

Sarasota Retired Educators Association Newsletter

Vo. 1, Issue 2; December 2024

Carolyn Duncan and Susanna Austin, Co-Presidents

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<https://Sara-Retired-Educators.squarespace.com>

Presidents' Message

This newsletter edition's theme of **Volunteerism** is so appropriate for SREA. So many of us are involved in helping schools, organizations, neighbors, friends, and of course, family. Indeed, we would have no organization if it were not for the countless volunteer hours of the officers and committee chairs and members. In addition, our members make significant donations of goods and money just within the confines of our luncheon meetings, let alone outside of SREA.

And, boy, did we outdo ourselves at the November luncheon meeting! Every month you step up to support the Food Pantry, Women's Resource Center, Little Libraries, and of course provide for the Scholarship table. This month we added Holiday Boxes for Seniors, distributed by Meals on Wheels.

You donated empty and full boxes already wrapped, additional boxes, and of course all the goodies to go into the **78 Holiday Boxes** that we delivered to **Meals on Wheels**. The seniors who receive these are so very appreciative. We had leftover items that were shared with **Mothers Helping Mothers** and with **School Link** for unhoused Sarasota students. Again, a great team to pack, wrap and deliver! Note that in 2021 we did 31 boxes, 2022 had 43, 2023 had 60 boxes. Each year has topped the last.

We also had a huge haul of goods for the **Food Pantry**. **50 pounds of food** (Karen's trunk was stuffed!) and **\$200 in checks!** WOW!

This just goes to remind us of how proud we are of all the members of SREA. Besides that, we get great learning opportunities and fun activities to build our friendships.

We wish you a wonderful Holiday Season! And please remember to make Valentine cards with your grandkids and bring to the January 15th meeting for Cupid Crew.

See you in 2025!

Carolyn Duncan and Susanna Austin, Co-Presidents



Teachers teach and then just keep giving back to their communities after they retire. That's what I've learned from surveying our SREA members on their volunteer experiences. They gain knowledge, feel joy, develop skills, and meet new acquaintances. These were common threads shared by our members when I asked them to *voluntarily* answer questions on volunteerism. Below are a sampling of their responses as well as a summary of projects that count as volunteer events when reporting our volunteer hours to Betty Tucker, SREA Volunteer Coordinator.

Where Do you volunteer?

- Gulf Gate School, St. Vincent De Paul Thrift Store
- GED Program at Suncoast Technical College
- Temple Beth Shalom, Art Center Sarasota , Gulf Stream Towers
- Lasagna Love, All Faiths Food Bank, Lift Church
- SREA Executive Board, Scholarship Committee, Temple Beth Shalom, Run and Teach Mahjong, Sisterhood, Young Families
- The Exchange Book Dept.
- Care for a teacher's mother suffering from Dementia so my friend has time to herself
- Celery Fields
- Patriotic Observance Committee, Sarasota Academy of the Arts, Loving Stitches, Gems of Sarasota Yacht Club
- Florida Cancer Specialists, Gamma Omicron Executive Board
- Gamma Omicron Executive Board, SREA Executive Board, Voter Registration, Neighborhood Needs
- Gamma Omicron Executive Board, SREA Executive Board
- SREA Executive Board, Meals on Wheels
- SMH Volunteer



The FREA Mission

- ◆ To safeguard the strength of the Florida Retirement System
- ◆ To support public education in Florida
- ◆ To provide fellowship opportunities
- ◆ To encourage community involvement
- ◆ To be a source of information and materials

Why do you volunteer?

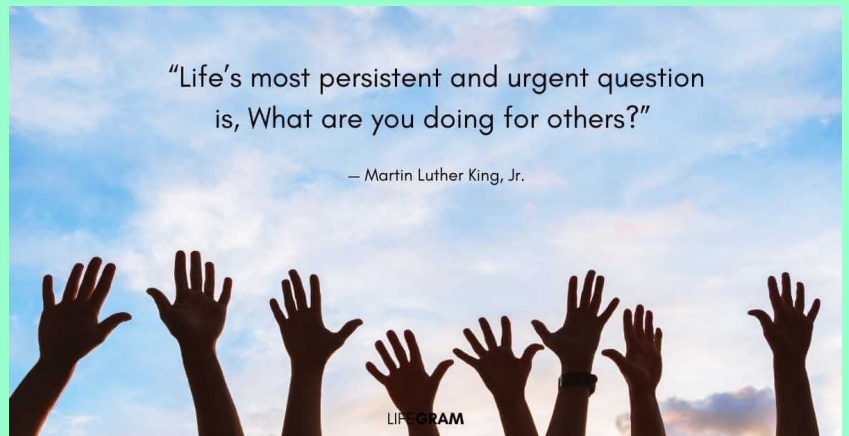
- Give back to the community, its' fun, meet new people, staying active
- I enjoy being with the students and helping them achieve their goals
- To help where it's needed, to get involved in the community
- It's what I've looked forward to for 20 years and it gets me out of the house as much as I want
- Keeps me busy, involved and out of trouble and keeps my brain working
- To consign home items and buy others; hence, "The Exchange"
- To make things easier for a friend
- To assist with introducing visitors to the natural world available to us right here in Sarasota County. To emphasize the collaboration of the Sarasota Audubon Society with the County
- To make the world a better place and to bring joy to myself and others in my community

What surprised you about volunteering?

- It's a lot of fun!
- How thankful people are of the volunteers
- I was surprised at how much I would be blessed by getting out to meet the people that came for support we were offering. They have all really touched my life
- How important my opinion is and how my voice makes a difference
- I meet so many new people from different states and countries
- How many people enjoy birding— learning about birds and marveling at how they enhance our world
- How satisfied it feels!

How can others learn about the volunteer organization?

- Visit the St. Vincent De Paul thrift store
- Call Suncoast Technical College, GED Program at 941-924 1365 Ext. 62110
- The Exchange Consignment Store is open everyday but Sunday, 9am-4 pm and Saturdays 10 am -4 pm
- Check with Art Center Sarasota
- Research the websites: LasagnaLove.org and AllFaithsFoodBank.org
- We recruit members, Felica Servetz
- Ask to shadow or attend a meeting
- Research the Sarasota Audubon Website
- Just Ask Me! - Tootie Kennedy



What Counts as Volunteer Service Hours?

Submitted by : Betty Tucker, SREA Volunteer Service Coordinator.

- What counts as volunteer service hours? Basically anything you do for other (family excluded) where you do not receive compensation.
- Providing a meal
- Shopping
- Walking the neighbor's dog
- Collecting mail for someone
- Running errands
- Dropping off cookies
- Attending SREA meetings (2hours plus drive time)
- Attending board meetings
- Volunteering with service organizations, churches, schools
- Serving on Community boards, philanthropic boards, charities
- Hospice, hospitals, nursing homes, schools
- Serving on committees
- Driving others to the airport, doctor visits, grocery store



Please remember to report your hours monthly to Betty Tucker at:

Tucker469611@yahoo.com

According to Sara Konrath, a social psychologist who directs the Interdisciplinary Program on Empathy and Altruism Research at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, older adults who volunteer have better memory and focus and even need “fewer dementia-related medications thanks to links to increased brain activity related to memory.” Children and young adults who practice generosity, meanwhile, tend to perform better academically and score higher on IQ tests.

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The Organization that Honors Your Yesterdays, Enriches Your Present, & Secures Your Future.

- FREA is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that
- Provides community service opportunities,
 - Advocates for the Florida Retirement System
 - Provides resources and information to help education retirees continue to live fulfilling and purposeful lives.

Did You Know?

FREA advocates for over 100,000 Florida Retirement System Education Retirees?

Did You Know?

From 2012 to 2023, FREA volunteers saved the State of Florida \$132,986,375.60
By working 6,649,319 volunteer hours.

(Average pay rate \$20 per hour)



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info@frea.org ~ 727-577-6400 ~ www.frea.org Date January 1, 2023

Pay to the order of The State of Florida \$132,186,975.60

One Hundred-thirty-two million, One Hundred-eighty-six Thousand, Nine Hundred-seventy-five dollars & 60/100 Dollars

6,649,319 Volunteer Hours
Memo 2013 to 2023 Florida Retired Educators Association

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Without volunteers, we'd be a nation without a soul.

Rosalynn Carter