

R E P O R T

Your United Way of Broome County investment at work

February 1999

Voluntary Action Center helps two individuals find rewarding activities

The Voluntary Action Center helps individuals find volunteer work that meets their needs, interests and availability. There is a volunteer role for everyone to play! Here are two examples of individuals who gave of themselves and learned first-hand the tremendous value volunteering has to offer.

Laid off supervisor gains new career through volunteering

For eighteen years Ruth had been an employee of the same company. She had been promoted several times and eventually supervised a department of 12. Then, like so many others in our community, she learned the shocking news that she was being laid off. Her company had sold the division she worked for to another company. That company offered jobs to the workers but at substantially reduced wages. The security she had felt in her long-time employer was shattered in an instant. She was depressed, confused and uncertain about the future.

Ruth struggled to come to terms with this dramatic change in her life and find a way to move forward. She recognized that crises also bring new opportunities. Ruth

chose to use her unemployment as a chance to pursue a longtime desire to work in an office. While she was comfortable with computers and had completed various adult study courses for office work, Ruth did not have any hands-on experience. At the suggestion of a family member, she contacted the Voluntary Action Center for help in finding a volunteer job.

After a brief telephone interview to determine Ruth's interests, she was given some suggestions of positions to pursue. She chose to volunteer in a medical records department and in an office of a local non-profit organization. Ruth used her volunteer positions as a chance to network and learn about employment opportunities. Within two months, she interviewed for, and obtained, paid employment with one of the agencies for which she volunteered.

Today, Ruth is thrilled with her new career. "I really enjoy the work and the atmosphere of the office. It is so different from my old job. I feel better about myself and have learned a lot. I was really afraid to leave (my old job) but it was the best move I've ever made."

High school student prepares for college with volunteer work

When Carly began her senior year of high school, she learned her classes would end at 11:15 a.m. She was pleased to have so much free time but wanted to use the time in a productive and interesting way. Despite a previous volunteer experience that had been dull and unproductive, Carly decided to contact the United Way's Voluntary Action Center. After a brief conversation with the VAC regarding her interests and career goals, Carly was referred to the Communications Department of a local non-profit organization.



At that position, Carly participated in a variety of activities and tasks. She related that she had improved her computer skills, learned to operate a variety of office equipment, gained patience and perseverance, met deadlines and discovered that work can be fun! According to Carly, "...this volunteer job is not only excellent for (college) applications, it is fun and rewarding as well."

While both of these individuals volunteered for several hours per week, thousands of people find that giving just one or two hours per week is rewarding. Whatever your situation, there is a volunteer role that will help our community and reward you immeasurably.

United Way supports the VAC through your donation

The Voluntary Action Center is a service established and supported by United Way of Broome County. Your donation to United Way funds this vital activity. For more information about the services provided by VAC, call 729-2592.

