wide spectrum: Education/literacy; the Arts; Hunger; Environmental/nature; Senior services; Health services; Family services. The greatest percentage of members have devoted their volunteering efforts to Education/Literary, which is not surprising from a group which has benefitted greatly from, and continues to value their own education.

Are you ready to make a difference? Check out these resources to connect you with volunteer opportunities in and around the Asheville community.

- Land of Sky RSVP Program: Ann Whisenhunt (ann@landofsky.org) or <http://www.landofsky.org>
- Hands On Asheville Buncombe: Michelle Bennett (Michelle.Bennett@unitedwayabc.org) or <http://www.unitedwayabc.org>
- Leadership Asheville Seniors: [www.olliasheville.com/las](http://www.olliasheville.com/las)
- OLLI Volunteer Interest Form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1-r8Tm2-6LYZbSB6Gq6f7IRbmqijituDgN6sWnpweVtM/viewform?usp=send\\_form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1-r8Tm2-6LYZbSB6Gq6f7IRbmqijituDgN6sWnpweVtM/viewform?usp=send_form)