

Volunteers deserve gratitude, encouragement

Fort Collins-Loveland receive accolades for its helping spirit

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A national report has validated what so many Northern Colorado residents already know: the Fort Collins-Loveland area is one of the most active in the nation when it comes to volunteerism.

Volunteering in America, a multi-year report on volunteering, found that the Fort Collins-Loveland area ranks seventh in the nation for mid-size cities for volunteerism.

Those contributions of time also have a monetary value worth \$200.7 million in service, which allows nonprofits to leverage their limited resources and reduces the public burden. The report found that 38.3 percent of residents or 86,900 people in the area volunteer their time, which is seventh among 75 mid-size cities.

This is the second year in a row that the Fort Collins-Loveland area has been recognized for its volunteerism. For those who already volunteer, we offer our gratitude.

Although some might consider a down-turned economy a difficult time to volunteer, the truth is that now is, indeed, an opportune time to give. Volunteering can help individuals boost or sharpen skills, expand networks and develop leadership talents. Those who already donate their time know that they often benefit more by building new friendships, keeping active, boosting healthy habits and developing a sense of confidence that their efforts do make a difference in the community.

Nonprofits and organizations, such as the United Way of Larimer County, have done a commendable job in educating residents that volunteerism can be as diverse as stocking shelves at the Food Bank of Larimer County or building a home through Habitat for Humanity.

An opportunity exists for every volunteer.