

Top 7 ways to volunteer in SoCal for 2010

By: Alysha Del Valle

Tuesday, Jan 05, 2010



LOS ANGELES (KABC) -- It's 2010, and this is about the time many people set New Year's resolutions. If volunteering is on the list of new goals, Citysearch.com has created a "top 7 ways to volunteer" list to help get you going!

The number one way to volunteer is for the dogs! Karma Rescue is a dog rescue organization specializing in large breed dogs.

"They take the dogs from the overcrowded shelters, which unfortunately are euthanized at a high rate," said Mar Yvette of Citysearch.com.

Karma Rescue patiently and hopefully waits for every single dog in need to be adopted.

"We had a dog named Mikey that we had in our program for six years, and he just recently got a home," said Rande Levine, founder of Karma Rescue.

If you can't adopt or foster a Karma Rescue pooch, go with their Guardian Angel Program.

"You spend time with them on the weekends, you give them treats, you pet them, you love them, and you just really mentor, it's sort of like a big brother or a big sister," Yvette said.

Reading to Kids is a nonprofit organization serving underprivileged communities through the power of books.

"If you have a soft spot for children and you love to read, this is where you should be volunteering your time," Yvette said.

Reading to Kids sponsors family-friendly reading clubs every second Saturday of the month at eight different elementary schools throughout Los Angeles County. The program really counts on volunteers to inspire a love of books.

"Hopefully they'll go home and want to read and spend their time hopefully not in front of the television," said Reading to Kids program director Lisa Flores.

Making the No. 3 spot is Chrysalis, where the motto is "changing lives through jobs."

"What they do is they help the economically disadvantaged and homeless people find jobs and become self-sufficient," Yvette said.

For the past 25 year, Chrysalis has helped over 30,000 people find work, with the aid of volunteers.

"Volunteers teach classes, they teach people how to use the computer, they work one-on-one with our clients to develop a resume, to practice job interview skills," said Patrick Shandrick of Chrysalis.

Shandrick added that you can also donate gently worn professional attire for their clients to wear for job interviews.

"It really is a great cause, and especially now with the way the economy has been, they've seen a 40 percent increase in people needing your help," Yvette said.

Rounding out the top 7 ways to volunteer in Los Angeles County are Guardians, assisting senior citizens throughout Southern California, Heal the Bay, helping and protecting our local beaches, the Los Angeles Mission, feeding the homeless and disadvantaged, 826 LA, emphasizing education.

In Orange County, volunteers shine at Children's Hospital Orange County (CHOC). In the Inland Empire, the United Way provides many opportunities to do good. In Ventura County, volunteer your time with homeless dogs at Big Paws 4 A Cause.