

Volunteer and pursue your passion just like Audrey

Volunteerism is a key component in the fabric of our Charlotte County community. How would the 400 non-profit organizations in Charlotte County deliver essential services or conduct business without volunteers? How would countless fundraising programs take place without volunteers? How would our religious community nourish our spiritual needs without volunteers? What would our government processes be like without the myriad of committees and boards on which volunteers serve? How would our school system function without volunteer support? How would our local fire, police, and sheriff departments



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provide the high level of support we expect without volunteers?

Volunteerism is deeply rooted in our society. It stems from the days of neighbors helping neighbors to cope with the challenges of living in the new world. It is a normal way of life for us where we add capacity and quality to what would not have been otherwise possible.

Ever since I moved to this area I've been very impressed with what volunteers are able to achieve. It's remark-

able! What motivates us to contribute this extraordinary level of volunteerism? Perhaps it is a school requirement. Is gratification from helping others? Is it social interaction? Is it something to do to occupy one's idle time? Is it the opportunity to use professional skills in another setting? Is it the opportunity to learn? Is it to fulfill a passion and make a difference?

Charlotte County is blessed with a valuable base of retired citizens who share their talents as volunteers. They use their acquired skills to keep active and help their adopted home. It is truly a treasure. These people are valuable contributors along with our younger citizens with whom they serve

side by side. One such volunteer, Audrey Seay, shared her talents throughout Charlotte County until a brief illness concluded her life journey on July 27. It was an honor to have served with her.

Audrey participated on several Charlotte County Boards and Committees and took this responsibility on behalf of our citizens very seriously. She served on the Board of the Arts and Humanities Council of Charlotte County and was a strong advocate for the arts. Most recently Audrey served as Team Punta Gorda's Government Relations Committee Chair. She facilitated Charlotte County joining the City of Punta Gorda and Team Punta Gorda in

the South County Gateway Project. A Deep Creek resident, Audrey was a strong proponent of the vision set forth in the Citizens' Master Plan and was inspired to help our community move forward.

Those who volunteered with Audrey valued her sage advice. We loved her laugh and sense of humor. She treated her fellow volunteers with respect and got the same in return. When I attended meetings with Audrey I noticed she was often greeted with hugs instead of handshakes, even by elected officials.

Like my experience with Audrey, one of the benefits of volunteering is getting to meet and serve with people that you would never

have met otherwise. It is a rewarding and enriching experience. From our youth to senior citizens, our society benefits from helping organizations thrive with volunteers. Join in! All are welcome!

Please save the date for Team Punta Gorda's annual meeting scheduled for 7 p.m., Nov. 8 at the Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association. This year's theme will be "Results through Collaboration." The public is welcome. If you would like to volunteer to help with the annual meeting please contact Team at team@teampuntagorda.org or 941-637-TEAM.

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