



Shefali Bhuva

Back to Volunteering

VOLUNTEERING OFFERS COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND A SENSE OF PURPOSE

I STARTED VOLUNTEERING as a teenager and along the way, learned that volunteering isn't only about whether you have time or money to give, but about being part of a community, sharing your skills and knowledge, and wanting to make a positive impact.

I became a Barrington resident in 1998 and have consistently been amazed by the welcoming nature of our community. At the time I was a working mom, and my two-hour round-trip commute downtown did not always make it easy to volunteer, but I was still able to find simple and meaningful ways to contribute to our community.

Several years later, when I 'retired' from corporate life and found that I had more time to give, volunteering filled an important void in my life. Not only was I able to use my corporate skills to help others, but it gave me a sense of self and purpose—something that I didn't want to lose when I put my career on hold.

When I was approached to join Barrington Area Volunteer Connection (BAVC), I could see the need for this type of organization in our area, especially as it is available to anyone age 13

years or older. With the pandemic shutting down so much activity, this platform came about at the right time for rebuilding our volunteer networks.

The Barrington Area Volunteer Connection's purpose is to connect Barrington area nonprofits with local volunteers. BAVC utilizes a platform that makes it easy for volunteers to find an organization that matches their interests and time



commitment. There is no charge to use the BAVC platform. Our goal is for residents and nonprofits to think of BAVC anytime they think about volunteering.

To date, BAVC has over 75 nonprofits of all types and sizes on its platform. Volunteering needs to be meaningful, and BAVC's platform allows volunteers to find nonprofits that they have a particular affinity for, whether its families, the environment, animals, or health. As we hit our six-month mark, BAVC has

almost 600 users on our platform.

One of the other benefits of BAVC is that we help nonprofits manage their volunteer signups and data. This is especially important for those smaller organizations that may not have the tools available in-house.

The planning for BAVC began during the pandemic with the hope that once the restrictions eventually eased up and nonprofits needed ongoing volunteer help, we would be ready to go. As predicted, we have begun to see nonprofits moving forward again with their onsite programs and event planning which will increase the number of volunteer opportunities.

Signing up for BAVC is simple and easy and takes less than five minutes. Those interested in volunteering can go to thebavc.org, create and customize a free account, and start looking for volunteer opportunities. BAVC is here and ready to assist you! 

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Shefali Bhuva manages the Community Outreach for BAVC and has been active volunteer with many other Barrington Area nonprofits over the years.