

UNITED WAY

Summer of service

This past week marked the end of the school year for most children in our area. Affordable, high-quality summer programming is a basic need that is met for many families through United Way contributions. United Way-funded agencies that provide summer programs and camps to keep kids active and engaged in safe, fun activities while parents are at work include: Boys & Girls Club, Boy Scouts, Girls



**Amanda
Burt**

Scouts, Murray 4-H, Whitfield-Dalton Daycare, Friendship House and Salvation Army.

May is bittersweet for us as many of our youth volunteers graduate and transition to the next phase of their lives. Volunteering is a great way to affect the community while also differentiating yourself on college and job applications.

Students from Northwest Service Learning Class and Dalton High JROTC recently won awards at the Kiwanis-United Way Youth Volunteer Banquet.

One young woman from Dalton High, Hira Qureshi, gave 201 hours of service this year. She balanced a heavy academic load while still carving out time to serve as a Buddy with Big Brothers Big Sisters. She also volunteered at Hamilton Medical

Center and worked with children at Friendship House. United Way presented Hira with a Presidential Volunteer Service Award and the Outstanding Youth Volunteerism Award at the banquet.

Drew Barton, a business student at Dalton State College, interned with United Way giving over 100 hours of service this semester.

If you are a high school or college student looking to volunteer this summer, here are a few recommendations:

■ United Way offers a two-day camp called Volunteer Vacation where students complete several local projects. The camp is June 23 and 24 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

■ The health department needs teen volunteers to assist at the We Can! Nutrition and Fitness Camp held June 7–17 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays.

■ More than 80 volunteer opportunities can be found at ourunited-way.org. Just click on “volunteer.”

I continue to be touched by all the acts of compassion and the willingness to give that I see across our community. With the recent tornadoes in Northwest Georgia, hundreds of volunteers have delivered items and donations to United Way of Northwest Georgia to help provide relief.

Shaw Industries donated a tractor-trailer that was packed by local residents with toiletries and water, helping to provide basic needs to families who lost everything.

May has been a busy month for volunteers. One of our board members, MaryBeth Meadows, took her high school Rock Bridge group on a project with the United Way Volunteer Center. The group painted a map of the United States of America on the blacktop at New Hope Middle School.

United Way AmeriCorps team led projects at Friendship House where 16 volunteers taught the children about different genres of music. At Looper Speech and Hearing Center AmeriCorps VISTA member, Denise Baker, engaged 38 volunteers including three Master Gardeners: Donna Parker, Sylvia Kwee, and Velma Ray, to install a new 16 by 11 feet flowerbed.

The United Way Young Leaders Society helped Congressman Tom Graves and Mayor David Pennington welcome the world to Dalton at the National Manufacturing Summit. How refreshing it is to see young philanthropists so active in the community.

So, this summer if you are on break from the morning tardy bell or just have an hour or two to spare — please use your time to give, advocate and volunteer.

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