

Volunteer puts energies into feeding hungry

Linda Dums, For Post-Crescent Media 3:30 p.m. CDT August 17, 2015



(Photo: Graham Washatka/For Post-Crescent Media)

Sara Bell, who lives in Fond du Lac but works in the Fox Cities, does a lot of volunteering here with organizations that focus on hunger relief.

“That is something I feel really strongly about,” said Bell, 40. “I think having access to food is such a fundamental right. It’s hard to believe that so many families struggle to put food on their plate, especially given the amount of food that is wasted.”

Bell, a nurse with ThedaCare for 19 years, knows food is vital to a person’s health and well-being.

“I know how important having access to food in general is for growth and development and concentration and to do well and succeed in school,” said Bell, who works in clinical training and education.

Volunteering is something she can do to help make an impact.

“It’s just something that seems pretty easy from a what we can do standpoint,” she said.

Bell volunteers her time at the Feeding America warehouse in Milwaukee. She sorts donations that are boxed and labeled for food banks from over 37 counties on the east side of Wisconsin who come to the warehouse to get what they need. Bell is excited for a warehouse opening soon in the Fox Valley.

“That’s pretty cool that it will be a lot easier to get the food where it needs to go,” she said, noting she might also volunteer at the new location. “It will be nice to have a more northern location.”

Bell said volunteers are important to get the work done.

“Without the volunteers, they are not able to do as much,” she said. “It’s not a lot of work and not a lot of effort on my part.”

For the last two years Bell has also served Homeless Connections in Appleton along with fellow members of the United Way of the Fox Cities Emerging Leaders. Bell serves as the kitchen lead and organizes the Emerging Leaders volunteers to serve a monthly evening snack and breakfast for residents.

Bell, who is a chair on the Emerging Leaders group, said she enjoys supporting a local organization that helps families and their children

Homeless Connections “supports the entire family unit that’s staying there,” she said. “I like it too because we’re able to get groups of people together. They are doing something that doesn’t feel too intimidating.”

Bell also finds ways for her children, 7 and 9, to give back. They spent time with Feed My Starving Children to make MannaPack rice packs that go to third-world countries.

“I think it’s important that I get my kids involved in volunteering,” she said. “I feel that if everybody took care of the person next to them you would think how the world would be. I do what I can with the time that I have because I know it’s appreciated by the organizations.”

Angela Janikowski, a friend and colleague, said Bell also motivates others to join her efforts.

“Sara’s dedication is driven by a sense of giving back to her community,” she said. “She recognizes how fortunate and blessed she is and feels that helping others is the right thing to do.”

Meet the volunteers

Each Saturday on the Good Neighbors page we introduce you to a volunteer in the Fox Valley. If you want to nominate a volunteer, send details to pfeatures@postcrescent.com.

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