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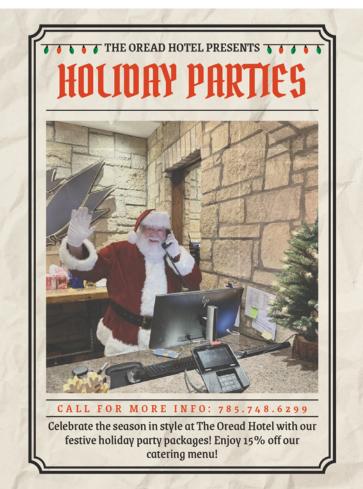


A good mix of art, young people and hope make Van Go an ideal volunteer opportunity for many community members.

of life? To serve others and to do

If you see a yellow Volkswagen Beetle (named Sunny) driving around Lawrence, there's a good chance it's passionate volunteer Stacey Lamb. "The first thing I think of with Stacey is her sunshiny personality," says Van Go office and development coordinator Sarah Humbert. "[Lamb] once donated a retired 'Sunny' to one of Van Go's reunions—a very grateful graduate who desperately needed a vehicle won the car. That's just one instance of Stacey's generosity."

Lamb says at age 5, her daughter Emily got her interested in volunteering. At this young age, Emily discovered what it meant to be homeless and wanted to do something to help. Lamb and her husband took their daughter to Lawrence Interdenominational Nutrition Kitchen (L.I.N.K.) to help serve lunch with the hope that



"... volunteering might ease her mind and heart." She continues, "Our family became quite involved, and we all began to experience the benefits of volunteering. It is putting into action what your heart knows is the right thing to do. I found that volunteering fueled my soul. ... not only was I helping others, I was getting fed. too."

Volunteering at Van Go was "the perfect equation. I love art. I love young people. I love to encourage others. I love doing something for the greater good," Lamb explains. "Smash those all together, and it is the perfect volunteer opportunity for me ever. Simple as that." She also says that founder Lynne Green is a dear friend who inspired her to get involved.

Lamb is a creative and designer who graduated from the University of Kansas with a bachelor of arts degree and worked with Hallmark Cards for 30 years. Humbert personally went through the Van Go program in 2007-2008 and has a direct understanding of the good the program does in the community and how much volunteers help the program. She remembers Lamb's help and encouragement for her during this time, and continued help with career advice for the youth going through the Van Go program.

"Stacey is a working artist who was employed by Hallmark for years and now has her own successful business," Humbert explains. "We hold career fairs and employment panels for our youth at different points during the year, and Stacey is always willing to come talk about what it really takes to make a living in the arts."

She's also a great resource for youth interested in applying to the Kansas City Arts Institute or other art programs who need help building their portfolios, she continues. "She's so encouraging to our young people and knows how to give them honest advice in ways that are setting them up for success. Above all else,

Van Go has a staff of fewer than 10 full-time employees working with local youth ages 14 through 24, and volunteers are invaluable in helping provide the depth of service, Humbert explains.

Lamb is hopeful that her help has positively impacted others. "I hope my encouragement, my listening ear and welcoming smile make me a good volunteer where others feel validated and definitely seen," she explains. And she is grateful for all the new relationships she has built. "The Van Go graduates especially

stick out in my head. They have become very dear friends who have left their thumbprints on my heart. I never would have met them if I did not come to Van Go on a regular basis. I feel so lucky that our paths crossed, because my life seriously is better because of them. It is because of volunteering that my life continues to get richer."

Humbert believes that without volunteers such as Lamb who help on the art floor, educate the youth, share career paths, conduct mock interview or employment panels, and teach nutrition education or healthy communication skills, Van Go couldn't share what it does with the community at large, as these are all vital parts of the overall services provided to Van Go youth.

Lamb not only volunteers at Van Go but at other community services such as Family Promise, as well. "Volunteering comes straight from the heart. When I work alongside other volunteers, it shows me that people really do care about helping others. I get a real feeling of hope ... It fuels me and feeds me."

For more information on volunteering, visit the Van Go volunteer page at www.van-go.org/volunteer.

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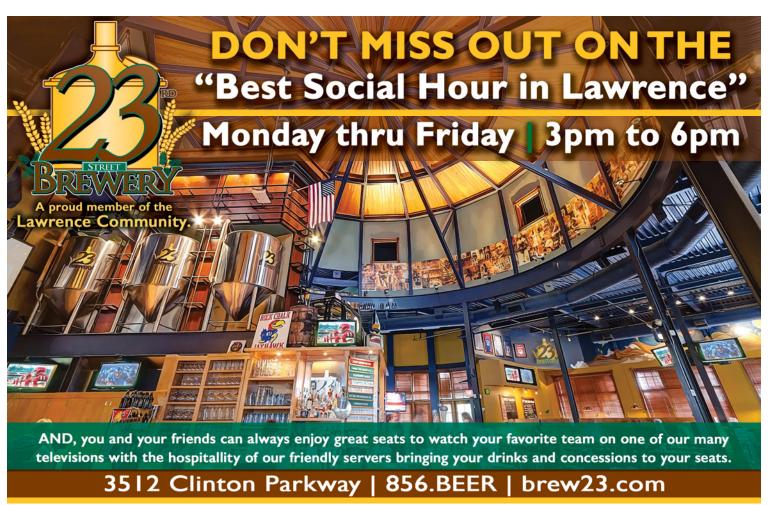
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