



# Volunteer Gwinnett NEWS

April 2019

## Greetings!

Welcome to the Volunteer Gwinnett News, a new quarterly newsletter to help you stay informed about opportunities to volunteer, how to become a volunteer, and the work volunteers are doing in our community today.

Volunteers are an essential part of Gwinnett County Government and our community. Their selfless contributions ensure projects get done, improve lives, build bridges, save tax dollars, and keep us all vibrantly connected.

## What is Volunteer Gwinnett?

Created in 2012 with the bold goal of reaching 1 million hours of service annually, Volunteer Gwinnett is a program designed to involve more residents in volunteer activities associated with County government, including County departments, boards, agencies, and related organizations. Volunteers can participate in one-time events and long-term projects.



Volunteer Gwinnett offers countywide volunteer opportunities, increases awareness about Gwinnett County's roles and responsibilities, streamlines volunteer recruitment and placement, and supports government operations. Opportunities are available in most County departments and can include one-day events, ongoing projects, and student internships.

## 2018 Volunteer Gwinnett Statistics



## Meet the Volunteer Gwinnett Project Coordinator



Muriam Nafees has been the Volunteer Gwinnett Project coordinator for Gwinnett County Government for about two years, providing support to staff who recruit, train, and supervise volunteers and interns.

After obtaining a bachelor's degree in business management from Kennesaw State University, Nafees began her career with Gwinnett County Government in the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, providing fire prevention training and awareness to the community. She transferred into her current role in 2017.

"I love being a volunteer coordinator because I believe volunteering is important to the well-being of any community," Nafees said. "It brings a sense of togetherness and I appreciate being able to provide people with various avenues for them to get involved in their communities."

## Program Profile

The Volunteer Citizens on Patrol (VCOP) program offers qualified and interested residents an opportunity to partner with the Gwinnett County Police Department to help serve as eyes and ears at parks and other locations.

The VCOP participants, who are not sworn officers, conduct high-visibility patrols in County parks, serving as a force multiplier by detecting, deterring, and reporting crime and suspicious activity. Other locations may be added as the program develops.



Volunteers must successfully complete the Gwinnett County Citizens Police Academy and additional training specifically tailored to the VCOP program. To learn more about VCOP and the Citizen Police Academy, [click here](#). You can also email [policevolunteers@gwinnettcountry.com](mailto:policevolunteers@gwinnettcountry.com).

## Liaison Highlight

The Department of Water Resources' outreach team gives the public an opportunity to work outdoors and to get their hands wet and their boots dirty. Led by Outreach Manager John Butler and Outreach Specialist Jordan Girard, the team helps residents engage and protect water in Gwinnett.



John is a passionate outdoorsman with a lifelong attraction to water. He studied environmental health science at the University of Georgia where he focused on stream ecology and aquatic macroinvertebrates while learning about water pollution and its effects on the environment. After working for DWR for 14 years, he is an enthusiastic and committed advocate for water quality in Gwinnett.

Water Resources' volunteer efforts mean that people kayaking down the Yellow River get to enjoy the beauty of a natural waterway. Without them, a ride down the river might be a reminder of the threat to water quality from floating debris, eroded banks, and mountains of trash.

Jordan, a nature-loving, trash-picking, critter-catching go-getter, graduated from Ohio University with a degree in Environmental Studies. Now in her third year with DWR, Jordan is excited about continuing to find new ways to give each Gwinnett resident an intimate experience with the outdoors and cultivating stewardship for our water resources.



DWR holds large-scale cleanup events twice a year in partnership with Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful — Great Days of Service in October and Great Gwinnett Wetlands in April and smaller cleanups all over the county, teaming up with clubs, groups, organizations, cities, and groups of dedicated residents.

The Gwinnett Adopt-a-Stream program lets you organize your own stream cleanup at a stream near you. Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful and DWR offers free certifications, and provides free monitoring supplies as long as you monitor your stream once a month.

For volunteer opportunities with DWR, visit [www.GwinnettH2O.com/Events](http://www.GwinnettH2O.com/Events) or [www.VolunteerGwinnett.net](http://www.VolunteerGwinnett.net). You can also request assistance with organizing a stream cleanup or check for upcoming Adopt-A-Stream certification classes by visiting Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful's website at [www.gwinnettcb.org](http://www.gwinnettcb.org).

## We Need You!



Help Gwinnett County maintain a sustainable environment by volunteering at **Gwinnett County's annual Earth Day** event on Saturday, **April 13** at the Gwinnett County Fairgrounds located at 2405 Sugarloaf Parkway in Lawrenceville.

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Residents are invited to bring paper, paint, electronics and tires to recycle. Volunteers ages 14 and up are needed to unload vehicles, direct traffic, break down boxes, distribute recycling information and support other Earth Day activities.

The event is rain or shine. Interested volunteers should register [here](#). For more information, please contact Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful at 770.822.5187 or email [gwinnettcb@gwinnettcb.org](mailto:gwinnettcb@gwinnettcb.org).

### [More upcoming volunteer events:](#)

- [Earth Day/Global Youth Service Day](#) – April 20
- [Great Gwinnett Wetlands](#) – April 27
- [Greenfest 2019](#) – April 26
- [Arts & Crafts Festival](#) – May 18
- [Kids Fishing Day 2019](#) – June 1

To see a complete list of volunteer events, [click here](#).

## Gwinnett County employees in action at JA Discovery Center

Gwinnett County Government employees are dedicated to giving back to our community. Each month, more than 20 employee volunteers share their life experiences to coach a small group of Junior Achievement students at a day-long program at the JA Discovery Center.

The Discovery Center gives middle school students a glimpse of possible professional and financial futures that await them. This partnership and storefront sponsorship impacts more than 30,000 students per year.



## Volunteers in Action

Events that volunteers helped make a success!



Random Act of Kindness Day  
Shorty Howell Park  
February 9, 2019



Partnership Day  
Little Mulberry Park  
March 2, 2019



Water Resources Privet Pull  
Lilburn City Park  
February 23, 2019



Gwinnett County Fire Smoke Alarm Blitz  
Grayson  
February 9, 2019

**Volunteer Today!** [VolunteerGwinnett.net](http://VolunteerGwinnett.net)

770.822.7955  
[volunteergwinnett@gwinnettcounty.com](mailto:volunteergwinnett@gwinnettcounty.com)