

Culture of volunteerism is celebrated at ICAN

BY SHELBY PEDERSEN

ICAN wrapped up our Volunteer Appreciation Week a few weeks ago and I was again reminded of how volunteers truly are the lifeblood of what we do. We simply could not provide the services that we do without our volunteers.

Our organization recently went through the process of becoming a Service Enterprise through the Arizona

impact on ICAN's youth.

The return on investment is one way to show the impact of volunteers. However, it is seeing the day-to-day interaction that really exemplifies the effect of our volunteers. Volunteers like Tom, who started volunteering at ICAN and noticed an under-utilized garden in the back. Tom took it upon himself



(Photo Courtesy: ICAN)

Shelby Pedersen, CEO of ICAN, urges people to volunteer in their communities.

“Becoming a Service Enterprise helped us realize the value of our volunteers.”

— Shelby Pedersen

Governor's Office and Points of Light. In fact, we were the first organization in the state of Arizona to do so. Points of Light is the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service. It partnered with the Governor's Office to create a process to certify local organizations so that they can better understand and maximize the true value of volunteers.

Becoming a Service Enterprise helped us realize the value of our volunteers. Last year alone, ICAN's volunteers donated over 18,000 hours of their time to our organization. That time is valued at \$22 an hour, which equals a total value to the organization of more than \$400,000 a year. That's an incredible

to lend his expertise in that area and create ICAN's Garden Club. This group now meets with Tom twice each week and has enjoyed a number of seasons of harvests, finishing each with a "salad party" to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Volunteers like Carla and Mary Jo are also valuable. These retired school teachers with a passion for literacy manage ICAN's library and work one-on-one with youth to increase literacy. Helen is a volunteer who comes to ICAN two days every week – welcoming youth with a warm smile (and many times a hug as well) as they check into ICAN and start their afternoon. These are the experiences that cannot be valued

participate in community service projects to give back to the community that is supporting them. Our teens recently visited Feed My Starving Children and packed food boxes for the hungry. With our youth, even simple projects like picking up trash around the building help create that culture of civic engagement. Our staff members also participate in a community service activity each year as a group.

We have more than 250,000 residents in the City of Chandler. Imagine the impact it would make if every person volunteered – even just one hour a month. ICAN is part of the "For Our City" initiative, which is a collaboration of businesses, local government, faith-based communities, and nonprofits. This group organizes various service projects throughout the year and helps to connect volunteers with organizations.

I encourage everyone to join in ICAN's culture of volunteerism. Maybe you already volunteer at your child's school – that is great! Could you spare one more hour each month to help someone else in need? There are tons of volunteer opportunities, right here in Chandler, and throughout the valley – providing experiences that not only benefit those in need, but provide life-enriching experiences for volunteers willing to help.

Shelby Pedersen is the CEO of ICAN: Positive Programs for Youth

in hours and dollars. These volunteers support ICAN's program staff, allowing them to carefully plan their lessons and ensure that the time spent with youth is impacting them with enriching life skills and academic enrichment opportunities.

We strive to create a culture of volunteerism. Even ICAN youth are learning the importance of volunteering – they

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Are You Living With, or Worried About, Someone Suffering with Low Back Pain?

By Back Pain Expert, Shaheen Siddiqui



Have you ever been told that back pain is just something that you have to deal with as part of life, and there's not much you can do about it? Or, has your doctor told you that the only solution to your back pain is taking medication or just resting for several days?

If you are 30+, and you've answered YES to any of these questions, or you've been having back pain for more than 2 weeks and it's not going away, then this information I'm about to share with

Just imagine your life if you were able to:

- sleep at night without discomfort and pain
- wake up in the morning with less pain and stiffness in your

you will find easy to follow, simple advice that can make a difference almost immediately.

My name is Shaheen Siddiqui, a physical therapist who specializes in helping people aged 30+ find natural, long lasting relief from low back pain. Why did I write this report? To help you, or someone you are concerned about, to make a more informed decision regarding your health. Sometimes it's the most simple change in your daily