

Resume for George Stephens

I have resided in Howard County since 1974 and have been involved in various volunteer activities within the area. I am a retired engineer and would like to find a new way to contribute to our community. The major volunteer activities I have participated in are:

President (7 years) and vice president (3 years) of the Soccer Association of Columbia SAC). During my time with SAC I learned a lot about managing a volunteer organization. During my tenure we had a staff of about 400 volunteer workers (coaches, field maintenance, and managers) serving over 2000 players with only one part time paid staff member. I believe that engaging volunteers in support of any cause including various disability issues could be an effective adjunct to an overall program.

Canine Search and Rescue (SAR) technician for wilderness missions with Mid-Atlantic D.O.G.S. (MAD) (9 years). During the time I served as a SAR technician GPS technology had become widespread so that most folks lost in the wilderness that we were tasked with locating were either very young or else suffered from some form of disability (e.g., dementia, autism) and couldn't use a GPS to self-rescue. We spent time learning how such folks behaved when lost and disoriented.

Member Montgomery County Animal Rescue Team (CART). CART is a volunteer program to provide emergency animal shelters in conjunction with emergency human shelters. This program was established in conjunction with a FEMA grant because of the recognition that people either won't participate in an emergency evacuation or will return to a dangerous location to rescue their pets if they are not comfortable that the pets are safe. Providing animal shelters in conjunction with human shelters brings more people into a safe place and provides comfort to them by ensuring that their pets are safe as well.

Therapy dog handler with Fidos For Freedom (14 years). During my time as a therapy dog handler I have visited many places where there were clients who are either physically or mentally challenged. Learning the value of a neutral and loving interaction with a dog helped me to appreciate how little effort is sometimes needed to brighten the life of someone who is struggling with disabilities.

Service dog trainer for Fidos For Freedom - home puppy raiser and instructor for prison trainers at Federal Correction Institution (FCI) in Cumberland. (8 years). My wife and I trained 5 puppies for about a year each. When puppies in the program are moved along to the next stage of training, they go to a group of inmate trainers at FCI where two inmates are assigned to work with each young dog teaching them skills they will need to ultimately serve their assigned client. There is a fair degree of turnover of the prison trainers so we go to the prison twice a month and train the trainers to help them work with the dogs. Our program trains dogs to serve mobility impaired clients, hearing impaired clients and clients with PTSD.