

# A healthy addiction: volunteering

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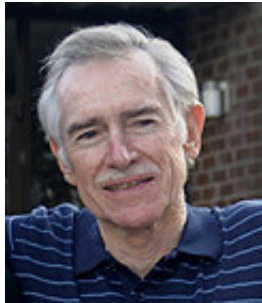
Last Sunday's USA Weekend supplement to The Facts featured an article on Make a Difference Day. "For nearly two decades, on the fourth Saturday in October," the article said, "USA Weekend's Make a Difference Day has inspired millions worldwide to feed, clothe, house, teach and soothe their neighbors." Friday's funnies in The Facts featured volunteer themes in "Blondie," "Snuffy Smith," "Rose is Rose" and "Dilbert," with a satiric twist, of course.

"Make a Difference Day is fantastic," said Hill Harper of CBS' "CSI: NY," who helps "underserved youth" in his Manifest Your Destiny Foundation. "That one day will multiply into many days because so many people will discover that volunteering is addictive."

The running community represented by the Brazosport Area Road Runners Association and the industrial community represented by BASF celebrated Make a Difference Day in a special way with the 20th anniversary of the BASF-sponsored, noncompetitive Kids Run at the annual Monster Dash in Lake Jackson Saturday. Sixty-five youngsters 12 and younger ran

varying lengths based on their ages and received T-shirts and finishers medals. Volunteers supervise and sustain this physical fitness activity.

Volunteers Cindy Suggs, BASF manager, community and government affairs, and Leslie Thompson, BASF communications specialist, served up pieces of 20th anniversary cake after the Kids Run.



"BASF has continued the tradition of supporting the local Kids Runs for several reasons," Suggs said. "In our efforts to be a good corporate citizen, it gives us an opportunity to meet a community need. It also provides us the opportunity to encourage young children to adopt a healthy lifestyle, which includes regular exercise, and to plant this seed at an early age. Our hope is that by doing our small part, we are helping these children develop a habit that will last a lifetime."

It is irresponsible not to volunteer for a sport, organization or activity that you are part of. We know those, however, who show only for the activities and never volunteer to help with them. Without BARRA volunteers, the support and financial assistance of local businesses and industry and other community volunteers, particularly high school groups like the National Honor Society and PALS, our efforts at providing the area physical fitness activities would fail.

Another reason to volunteer for community events in general and area athletic activities in

particular relates to the isolation our busy lives and work lead to. If we never move in spheres beyond our jobs and become chained to our work, the computer or the TV, our lives become sterile.

If you are in that "Slough of Despond" or in the clutches of Demon Sloth, getting out to volunteer for local races or fitness events might be that first step you have been unable to take to begin that fitness regimen you have resolved to begin but haven't. Being around runners and triathletes is exciting for both youngsters who are seeking mentors and role models and for sedentary adults who are seeking inspiration, encouragement and group support.

Get out there in the community and make a difference not just on the fourth Saturday of October but every week. The difference you make in the community will make a difference in your life. You will discover that, indeed, "volunteering is addictive." Your life will be richer.

**Footnotes:** Guillermina Silva and Manuel Moreno added flavor to the Monster Dash by running, respectively, as mustard and catsup. If you missed the photo, see yesterday's sports page.

Most Holy Trinity of Angleton holds its inaugural 5K Run Saturday. A downloadable registration form is available at [www.barrahome.net](http://www.barrahome.net), or you can register on race day beginning at 7 a.m. at 1713 N. Tinsley.

**Bill Shaw's running column appears every other Monday in *The Facts*.**