

UNITED WAY OF NORTHWEST GEORGIA

Find yourself in service

Gandhi describes the exact way that so many community members in northwest Georgia evolve as leaders: "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

Although being "lost" reminds me more of "Gilligan's Island" than volunteering, the essence of the quote gets at the heart of service. Purposeful service is only the beginning, and real personal development happens at the point in time where acts of service are superfluous and a constant part of your life.

Can all of this service be overwhelming? Is it possible to not know where to start? Absolutely.

My advice: Start in the backyard of your community. Do what you're passionate about — and bring a friend.

Our United Way Volunteer Center is here to help. Simply visit ourunitedway.org for a listing of more than 100 local opportunities to serve, or give us a call at (706) CAN-HELP.

Friday through next Sunday, a United Way volunteer project is taking place at Southeast Whitfield High School sprucing up the special education department by painting the walls. Visit ourunitedway.org/volunteer for more details.

This past Friday, a plethora of volunteers led by Jill Adcock painted educational charts and maps on the playground at Westwood Elementary School. I encourage all parents to take an active volunteer role at their child's school. Just the other day, United Way volunteers painted a map of the USA on the Eton

Elementary School playground.

I want to thank the 185 national sales team employees from Tandus who completed four projects last month at the Family Crisis Center, Boys & Girls Club, Brookwood Elementary School and Dalton Middle School.

The United Way Volunteer Center is looking forward to Shaw Industries' Live United Week of Service this week with 17 projects scheduled and more than 500 volunteer slots. Chester Chaffin's team from Enterprise Excellence already completed their project at the Family Crisis Center, weeding the flower beds, mulching and even donating a bench.

Recently, United Way volunteers Bryan Macon, Mitch Sanford, Larry Winter, Chester Chaffin and Rob Cowan led the Chamber of Commerce's Emerging Leaders class in United Way's Boardwalk program. This program delves into the interworking of nonprofit boards of directors and helps recruit new volunteers to board service. If you are interested in joining the Aug. 29 Boardwalk class, please visit our website. We need new, energetic volunteers to lead local nonprofits effectively and efficiently.

Our United Way serves Whitfield and Murray counties. Every week or so, I find myself on a road that I have never driven down before. Our two-county area is deep and wide. Schools, neighborhoods, children and families across our community need our help. Through United Way, people from all different backgrounds join a movement of improving lives. It is truly amazing to see everyone rally together to live united.

Amanda Burt is the president of the United Way of Northwest Georgia.



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