

Volunteer

Texoma Seniors Have a Heart to Serve

SHERMAN, December 31, 2014– Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) offers Texoma seniors a variety of volunteer opportunities through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and the Foster Grandparent Program. Whether a senior would like to help deliver meals with Meals on Wheels of Texoma or serve in one of our local elementary schools tutoring or reading with a special needs student, TCOG's Senior Corps programs provide volunteer opportunities in more than 70 locations including schools, day cares, community centers, hospitals, and other social service agencies throughout the region.

During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, Senior Corps volunteers served more than 90,000 volunteer hours. According to Independent Sector's Volunteer Time Calculator, the monetary value of a volunteer hour served in Texas is \$23.40 per hour, bringing the total value of TCOG's Senior Corps volunteer time served to more than \$2 million. The 90,000 hours also represent the equivalent of 43.5 full time equivalent positions, which is significant when considered in terms of the salary and benefit dollars our local schools and non-profit agencies have saved by utilizing TCOG's volunteer services.

While the payoff for the volunteer can't be stated in the same monetary terms, the value is no less significant. Alice, a foster grandparent had this to say:

Before retirement, Charlie and I both worked with people in the public. He is retired from sales and I am a retired teacher. We raised three sons and we were supportive and active parents (yea, band kids!). When we became empty nesters we realized that we needed "a little oomph" in our lives. The Foster Grandparent program fulfilled this need and has been a wonderful addition to our lives. Our days start with a smile when we hear, "Hi, Miss Alice," or "Hey, Mr. Charlie". Work? Oh no! The Foster Grandparent Program gives us a reason to smile every day! We have made great new friends who are now a family for us. Thank you FGP.

Many of our seniors have a heart to serve, and TCOG can find a place to help our seniors plug back into the community and feed that desire. Wanda is a TCOG RSVP volunteer, and she will tell you she was "born to serve others." Wanda began volunteering by delivering meals with Meals on Wheels in the 1990's in Odessa, Texas. She eventually retired and relocate to Gainesville, Texas where she currently resides. Wanda's mission has always been to help others in need, so once again she returned to volunteering with Meals on Wheels locally. Although Wanda is now 89 years of age, moves a little slower, and is currently unable to drive, she's not going to let a little thing like age stop her from what she refers to as "her mission" in life. With the assistance of her seated walker, Wanda continues to deliver meals in the senior citizen's apartment complex where she lives. Wanda stated, "Sitting around can make you old, so I try to do what God wants me to do."

If you are 55 or older, have a heart to serve and are interested in volunteering within the community please contact us at (903) 813-3574 or (903) 813-3587. You may also visit our website at www.tcog.com/departments/aging_services/senior_corps.

The Texoma Council of Governments is a voluntary association of the local governments in Cooke, Fannin, and Grayson Counties. Established in 1968, the Texoma Council of Governments promotes economy and efficiency in the coordinated planning and development of the tri-county region through its community and economic development activities. Either directly, or through contractors, the Council provides housing, utility assistance, and weatherization services for low-income citizens in the region and assists the elderly through a variety of Area Agency on Aging programs. The Council also facilitates the delivery of grant funding for homeland security and criminal justice.

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