

Helping Me to Be a Better Person

Contributed by Becky Mangus, member of the Columbia Rotary Club and Publisher of the Business Monthly, a Business-to-Business newspaper serving Howard County, the BWI Business District, and North Anne Arundel County. This is an excerpt of an article that appeared in the Special Rotary Insert section of the October issue and is reprinted with the permission of the Business Monthly.



I have always been someone who believes in helping others and serving the community. My children learned this in elementary school when I encouraged them to donate a couple of hours of lawn service as a silent auction item at their school's Spring Fling. They asked me why it was called "volunteering" when they didn't really want to volunteer their services. I simply said, "Because you aren't getting paid to do the work — that is the 'volunteer' part."

So you can imagine how pleased and proud I was several years later when one of my sons, who was helping me transport donated items from my Rotary club to the Domestic Violence Center, said as we unloaded the car, "You know, some people just don't get it. They don't understand about volunteering." It appears the year before he was offered community service hours to help with cleaning up his girlfriend's high school campus. He helped clean but refused the community service credit. "It was her school, and that is just what you do."

And that's it. It is just what you do to make your community, your world, a nicer place to live — for yourself, for others. That is Rotary's motto, "Service Above Self," and perhaps that is why Rotary and I are such a good fit.

As with everyone, my life is incredibly busy. I have neither the time nor the money to make as much of a footprint as I would like. But, by being part of an organization that is making a difference every day worldwide, I am making a difference as well.

In a small way, I have contributed to help the survivors of the tsunami in Thailand and the hurricanes in Haiti and Louisiana. I have helped bring mental health care to the people of 123 villages in India. I have helped bring clean drinking water with the building of five new wells to a small community in Kenya. I have helped with polio eradication worldwide. I have helped ensure villagers receive clean blood transfusions in several small towns in South America. And, there are countless other ways I am helping of which I am not even aware.

I could not do all of these things myself. But, as one of many, I can have a long-lasting and significant effect — and that makes me happy. It also helps fulfill my belief that one and one do equal three: You, me and us