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Stepping Out During the Holidays

By Linda Lan Phung



Linda Lan Phung, a Miramonte High School junior who volunteers throughout the East Bay, is an officer with Club Be the Star You Are!(r), and strives for 17-second miracles, inspired by author Jason Wright. Be the Star You Are!(r) is spearheading Operation Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief to help families on the East Coast. http://btsya.com/hurricane_sandy_relief.html.

are less fortunate. Volunteers are needed in every organization year round. Besides helping out at your local church, school, or club, you can find an organization that suits your interests by visiting the Volunteer Center of the East Bay at www.helpnow.org or Volunteer Match at www.VolunteerMatch.org.

As Raber says, "There are always people who are down on their luck, so the best way to be helpful is to volunteer for the rest of the year as well as the holidays." Everyone experiences that feel-good euphoria when doing something positive and meaningful for others. This season, step out and give back to your community!

Teen Scene is YOUR voice. If you have something to say or have writing skills and want to be part of our Teen Scene team, email our Teen Coach, Cynthia Brian, Cynthia@CynthiaBrian.com.

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Tidings of good cheer fill the air as the holidays approach. Stores are piled high with decorations, houses decked with lights and ornamentation, and people filled with generosity.

Salvation Army Santas ring their famous bells outside of shopping centers in anticipation of donations for the poor. As important as giving dollars is to help charities help others. This year, why not experience how it feels to give back by volunteering your time?

Whether it's sorting food for the hungry, collecting books, or coaching kids, a plethora of opportunities await for you to get involved. With volunteering, when you help someone, you're "teaching them to fish" so that they can pass it forward to help others in the future.

Miramonte junior Guy Raber volunteers with nonprofit organizations because he believes it to be a great way to give back to the community. He states, "My favorite volunteering moment was two years ago when I was an instructor for beginning sailors. One of my beginners told me that I was his idol. Hearing him say that gratified me because it showed I was making a difference by volunteering - even if it was only as a sailing instructor."

Campolindo senior Megan Chen chose to volunteer because she enjoys assisting people.

Chen says, "I'm so lucky to be where I am here in Lamorinda, living the way that I do. Helping the less fortunate makes me happy because I'm helping someone in need." With volunteering, Chen sees firsthand how she affects the person. She adds, "The best feeling happened when I served food at Glide Memorial Church for the hungry people and saw how grateful they were, smiling and thanking me."

Volunteering benefits both sides. It definitely impacts lives in a profound way, as Raber's and Chen's experiences illustrate. It is also fun because volunteers derive pleasure from their efforts.

Whether you are a seasoned volunteer or volunteering for the first time, the holiday season is a great time to donate your talents, time, and dollars to help others who

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