



Tennessee Volunteer Programs Make an Impact

The Volunteer Generation Fund is a program of the [Corporation for National and Community Service](#) (CNCS) that supports voluntary organizations and state service commissions in boosting the impact of volunteers in addressing critical community needs.



The Volunteer Generation Fund allows Volunteer Tennessee to collaborate with Volunteer Centers across the state through the Tennessee Volunteer Generation Fund Coalition, an effort to increase volunteer recruitment and expand the use of volunteers to increase educational attainment for Tennessee's youth, improve economic outcomes for individuals, and better prepare communities for disasters.

[Hands On Nashville](#), the [United Way of Greater Chattanooga](#), the [United Way of Williamson County](#), [Volunteer East Tennessee](#), [Volunteer Memphis](#), and [Volunteer Tennessee](#) make up the Coalition. The Coalition will provide capacity building services to 60 organizations across Tennessee.

This month, we're highlighting how one VGF program engages volunteers and improves lives.

The [United Way of Williamson County's Raise Your Hand \(RYH\)](#) program is an education initiative that focuses on students in first through fourth grade who are not proficient in reading and math. Statistics show that students learn to read in grades K-3. In 3rd grade, they begin reading to learn, so being on grade level is crucial to school performance.

Data shows that adding volunteer tutors can significantly improve students' academic success. To that end, volunteers are recruited to work with certified teachers in an after school time setting. These volunteers work one-on-one with students to help reinforce the skills learned during the tutoring class.

The volunteers get to know the children and, in some cases, become a child's biggest cheerleader. RYH volunteers are so much more than just volunteers. For children who lack consistency in their lives - the volunteer fills that role. For children who lack a strong support system - the volunteer fills that role. For children who just need an adult to talk to – the volunteer fills that role. Volunteers have always been and will always remain essential to the success of the Raise Your Hand Initiative.

Meet Carol, a volunteer for the Raise Your Hand Program:

What led you to become a volunteer with the Raise Your Hand Program? I love kids, but do not have my own. This program gives me an opportunity to work with, interact with and really connect with the children in the program. Moreover, I just like to help people.





What are some of the highlights of what you have experienced as a volunteer with the program?

I love it when the kids get excited when they see you, seeing them when they master their spelling words and when they are finally excited to do the tutoring. I know the connection is there when the students want me to meet their parents.

How can you see your service making an impact?

I have always loved to read. This program allows me to see the excitement and the confidence that comes when the students finally 'get it,' when they figure it out.

What would you tell others considering volunteering?

It is the best thing that you could ever do. It makes you feel good and it makes the children feel better about themselves. If a little one is struggling in class and their peers make fun of them, school is a horrible place. But, when they start being secure in their knowledge it changes the entire experience.

[Volunteer Tennessee](#) and the [Corporation for National and Community Service](#) are proud to support volunteer programs that make a difference for Tennessee communities. Join the conversation on social media by using #GoVolunteer

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[Volunteer Tennessee](#) is a 25 member bipartisan board appointed by the Governor to encourage volunteerism and community service. Volunteer Tennessee pursues its mission through administration of AmeriCorps grants, training and collaborations and coalitions with public and private organizations interested in volunteerism and service. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

The Volunteer Generation Fund is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Social Innovation Fund, and the Volunteer Generation Fund, and leads volunteer initiatives for the nation. For more information, visit www.NationalService.gov. As part of their continued efforts to engage the public with national service, CNCS released the [2017 Public Engagement, Outreach, and Education Plan](#). As part of this plan, the agency has designated monthly themes throughout the year, centered on CNCS focus areas. October's theme focused on Volunteer Mobilization.