Giving Back

How to get hands-on with Atlanta’s charitable organizations

By Lewis Mayrcc

Atlanta offers a variety of opportunities for volunteers to help the community. For those looking to contribute, here’s a guide to “giving back” that gives information on organizations and agencies needing your help.

Hossea Feed the Hungry

Mission: Founded by civil rights icon Hosea and Juanita Williams in 1971, this organization is known for its annual community dinners on Thanksgiving, Christmas, Martin Luther King Jr., Day and Easter. But the agency’s reach is much further than that — it provides year-round nutrition and other programs to families and the homeless. “We serve the working poor and the chronically homeless,” said Iheo Posey, director of community relations. The organization helps 65 families every week, giving them food, medical attention, financial assistance and literacy programs. Another role is working with the Atlanta Public Schools, providing tutoring and other services for students. “We are very focused on education and empowerment,” Posey said. Every Sunday, the agency gives food and conducts a religious service. Downtown for the homeless and others. The agency also visits shelters in Downtown Atlanta where people live under bridges in cardboard boxes. Under the leadership of Elizabeth Omilani, who became president in 2008, the organization has tripled the number served and expanded its year-round organization.

How You Can Give Back: The organization needs volunteers for its community dinners and its food-delivery programs. It also wants participants in its “sit and sip” visits to elderly people. There are also opportunities for administrative assistance and for warehouse workers. Guiding hands are sought for the “back-to-school” initiative at Turner Field where 1,000 kids receive book bags and school supplies.

Contact: Visit www.hosseafeedthehungry.com or contact Amy Smith at asmith@hosseafeedthehungry.com or (404) 755-3353, 1303 Donnelley Ave.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta

Mission: For more than 70 years, the Boys and Girls Clubs have offered athletic, educational and developmental programs to disadvantaged youth across the metro area. The core program areas are character and leadership development; education and career development; health and life skills; art and cultural enrichment; sports, fitness and recreation; and outdoor education. The agency had a budget of $16.7 million for fiscal year 2008.

How You Can Give Back: Club Blue, a young professional group, sponsors networking events, special events and service projects. Volunteers seeking to work at a certain club can download an application on the organization’s Web site.

Contact: Visit www.bgcmga.org or call (404) 527-7100, 100 Edgewood Ave., Suite 700.

AID Atlanta

Mission: AID Atlanta, the largest AIDS service organization in the Southeast with an annual budget of $7.5 million, gives assistance to 5,000 people that have been found to be HIV-positive. “We have a variety of services: HIV case management, medical care, housing and other services,” said Executive

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