

VOLUNTEER VOICE

A newsletter by and for Pinellas County government volunteers.



October 2016

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

Grand Opening of the Leslie Uzzo Commemorative Trail

By Season Groves, Volunteer Coordinator, Animal Services

In 1991, a young lady was watching an interview of Kenny Mitchell who was the Director of Pinellas County Animal Services (PCAS) at that time. Mr. Mitchell put out a call for volunteers and the young lady answered that call. Fast forward 25 years and that young lady is still giving her all to the orphaned dogs of Pinellas County.

That young lady is volunteer **Leslie Uzzo**. In appreciation of her 25 years of dedication, PCAS has opened the Leslie Uzzo Commemorative Trail.

Leslie began with at PCAS as a dog walker and later applied her grooming skills to the dogs. She gives them a better chance at a forever family.

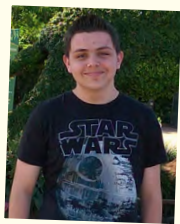
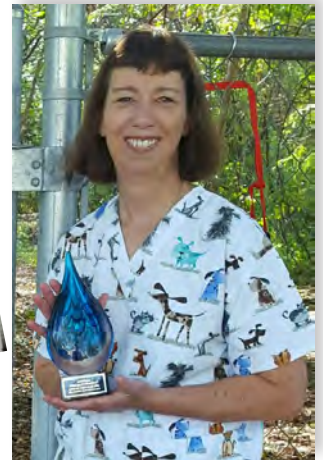
Leslie has stayed through the many changes PCAS has undergone through the years. Why? In her own words, "I continue on because of the obvious need, and the good feeling I get when the day is over."

Leslie makes a difference and represents a larger population of volunteers who give of themselves each and every day. She urges others to join the PACK, "I would encourage anyone who loves animals and has a few spare hours to volunteer here because, not only would you be doing the animals

a favor but also yourself. It's a great feeling that money can't buy."

As for the Leslie Uzzo Commemorative Trail, it is now officially open to the volunteers. The trail provides the volunteers with an enrichment area that delivers a whole array of sounds, smells and sights for the dogs. Dogs react to these stimuli in a positive manner increasing their level of wellness, both physically and mentally. These positive changes ultimately offer satisfaction for volunteers like Leslie. We all share the same goal ... getting these orphans into their forever homes.

In the meantime PCAS is looking for those special few who can give the dogs and cats love and enrichment in this [temporary home](#).



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Volunteer Voice

Graphics, layout, editor - Mary Sault
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(727) 464-5098.

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

A Serene Place for People and Pets

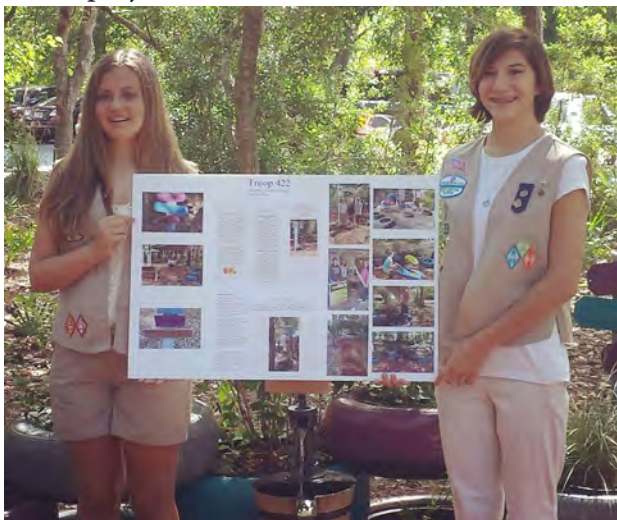
By Season Groves, Volunteer Coordinator,
Animal Services

Girl Scout Troop #60422 isn't a large group, but its three members are doing big things for residents of Pinellas County. The Troop came to Pinellas County Animal Services (PCAS), intent on filling a gap for residents and animals alike.

For many residents, PCAS provides services such as licensing and enforcement, adoptions and occasionally, that last stop before the Rainbow Bridge. It was those most in need that the young ladies of Troop #60422 wanted to help.

Alexa, Catherine and Samantha initially recognized the emotionally painful process that pet owners face when they make the decision to humanely euthanize their pets. So, in late August 2015, the Girl Scouts set their plan in action and found that their project could touch even more lives. They built a serene place where citizens, staff and volunteers can go to recover from the stresses of the day or to reflect on the love or loss of a pet. The area has grown into so much more than they originally intended.

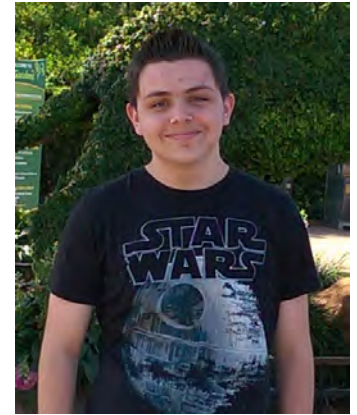
The project took nearly eight months and more than 55 hours from the first research until completion. The girls thought of everything from the most eco-friendly pathway materials to the self-sustaining plants. Master Gardener **Linda Smock**, from the Florida Botanical Gardens provided the Girl Scouts with assistance in choosing the lovely plants. The Troop accepted donations from Home Depot of Largo, Tires Plus of Largo, and Home Depot of Seminole to help with the project.



ISTEM Student Volunteer Brent Wilson

Contributed by BTS Staff

Brent Wilson (15) is a sophomore attending the Institute of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (ISTEM) program at Countryside High School. He is also the president of the school's Robotics Club.



While looking for volunteer opportunities this past summer, he found that working at Pinellas County Business Technology Services (BTS) in the Operations Center was a perfect fit.

Brent contributed over 175 volunteer hours working with the PC Replacement Team. His duties included imaging computers and organizing equipment for surplus.

Brent's volunteer work has allowed him to contribute



Brent in his natural habitat.

his time to his community and has given him real life experience working in a technology department. This experience will undoubtedly benefit him in the future.

The Troop showed they are now master eco-savers. They re-used as many materials as possible, from the arbor to the freshly painted used tires. They hand built the benches providing a relaxing place to sit while the fountain provides a musical background.

Animal Services can be a hectic and stressful environment for both people and animals. What Alexa, Catherine and Samantha have built for our community truly gives everyone a quiet, peaceful place to gather their thoughts. Whether it's to photograph your new pup, de-stress while you wait, or spend a few more moments with an old friend, it is truly a safe place that has brought much needed peace to our shelter and community. PCAS is sincerely grateful for Troop #60422's decision to choose us for their Silver Award Community Project.

Happenings

National Cat Day - Oct. 29

Pinellas County Animal Services is celebrating "National Cat Day" by waiving adoption fees on all feline friends at the shelter on that day. View pets available for adoption at www.pinellascounty.org/animalservices/Adoption_Center.htm. Animal Services, (727) 582-2600; 12450 Ulmerton Road, Largo.



Farm City Day - Nov. 5

Activities will include making butter and ice cream, milking goats, feeding calves and petting 4-H animals. Families can learn how to plant and care for gardens at activity stations for children. Sponsored by the Florida Farm Bureau. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free. Heritage Village, (727) 582-2123; 11909 125th Street North, Largo. www.pinellascounty.org/heritage.

Preserve Work Day - Nov. 19

Residents can join the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve to remove exotic vegetation and nuisance plants from the preserve. Participants are asked to bring work gloves, clippers, shovels, hand saws and loppers. This is hard work and recommended for strong volunteers ages 12 and up. 8 to 11 a.m. For additional information, call Evan Earle at (727) 515-9545. www.friendsofbrookercreekpreserve.org. Brooker Creek Preserve, (727) 453-6800; 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs.

Holiday Lights in the Garden - Nov. 25 to Dec. 31

Residents and visitors are welcome to enjoy holiday lights in the gardens each evening from late November through December. The gardens offer an array of light-lined paths with nightly free entertainment and visits from Santa Claus. This event is the largest fundraiser for the gardens and depends on volunteers, sponsors and donations to reduce the cost of offering this holiday tradition in Pinellas County. Free; donation of \$4 is suggested. Children under 13, free. Florida Botanical Gardens, (727) 582-2100; 12520 Ulmerton Rd., Largo.



Volunteers needed

Over 450 volunteers are needed for the Holiday Lights event. It runs from November 25 through December 31, 2016, 5:00 to 9:15 every night. Without volunteers, the Foundation would not have a successful fundraising event and would not be able to financially support the Garden. Volunteers are needed for the following:

- Greeters: Volunteers welcome visitors, accept donations, stamp hands, and provide directions. It is a fun job and enjoyed by all who have done it in the past.
- Gift Cart: Volunteers sell holiday themed items from our outdoor gift cart.
- Entertainers: We are looking for talented musicians, dancers and performers to provide entertainment that enhances the excitement and joy of the season.

If you are interested in joining us this holiday season, contact Richard Berube at rberube@co.pinellas.fl.us or call at 727-582-2247.



READ the Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation newsletter, [Florida Friendly Footprint](#).