

NAME	SILVIA BONILLA
LOCATION	BOGOTA, COLOMBIA
Where or how did you volunteer?	At the end of March, the mother of a friend passed away from cancer. I couldn't attend the funeral but instead, I made a donation to the environmental ONG called "Reserva de Vida" to support the reforestation and planting of trees in my country, Colombia. A couple of months ago, I wanted to buy some roses for my apartment. I bought the roses from "Sanar Foundation", which helps children with Cancer. I adopted a homeless puppy, found in a mountain, in Bogotá Colombia.
What was your role?	I donated, I provided money to a good cause. became mommy to a homeless puppy. instead of buying, I adopted.
Why did you decide to help?	It is very satisfying to be able to contribute to others. I am grateful for my health, for my family and it is a way to give back to the world. This year I would like to dedicate part of my love to an animal. I am looking for meaning in my life, to make it happy, to change my routine with something meaningful. Give love to a homeless animal.
What have you learned from this experience?	That any action, no matter how small it is, can have a purpose in helping others. That a homeless puppy is the most loving and grateful being. I feel that I am contributing to give love to animals.
What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?	I invite everyone to look for brands and services with the purpose of helping others. Companies that have a purpose towards the community are companies that are worth supporting. I recommend adopting animals. It is a nice gesture with the pet and with yourself. it is very rewarding and fills you and your life with unconditional love.

NAME	BOB MCGILL
LOCATION	HOUSTON, TEXAS
Where or how did you volunteer?	Our church hosted a Food Bank of Houston distribution
What was your role?	participant - taking filled out forms from families.
Why did you decide to help?	Our church has done 3 previous Food Bank events since the pandemic started, and I wasn't able to participate. This time, I wanted to be part of the experience, and do something to help the community.
What have you learned from this experience?	That sometimes people from all levels of life can use a little help.
What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?	If you have a chance to do something like this, take it. The energy, and overall atmosphere of giving, and gratitude from the people makes it all worthwhile.

NAME	ASTRID ESPINOSA
LOCATION	BARRANQUILLA, COLOMBIA
Where or how did you volunteer?	Corporación Tierra, Amor y Paz and Independently.
What was your role?	Providing temporary homes, donating money for treatments and food, adopting.
Why did you decide to help?	My sister and I found a newborn kitten on the stairs in our building, it was scared, and its eyes looked infected. We named it Popcorn, took it to the vet, nursed it back to health and found a forever home for it. Then, after our beloved pet Luna died in an accident after running away, we wanted to honor her memory. We make donations both in money for the treatment and sterilization of street dogs and cats in Corporation Tierra, Amor y Paz' care, and in dog food so they can continue their feeding routes. I also adopted two dogs. Macarena from the Corporation's feeding route and Ginger who had been abandoned by her previous owner.
What have you learned from this experience?	It's made me more sensible to the predicament of animals who are on the streets, suffering from the sun and the rain and struggling to find food or water. Any time I can help, I will do it.
What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?	Please do. These animals need our help. You can sponsor the sterilization for one of these animals, act as a temporary home for recovering ones, donate food by the bulk (which isn't really expensive) or provide one of them with a forever home. The love and kindness these animals can give you in return is worth more than gold. Trust me, I would know.

NAME	IVAR DONADO
LOCATION	BARRANQUILLA, COLOMBIA
Where or how did you volunteer?	Sheltering cats and feeding stray cats and dogs.
What was your role?	Doing night rounds in my bicycle looking for dogs and cat to feed.
Why did you decide to help?	<p>A few years ago, when walking at night through an area mostly composed of work offices, manufacturing facilities and call centers close to where I lived, I noticed there were many cats around, most of them trying to find food in trash cans. My wife and me then agreed on doing rounds every night searching for those cats and feeding them. After a while they already recognized us and would all come out to get their food at the sound of us whistling. Some of them ended up trusting us so much that they let us take them to find them a home. Unfortunately, most of the time I had to do it behind my mother's back (we lived with my sister, and my mother, who is the owner of the apartment didn't like the idea of having so many pets in such a small place). We were able to find a home for many of those cats. For some of them we talked with the people who lived nearby so they could keep a place for the cats to shelter when it was raining and provide water to them. Sadly, when the mandatory quarantine started, and a curfew was put in place we weren't able to continue doing this. Those cats wouldn't come out during the day due to the amount of people around and we couldn't go out during the night anymore. At the end we ended up adopting some of the remaining cats and we have five of them now.</p>
What have you learned from this experience?	<p>Ended up noticing how well-behaved stray cats and dogs are. With just a few signals given before giving them food and water they caught up pretty quickly. I had the chance to understand quite a bit of the different behaviors cats demonstrate... and that they are not the "independent" animals they are made out to be. Most of them like being with their "human slave" at all times and being caressed. and learned how despicable some people are. There's one company for manufacturing floor tiles and they were persistent in their attempts at preventing us from feeding the cats. They kept sealing every nook and cranny cats could use to get out to meet us and eat. During the morning we could see some of them trying to kick the cats for no apparent reason. Good thing we were able to get in contact with one pet shelter and they helped us rescue most of those cats.</p>

What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?

First: Talk to the people who work or live around the area where the stray cats are. Even if they don't adopt those cats, I've found they are often more than happy to give them some food and water, and also are a good source of information about the current state of the cats (since sometimes a cat wouldn't show up for a few days). When trying to feed a cat for the first time don't try to approach them because most of the time they will just run off. Stay a few meters away from them, get their attention and while they are looking at you, leave the food in the floor and then get away from the food. After a while they will eat the food. They will start trusting you after getting food from you a few times, just don't rush it. A few cats are the exception. Sometimes there are cats that didn't have bad experiences with humans, and they would approach you by themselves (In my case I'm not sure if that happened because I had some cat smell on me already from the ones I had at home).

NAME	HARSH BAHL
LOCATION	SONIPAT, INDIA
Where or how did you volunteer?	I help my brother who is the Founder of Learning Initiatives for India (LIFI). LIFI intends to create a movement of Youth Teacher Leaders and other stakeholders which can ensure an ecosystem of support for out of school children and families wherever they are. We started working in a village called Purkhas Rathi near Sonipat, Haryana, India. We went from door to door in this village and started our pandemic specific intervention 'Listen and Learn' with 16 at-risk children in July 2020. Now this initiative is a collective of 15+ members, 2 partner organizations and is running successfully in Haryana and Bihar. LIFI's long term intent is to create an ecosystem of support with their Youth Teacher Leaders and partner organizations and ensuring that out of school children are on a lifelong learning path wherever they are.
What was your role?	Helping my brother set up LIFI's operations in Purkhas Rathi, Haryana, India. I involved myself in doing door to door surveys in the beginning to find out children who were not getting sufficient support from their schools in the tough pandemic times. I also helped in getting the organization registered and supported with some seed amount.
Why did you decide to help?	My brother has been working in the Education sector for more than 10 years and has worked in the most marginalized communities in Delhi and outside of Delhi. For the last 3 years, he has been working with out of school children. A previous project he was in saw big shifts because of the pandemic. He wanted to do something about the problem and so started Learning Initiatives for India with our help so we could all serve the most marginalized children in the country.
What have you learned from this experience?	Ideas definitely grow when you have the right intent and the heart to solve problems. 2. More than 32 crore children got affected during the pandemic in India due to network connectivity issues and other resource constraints. 3. In the so-called normal days also, there were more than 3 crore children which were out of school. The problem is going to increase exponentially.

What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?

Just give your best shot. Journal your learning. The problems non-profits like LIFI are trying to solve could really ensure equity for all the children in our country.

NAME	SHERRY BURDEN
LOCATION	RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA
Where or how did you volunteer?	Wake - National Alliance on Mental Illness.
What was your role?	Gift Wrapper, Advertising Assistant and Card Writer
Why did you decide to help?	I have decided to help this organization because it helped me with taking care of my mother who has been diagnosed with Mental Health issues.
What have you learned from this experience?	That you find more happiness in your life when you volunteer. Giving your time and services to strangers that cannot give you anything back in return or you may never meet.
What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?	My advice is to find something to volunteer for because your life will have more meaning and more happiness.

NAME	LUIS SEVERINO
LOCATION	BARRANQUILLA, COLOMBIA
Where or how did you volunteer?	I have served for almost 25 years as an active member of Rotary International. First at the Rotaract Club of Barranquilla and now at the Rotary e-Club Colombia Innova.
What was your role?	I've had many roles, going from "hands and muscle to carry things" to committee leader and even Club President.
Why did you decide to help?	It's a simple rule of life I learned from my parents. You'll always receive 3 times what you give to others. If what you give is a good thing, then great things will happen to you.
What have you learned from this experience?	To be kind, respectful, and to care more about other situations and realities.
What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?	Go ahead! Nothing wrong can come from it and in exchange at least you'll learn a lot and will be feeling good about the work done and how it helped others.

NAME	JAMES GRAEME
LOCATION	ALPHARETTA, GEORGIA
Where or how did you volunteer?	City of Alpharetta GA, Old Rucker Park and Farm (Community Agriculture).
What was your role?	Permaculture, land terraforming, irrigation design and installation
Why did you decide to help?	After building musical theater sets at a local church for 3 years, I decided to move to more outdoor work and the farm was very close to my home. The farm teaches people how to grow food at their homes, in raised beds at the farm, and is an experiential field for the local Cambridge Highschool Future Farmers of America program. The farm is also a 100% organic growing facility and is a great alternative to chemical food production.
What have you learned from this experience?	Quite a bit. Although I knew a lot about horticulture, landscaping, and irrigation I learned a lot about producing food in large quantities. Last year we donated 8,000 pounds of vegetable to the local food bank and this year we expanded that capability by 50%
What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?	Community agriculture is becoming more popular as people strive to be self-sufficient, help others, and lead a healthier lifestyle, so many municipalities are engaging in this kind of activity. Ask your local government and charity organizations (food banks are a good start) and search the internet for "community agriculture". Remember, "No farmers, no food."

NAME	DOLORES BECKMAN
LOCATION	LAKEWOOD RANCH, FLORIDA
Where or how did you volunteer?	I volunteered at the Hillsborough Education Foundation (HEC) in Spring 2020 for their scholarship review process.
What was your role?	My role was to review 40 scholarship candidate applications and access their application for scholarship award through a 5-point check of items (GPA, Extracurricular activities, Essays, etc...).
Why did you decide to help?	At my last company, Crowe, there was a person designated to assist finding local volunteer efforts and she connected me to Angie Anthony at HEC.
What have you learned from this experience?	I learned about the scholarship candidates who wrote amazing, heart-felt essays which depicted their lives of struggle and how important they thought the award would be to their future and their family's future. It was truly touching to read anonymous essays and know I made a contribution towards someone's future.
What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?	Go for it! It was very easy to do, I didn't have to leave my desk because the evaluation process was all online. Find something that works for your schedule and your work commitments. I enjoy education initiatives, so this was right up my alley.

NAME	EDDIE JAIDI
LOCATION	GILBERT, ARIZONA
Where or how did you volunteer?	I help pick up trash in the Arizona desert and recreation areas.
What was your role?	Pick up trash or help with events logistics
Why did you decide to help?	Give back to the community Keep recreation areas open Prevent wildfires. Teach my 7yo about volunteering & keeping areas clean. Discover new areas of the State.
What have you learned from this experience?	Humbleness - no one is too good to pick up trash and keep our state clean People do not have common sense by burning pallets (nails), leaving fires unattended which may start wildfires. Building a bond with my son and helping him grow
What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?	Just sign up and do it! It is great to get instant gratification as the impact can be seen right away. From a safety perspective, the volunteer must wear closed toe shoes, gloves, glasses, a hat and carry a lot of water (I am in AZ). I also have pictures I can share as well. Thank you!

NAME	JENNIFER WHITE
LOCATION	TEMPE, ARIZONA
Where or how did you volunteer?	For the past four years I have participated and also organized the Phoenix Branch of the Home of the Brave Campaign. I started it up with the Phoenix VA in 2017. We organize an event at either the VA homeless shelter and/or target an area within the hospital. First year we gave away about 100 t-shirts, toiletry bags, two meals to the CRRC homeless vets in AZ. Next year it got a big, bigger and we gave way 250 shirts and toiletry bags to the nursing home vets as well as the PTSD vets at the Phoenix VA. We also gave away lots of hugs and cheer and definitely make a lot of the gals and guys day. 2019 we grew to be able to give away 1000 shirts to veterans and help organize a massive festival with the VA on the VA Campus. Unfortunately, due to Covid; we were not allowed to have an event in 2020 but the Phoenix VA reached out to me to help 140 female Navajo veterans and their children and I myself gave away \$1,500 worth of toiletries, baby supplies, food, water and adult clothing to help the female Navajo veterans.
What was your role?	Both the site leader, founder as well as individual participation.
Why did you decide to help?	Most of the men in my family served including in WWII, Vietnam, Korea and Iraq and my Aunt was a CIA Director so I thought it was the least I could do to serve in this way.
What have you learned from this experience?	There are very great needs within the Veteran community with people with injuries both mental and physical they deserve to be recognized for their sacrifices and they need much help and support. You can make a huge difference in their lives by showing that you care.
What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?	The Home of the Brave Campaign was gifted to the Soldier's Angels so if you like to get involved every year there is a call for volunteers to help with the November event. You can also contact your local VA Charity Office to see what help or donations they may need at any time. The need is often greatest in the winter months to help the homeless veterans.

NAME	RACHEL ALDRIGE
LOCATION	CASA GRANDE, ARIZONA
Where or how did you volunteer?	Casa Grande Food Bank
What was your role?	I volunteer every week and help passing out food to families in need.

Where or how did you volunteer?	With the help of my neighbors, we collected food and cleaning supplies for a family from Venezuela (about 35 members) that got Covid and didn't have resources to stay at home
What was your role?	I got the idea and post it to the WhatsApp group we have with our neighbors and then coordinated the collect.
Why did you decide to help?	Pandemic was starting and we all were afraid of this unknown illness. There was a family living in a close neighborhood and some members got Covid, but they were still on the streets trying to sell things as they come from Venezuela and don't have a formal job. The news about this family was spread and all neighbors around were scared and pointing to them for not staying home. The real problem is that they didn't have food or any supply to stay home, so I got the idea that if instead of pointing at them or complaint about local authorities for doing nothing, we could help with some food and cleaning supplies, then they could stay home and we all will be safe. The community change their mind and agreed with the idea. It was such a success that we collected 7 sacks of food for this big family.
What have you learned from this experience?	What I learned from this experience is the reason I am sharing it. Sometimes it is easier to complain about others, but if we just try to be on their shoes, if instead of just complain about authorities we try to do something... we won't change the world but we will impact somebody's live and this somehow could benefit us too....
What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?	To be transparent. We decided not to receive money. only food and cleaning supplies. My house was the collecting center. Every time someone brought something, I shared it through Whatsapp, I had someone from the community as witness that all the food and supplies were delivered to the people, they give it for.

Where or how did you volunteer?	Via Zoom with a spanish nonprofit called Aspasim and Esade Business School.
What was your role?	I was a consultant volunteer helping them to build and improve their organization
Why did you decide to help?	It is a great opportunity to give back and share the knowledge you have acquired with both work and education.
What have you learned from this experience?	I had the chance to meet with other volunteers and share experiences, knowledge and get to know a nonprofit and all the team that was in charge of running it.
What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?	It is a great opportunity to learn, and my advice would be to enjoy the opportunity and if you say you will dedicate 5hrs actually do it in a conscious way. You learn a lot out of it.

Where or how did you volunteer?	Local Police Dept "Shop with a Cop".
What was your role?	Master Present Wrapper!
Why did you decide to help?	My husband is a Police Chief, I love Christmas and giving gifts. When I first heard about this program, I wanted to be a part of giving less fortunate children and their families a wonderful Christmas. I love how excited they are to shop, hang out with a police officer and the excitement to help me wrap all their gifts...except the ones they think they need now vs waiting for Christmas. :)
What have you learned from this experience?	This year was extra special with a "COVID-19" version since the children could not go to Wal-Mart with the police officers to shop, eat Subway and get all their gifts wrapped for under the tree. Instead, the children nominated sent in a Christmas wish list for them and their family for the officers to shop. We met at the police department with stations setup for each volunteer to wrap their families' gifts, then we loaded all the gifts in several police cars, met another non-profit at Wal-Mart to pick up a big basket of food for Christmas dinner and off we went delivering just like Santa. This year was the first time I was able to be a bigger part going to family's homes and see the emotions, thankfulness that they were going to have a Christmas for their children during an even tougher year for many. This experience has showed me how many wonderful families there are that just need a little positive and love in their families lives to keep going. It's my honor and very humbling to be a little part of that happiness.

What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?

With so much negativity in the world, especially for law enforcement today socially and an all-time high suicide rate for police, reach out to your local departments and see what type of programs they have you can volunteer for or what you can do to help them. It will start a great relationship, provide insight into their day-to-day life and you will be a part of the change much needed that we see them and care.

Where or how did you volunteer?	I am a volunteer mentor for the national non-profit SCORE for my local area. We provide free advice and resources for small businesses and entrepreneurs.
What was your role?	Mentor, Digital Strategy owner, marketing.
Why did you decide to help?	I like helping people achieve their goals.
What have you learned from this experience?	I have mentored over 20 entrepreneurs and small businesses the last 12 months. I have learned too much to list but can share people are appreciative and hardworking when they get help and direction.
What would be your advice for anyone who'd like to volunteer in similar initiatives?	Listen and be empathetic.