

# VOLUNTEER VOICE

A newsletter by and for Pinellas County government volunteers.



June 2016

We're on the web at [www.pinellascounty.org/volunteer](http://www.pinellascounty.org/volunteer)

## Emergency Management Names Youngest Ambassador

*Long-time volunteer sees value in every role.*

*by Debra Pace, Volunteer*

**Spencer Shaw** (19) has a long history of volunteerism both in and outside of Pinellas County government agencies, so it seems fitting that he is the youngest Emergency Management (EM) intern and is also now the youngest person in the Ambassadors program.

The recent East Lake High School graduate says he is excited about becoming an EM Ambassador, which will enable him to provide outreach and education to Pinellas County residents and visitors by delivering presentations and staffing outreach events.

Shaw already has an Associate's Degree in Emergency Management, but says he originally started as a volunteer in the Sheriff's Department in 2011.

"I originally wanted to be a deputy – and my Mom is a deputy – so I signed up as a volunteer. But, I quickly found out that it wasn't for me," Shaw says.

Despite excelling as an Explorer Major in Explorer Post 900 and earning shooting championships, his true passion came along shortly after the county's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) moved

to the Public Safety Complex next to the Sheriff's Department, and he became an EM intern in October of 2014.

The coolest thing about interning, according to Shaw, is that he gets to tour all the schools and help determine which areas can be used for emergency shelters ... and how classrooms are chosen.

One of his most eye-opening experiences came during Tropical Storm Erika in August of 2015, when the EOC was partially activated.

"Seeing the hundreds of people – from volunteers to top leadership – come together for one event was very impressive," says Shaw.

Being an EM intern and volunteer has helped the current college student realize the value of each role, no matter how small it may seem. From filling information into

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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](mailto:mkvam@pinellascounty.org).

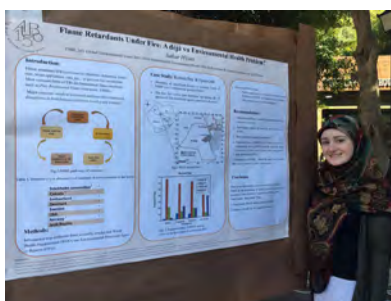
# Volunteering and Mentoring with an International Flavor

**Natasha Dickrell**, Volunteer Coordinator with the Environmental Management Division, recently copied the *Volunteer Voice* on this note she sent to EM staff about a former volunteer/intern.

Here is an update from **Sahar Hijazi** who volunteered with us this past winter. She entered the competition and is grateful for the feedback we gave her on her environmental assessment of a region in Lebanon needing stormwater management solutions. Check out the photos!

Feel free to offer her your congratulations since she's graduated as well.

I can't thank you all enough for being fantastic mentors who are now supporting students internationally!



Sahar Hijazi



Dearest Natasha,  
Good afternoon, how is everything going? I hope all is well. I miss everybody so much. I presented my stormwater project and another one on flame retardant today, although I did not win in the competition but it was a great experience. I'll share with you my photo and you can send it to Paul, Nancy, Julie, Michelle, and all those who stood by me when I presented at the County. Lots of love.

Best,  
Sahar Hijazi

## More Than Volunteering

Contributed by Sandy Wilson, CPM, CVM  
Volunteer Program Project Manager, Parks and Conservation Resources

Shelley Nieter and her friends, a group of seniors from Granger Christian School in Granger, Indiana, were spending a week in Indian Rocks Beach for their senior trip. Shelley contacted our office to see if they could plan a morning to volunteer for our department. We arranged a beach access clean up.

I feel really honored to have met such a nice group of students and their intrepid chaperone.

As Shelley said, "We had to volunteer as part of our trip but to us it was more than that. We love to volunteer as a way to give back to whatever community we may be serving. Thank you so much for working with me and setting up our volunteer day. We were truly blessed."

No, Shelley, your group blessed the Pinellas County Parks Department and we thank each and every one of you!



Youngest Ambassador, continued from page 1.

a spreadsheet, to making calls, to conducting surveys, every job is critical.

"You don't have to rush into a burning building or rescue kittens... the work you're doing has such an important place in the County," says Shaw.

The St. Petersburg College student is working toward his Bachelor's Degree in Emergency Management and says he would ideally like to stay in Pinellas County. He finds the County's need for creative solutions extremely interesting, given the population size and vulnerability that comes with being surrounded by water.

Shaw says no matter where he ends up earning a salary, he will continue building up his resume through the very rewarding job of volunteering.

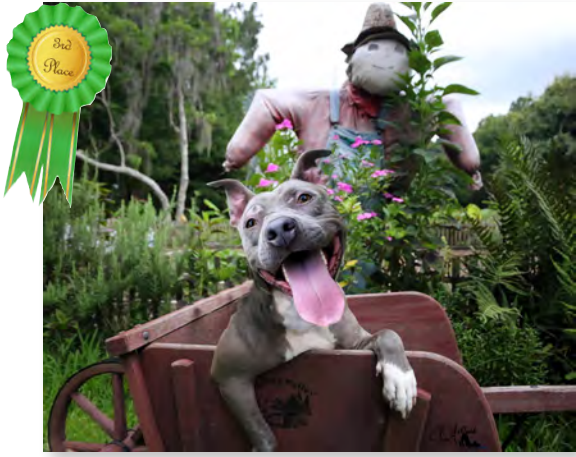
## *Gone but not Forgotten*

Volunteer and Master Gardener **Bob Young**, 82, (class of 2011) passed away on June 9th. Survivors include, 2 sons, 3 siblings, companion, 5 grands, and 6 great-grands.

**Theresa Badurek** (Extension Services) said "He will be remembered fondly as he always had a smile on his face!"



Here are just a few of the entries from our volunteers. [View more art show entries](#) online and vote for your favorite for the People's Choice Award!



"Barnice", Jim McCook, Animal Services, 3rd place, amateur photo



"Sponge Bike", Jenny Penney, Animal Services, amateur photo



"Antarctic Beauty", Louis Petersen, Brooker Creek Preserve, amateur photo



"Ferry to Kobe, Japan", Lynn Bosco, Florida Botanical Gardens, honorable mention, intermediate photo



"Angry Ocean", George Avlonitis, Extension, amateur painting



"Not Your Typical Dragonfly", Samuel Avlonitis, family member, teen works on paper



"Phantom", Alaina Burke, Heritage Village, amateur works on paper

"Japanese Cherry Blossum Tree", Bianca Avlonitis, family member, youth painting



"Moon Set at Sunrise, Indian Rocks Beach", Carla Mogan, Animal Services, intermediate photo



"Waiting to be Found", Cindy Schneller, Animal Services, amateur photo



"Birds", Barbara Wood, Heritage Village, intermediate craft