

## **Inspiring Tomorrow's Volunteers**

*By Brandon Seng, Communications Manager, Michigan Nonprofit Association*

Heads down and walking slow, it was no secret that the two youngsters that entered the United Way Volunteer Center of Midland County felt they had better places to be. They were ushered in by their father, who announced they were interested in volunteer opportunities to keep them engaged over the summer months. Glancing at his children, who were staring through the window at the beautiful summer weather, it was obvious this father held little concern for the fact that his children were contemplating the many other activities that they could be doing at that particular moment.

Volunteer opportunities, according to the father, would help them to avoid idleness, and curb the problem of “sitting around doing nothing all summer.” The Volunteer Center was quick to accept this challenge, and went to work to provide these youth with opportunities that would change their mind about volunteering, and help them find fun in their placements.

The task of finding interesting volunteer opportunities for these two children, who varied in both age and gender, proved easy, and the Center found opportunities that would excite the siblings, and keep them involved. The girl was referred to a girl's day camp - History Girls - fashioned after the “American Girls.” A similar volunteer opportunity was found for her brother, who was referred to a Boy Scout Camp, called Mission Possible. Here, he was given the opportunity to help in the facilitation of the archery, target shooting and gun safety portion of the camp.

It was no surprise to the staff at the center when the boy came back after volunteering, and expressed interest in finding other placements. Having had so much fun at the Boy Scout Camp, he had formed a different opinion about volunteering, and was excited to head back out into the community. He jumped at the chance to participate in another summer camp - Time Travelers Camp for Boys – and also started to donate his time at the local Recycling Center.

“Proving the rewards that come from volunteering is a great part about this job,” said Interim Director/Volunteer Outreach Director Janet Fergin. “It's a pleasure to see youth get hooked on volunteering. Because of our work, these youth will remain engaged in the years to come.”

For more about the United Way Volunteer Center of Midland County, contact:

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