

VOLUNTEER VOICE

A newsletter by and for Pinellas County government volunteers.



October 2015

We're on the web at www.pinellascounty.org/volunteer

From Volunteer to Engineer

How volunteering helped Zara McKay get a job

Zara McKay (24) graduated from Florida State University in May of 2014 with her Bachelors of Science in Chemical Engineering. Unable to find immediate employment in her field, she decided to volunteer at a local wastewater plant to earn work experience.

She started volunteering at the William E. Dunn Water Reclamation Facility in Palm Harbor in January of 2015. After a few weeks of running process tests and learning the basics of operations, McKay asked the plant manager if she could get an assignment which aligned more with the type of work she was seeking. She didn't hesitate to get her in contact with the Engineering department.



McKay was placed in the Utility Infrastructure Unit, part of the Planning and Design Division in the Office of Engineering and

Technical Support (ETS).

She worked under the supervision of and assisted professional engineers. Her assignments ranged from reading and reviewing specifications to communicating with contractors about proposed projects. All of this work was

valuable and helped build her knowledge with direct experience as an engineer.

And her hard work paid off!

In August of 2015, McKay was hired as a Junior Engineer in the Systems and Process control group at Hatch, a Canadian company with a Tampa-based office.

McKay says, "As a volunteer I learned countless things to increase my employability. From the technical side, my new position required electrical understanding which I gained helping on a project at ETS. I learned to read technical documents that are standard in the engineering field. I also learned to communicate with other engineers, contractors, and County employees in professional manner."

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Volunteer Voice

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How to participate: Send questions, article submissions, upcoming events, photos, or story ideas to mkvam@pinellascounty.org.



Dear Volunteer Services,
Hello, I work at Solid Waste at the Water Treatment Plant. We treat the water which produces electricity for the residents of Pinellas County. I work the second shift and I would like to tell you about **Jacob Reed**, a young man who volunteers with Pinellas County in our department.

Jacob grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, in the foster system and had a hard life. When he reached the age



of 21 or so he decided to do something to change his life. Jacob decided to learn wastewater treatment so he would have an occupation to better himself. He had taken the Florida Department of Environmental Protection test for Wastewater C. In Florida you can pass the test anytime, but you cannot obtain your license until you have 2,080 hours of plant operation.

Jacob has a full time job as a commercial painter. Then he is at the plant at 6:00 p.m. with me till about 9:30 p.m. to obtain the hours needed for his license. He helps by performing water samples and jar testing plus helps with plant operations.

He is a young man who has committed to changing his life.

Considering his past circumstances, I give him a lot of credit for turning his life around. I currently

have a license for Drinking Water and one for Wastewater and Jacob is working toward also obtaining both licenses.

Jacob has told me that his goal in life is to obtain a license so he can make more money and have a stable career. He would someday like to get married and raise a family and provide for his family and be a better father than his was to him.

It's awesome that Pinellas County has a volunteer like Jacob Reed. As long as he is here, I am honored to teach him everything I know about both Wastewater and Water Treatment. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Jacob on all his accomplishments.

Warm regards,

Henry Gomez

Water/Wastewater Plant
Operator
Solid Waste Department

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Zara McKay *Continued from page 1.*

McKay says, "Most jobs require some work experience. Without the Pinellas County Volunteer Program I would have never had the chance to gain the hands-on experience I needed to be considered for the positions I wanted. Not only did volunteering at William E. Dunn give me experience in wastewater but it helped me network and create contacts to get me to the work I wanted. When I started at ETS I lacked experience and confidence. Without them and the volunteering opportunity I think I would still be unemployed. I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to volunteer with the County. It was a truly life-changing experience."

PINELLAS PAWS CAUSE

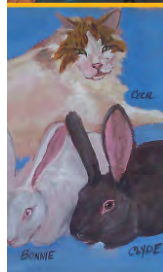
A Pinellas County Animal Services and Murals for Mutts Partnership

Murals for Mutts artist Anna Hamilton Fields wants to paint YOUR pet ... on the wall at Animal Services. Your \$100 donation includes the pet portrait while 25% goes to the Animal Welfare Trust Fund which helps support a higher quality of care for the dogs and cats at the shelter.

Simply contact Murals for Mutts at muralsformutts@gmail.com or call (727) 204-5515.

You can view some of the completed work at www.muralsformutts.com.

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Coming Up!

October 24 - Country Jubilee

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - The 37th Heritage Village Country Jubilee is the first place to search for gifts for the upcoming holiday season. The giant flea market and book sale are special features. Handmade holiday crafts, paintings, jewelry, stained glass and wooden treasures are among the offerings as well as musical entertainment, tours of historical homes, and demonstrations of traditional crafts.

Musical talent will include Charlie Bill & Two-Wheel Riders, the Leigh and Steve Humes Duo, the Rosewood Creek Band, and newcomers Reenee and the Rollers. Also Simple Gifts, Stan Swanson, and Charlie Bill's Banjos will perform.

November 27 - Holiday Lights!

Every evening starting November 27 through December 31 from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m., the Florida Botanical Gardens will display holiday lights in the gardens. This free event includes nightly entertainment and visits from Santa Claus. The event is the largest fundraiser for the gardens.

www.flbg.org/. Florida Botanical Gardens, (727) 582-2100; 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo.

Free. Donations appreciated.

Nov. 28 - Holidays at the Village

Beginning November 28 through January 3, visitors can enjoy the holiday season at Heritage Village, Pinellas County's 21-acre living history museum. Historical houses will be decorated true to their time period, locality and lifestyle, from an elaborately decorated Victorian home to a simply adorned 1852 log cabin. For information, visit www.pinellascounty.org/heritage or call (727) 582-2233. Heritage Village, 11909 125th Street N., Largo. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays as well as December 25 and January 1.

Gone but not Forgotten

The Volunteer Voice is saddened to report the passing of the following volunteer, as reported by Ellen Babb (Heritage Village):

Gladys Joseph, Recording Secretary for the Gulf Beaches Historical Museum, passed away suddenly after a brief illness on August 19. Excerpts from her obituary in the *Gulfport Gabber* follow:

Gladys loved life and enjoyed spending time with her family and friends. Gladys was a tireless worker, extremely organized and full of energy. She worked for many years as a secretary, retiring from the J.M. Ney company in 1990. She channeled her boundless energy into volunteer work and other numerous activities. Gladys was always ready for a good time. She loved reading, traveling with her girls, dancing and a good laugh. She was very devoted to her family and friends. Gladys was a very strong, independent woman, having raised five children alone after the death of her first husband, Vincent Masiunas. She was always ready with advice and support to anyone in need. Gladys is survived by her husband Joseph; five children, John Masiunas and his wife, Rosario of Savoy, IL; Ann (Masiunas) Etre and her partner, Paul Volpi of Vernon, CT; Marybeth (Masiunas) Gelfand and her husband, Richard, of Shelton, CT; Matthew Masiunas and his wife Lisa, of Windsor, CT and Andrew Masiunas and his fiancée Lori Moriarty of Phoenix, AZ. She is also survived by her five grandchildren. A memorial service will be held in Florida to honor her memory later in the fall. For online expressions of sympathy, visit www.BrettFuneralHome.net. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Gulf Beaches Historical Museum, 115 10th Ave., St. Pete Beach, FL 33706.

