

TheTimes

This Tualatin resident is PGE'S Volunteer of the Year

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BY KRISTEN FORBES

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For Tualatin's Doug Plambeck, volunteerism is an ingrained component of his life routine. It's not uncommon for him to spend an evening sorting food at the Food Bank. Each year, when the Starlight Parade ends, he's there to pick up the accumulated trash. In February, he planted trees in Tualatin for the Friends of Trees organization. He is a board member for Community Partners for Affordable Housing, a commitment that includes several meetings a month.

Plambeck's employer, Portland General Electric, recently recognized his efforts and awarded him their Volunteer of the Year.

"I've pretty much always volunteered," Plambeck explains. "It's a way of giving back to the community. I like to think of myself as being a part of a community. There are some people who need some help and a hand up. I'm perfectly willing to jump in and provide my time and resources to help out."

A Tualatin resident since 1979, Plambeck's volunteerism often seeps into his family life as well. His two children are now grown, but throughout the years Plambeck helped out as an assistant soccer coach for his daughter and Cub Scout den leader for his son. He also ushers at his church regularly.

Plambeck, who has been with CPAH since the beginning, volunteers as its treasurer, chair of the fundraising and community outreach committee and chair of the finance committee. His financial expertise and interest stems from his schooling and employment. He holds an MBA in accounting, is a certified public accountant and works as a senior auditor for PGE.

"It's where I can provide a lot of my knowledge and background to help the organization," he says.

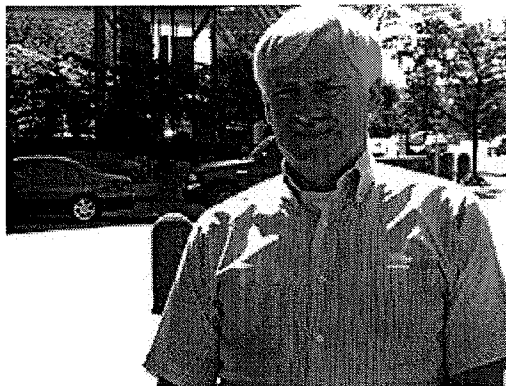
He provided similar knowledge and background to the Washington County Democrats, a volunteer post he retired from this November, after 27 years as its treasurer.

"I've learned through my years of volunteer work that there are a lot of people who are willing to go work for an evening or a day on the weekend, and then that's the end of their commitment," notes Plambeck. "You can get a lot of people interested in volunteering if it's just a short period of time. It's harder to get people to commit to something long-term."

When he's not volunteering, Plambeck is nurturing his vegetable garden, which includes raspberries, boysenberries, beans, corn and other vegetables.

For the most part, though, Plambeck's free time goes to volunteerism. Through his example, his children caught the volunteering bug, too. His daughter, who lives in Baltimore, volunteers with the Humane Society. His son, currently a student at the University of Oregon, is involved with his student body and College Democrats. Plambeck's wife is an avid volunteer, too – both in her church and as director of the preschool at Living Saviors.

"All the 'thank you's' you get from people," Plambeck says, makes volunteering worth the effort. "They don't pay you, so they give you pats on the back instead."



KRISTEN FORBES / TIMES NEWSPAPERS
Doug Plambeck's extensive volunteerism earned him recognition as PGE's Volunteer of the Year.

Plambeek admits that he doesn't always understand why everyone isn't as apt to take on volunteerism as he is.

"Sometimes it's frustrating that other people aren't as willing to volunteer their time. To get people to even come out to meetings – sometimes they say they have other things that are more important than helping the rest of society."

As PGE's Volunteer of the Year, Plambeek's priorities are clear. Helping others, lending a hand, and sharing his time and knowledge rank high on his to-do list. He not only volunteers regularly, but he makes it look easy in the process.

The Oregon Food Bank distributes donated food to a network of nonprofits in Oregon and Clark County, Wash. See www.oregonfoodbank.org.

Friends of Trees brings people in the Portland-Vancouver area together to plant and care for city trees and urban natural areas. See www.friendsoftrees.org.

Community Partners for Affordable Housing is a nonprofit organization that provides safe and affordable housing to individuals and families with the greatest need in Tigard, Tualatin and Southwest Portland. See www.cpahinc.org.

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