Kudos to Volunteer Expo

Of all the needs within a community — medical services, financial, job opportunities, educational resources, nonprofit outreach and modern infrastructure, among so many others — perhaps the one that will never go away is ironically the one that most take for granted.

We speak of volunteers.

To say volunteers are the lifeblood of a hometown — any hometown, not just our own Cleveland and Bradley County — is an understatement.

We don’t ask that you believe us. Just look at the slate of nonprofit groups locally. Now consider those whose services may have helped someone you know, perhaps a family member, a good friend, a neighbor ... perhaps even you. Each of these people-serving organizations has a common ground.

All rely on the big hearts, wide smiles and “can-do” attitudes of unpaid volunteers.

To many groups, and not just exclusively nonprofits ...

Volunteers are their legs.

Volunteers are their arms.

Volunteers are their communicators.

Volunteers are their spirit.

Volunteers are their technicians.

Volunteers are their information.

Volunteers are their eyes.

Volunteers are their ears.

Volunteers are their voices.

Volunteers are their contacts.

Volunteers are their soldiers.

Volunteers are their hearts.
Volunteers are their numbers.
Volunteers are their ideas.
Volunteers are their service providers.
Volunteers are their morning smiles.
Volunteers are their evening calm.
Volunteers are their reason for being.
Volunteers are their professionals.
Volunteers are their front-line workers and their behind-the-scene strategists.
Volunteers are their experience.
Volunteers are their wisdom.
Volunteers are their staunch believers.
Volunteers are their doers.
Volunteers are their go-getters.
Volunteers are their people-first and recognition-last mindsets.
Volunteers are their armies.
Volunteers are their unconditional love.
Volunteers are their conscience.
Volunteers are their balance.
Volunteers are their humanitarian way.
Volunteers are their face.
Volunteers are their heartbeat.

And yes, volunteers are their lifeblood.

Before volunteers can offer such significant impact, and before community causes can recruit their inner drives, the two must become acquainted.

This then, speaks to the importance of the recent Volunteer Expo co-sponsored by
Cleveland State Community College and the Bradley County Community Advisory Board.

Because the Expo was hosted by CSCC, its original concept was a campaign by the two-year college to introduce its students to nonprofit agencies and other groups whose timely work could benefit from their volunteer spirit.

In the words of one Cleveland State leader, the school wanted its students to understand the need, and the importance, of volunteerism within their community. The idea spread like a southwestern wildfire and soon the public was invited.

Now, the CSCC and CAB Volunteer Expo is one of the area’s most established opportunities for nonprofit agencies to come face-to-face with those who would like to help.

Both of our city’s post-secondary educational institutions — Cleveland State and Lee University — call it the service-learning experience.

To volunteer for one’s favored community service exemplifies the beauty in the human heart.

But before such radiance can surface, the two — volunteer and cause — must become one.

And that is the purpose of the Volunteer Expo.

It has nothing to do with money and everything to do with personal values.

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