



Guest Editor Sharon McB, Denver CO: Each of us, after decades of raising kids, pursuing careers and tackling other tough responsibilities, look forward to our sunset years.

The typical dream is relaxing on sunny beaches, leisurely watching the waves and sipping well-earned drinks. However, after a few months of doing nothing, many seniors realize that retirement shouldn't be the end of an active life. Today, most 65-year-olds can look forward to several more productive decades. Consider spending some of that time to help others. Volunteering is a satisfying way for retirees to contribute valuable skills and experiences to our communities and beyond. There are hundreds of opportunities available, from serving a meal at a local Salvation Army homeless shelter to a summer of rebuilding storm-damaged South American homes with Habitat For Humanity.

My volunteer history: Within a few weeks after I retired at age 65 in 2005, I started what became a 10-year commitment. I volunteered daily in senior activities at a major city community center. Some duties involved my career experiences from 40 years in graphic arts, teaching and sports.

I taught senior and children's classes, and also swimming and lifesaving training in the center's pool. I booked and escorted seniors to theaters, museums and group trips. I wrote, photographed, designed and published the center's monthly newsletter. Throughout those years, it was satisfying to offer a lifetime of experiences to help others.

If newly retired and unfamiliar with volunteering, begin your efforts with something easy and short-term. Check with local schools, hospitals and organizations for one-day or weekend tasks. It could be a church rummage sale, delivering holiday meals to homebound elderly or handing out voter info.

If, after those brief experiences, you're ready for longer commitments, scan the internet for national and international organizations with projects that interest you. You can volunteer for

interesting locations just about anywhere in the world.

Help rebuild a seashore village after floods in Indonesia. Teach arithmetic to kids in an African tribal town. Care for abandoned animals in an Israeli shelter.

During working careers, people get their rewards from paychecks and the material things they can buy. For volunteer retirees who continue working to improve their communities, the rewards are just as satisfying in knowing they're helping those in need.