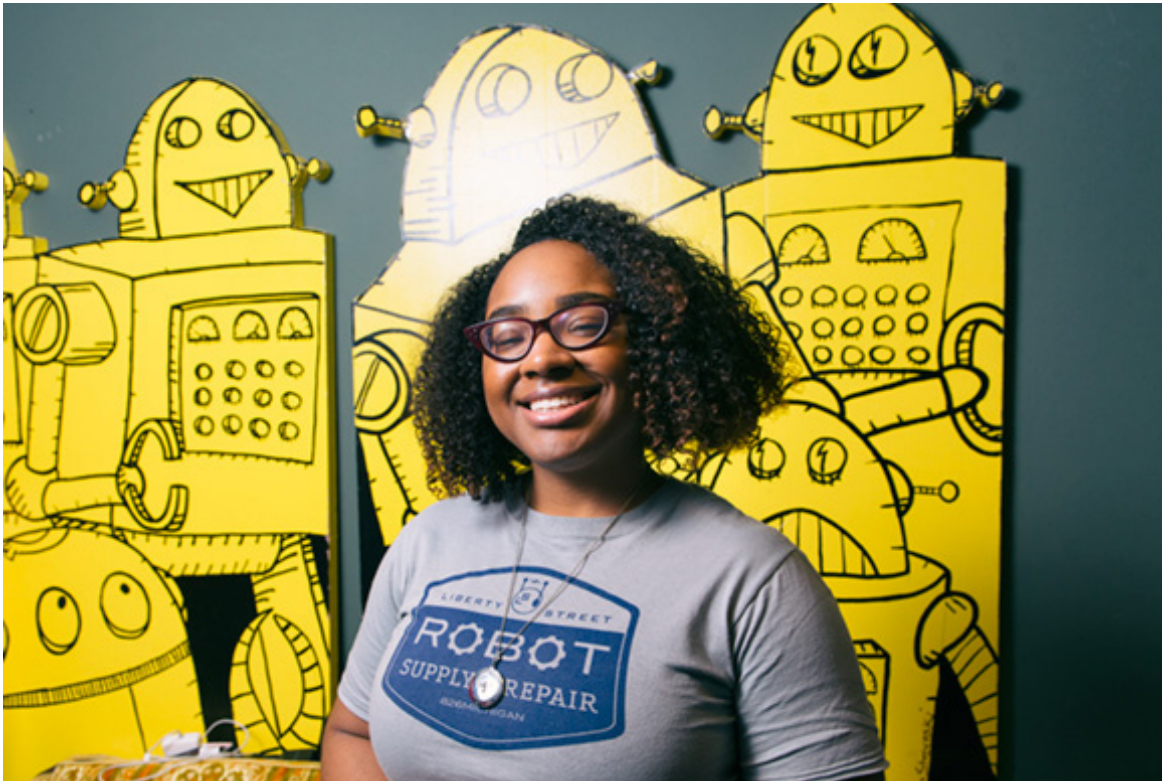


Features

Guest Blogger: Courtney Randolph

COURTNEY RANDOLPH | THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2014



COURTNEY-RANDOLPH - DOUG COOMBE

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Courtney Randolph is the program manager and volunteer coordinator at [826michigan](#). A Detroit native with varied nonprofit work experiences supporting both education and the arts, with help from numerous volunteers Courtney is building a solid expansion of 826michigan consistent with its current national impact on her hometown. She is an alum of Wayne State University and a former Bison of Howard University, with a passion for writing, community service, big hair, and cats.

Resolve to Volunteer This Year

A new year is a great time to commit, or recommit, yourself to important causes in our

community. Volunteers make a huge difference in this country, leading direct service with children and adults across all backgrounds, saving nonprofits mountains of dollars, and helping organizations reach new audiences. Surely, most people volunteer because it makes them feel good, but studies suggest that at an organic level, altruism is even good for physical health, [finding that volunteers tend to live longer than others](#). As it stands, there are hundreds of ways across Detroit for you to get involved. Look below for just a few. And, for those who eschew volunteering because it doesn't pay well, just note that four of the seven staff members at [826michigan](#) began as volunteers.

SERVICE VACANCIES ACROSS METRO DETROIT

Title: Volunteer

Ranks Include: [Oprah](#), [Bono](#), and [YOU](#)

Awesomesauce: [States with higher rates of volunteerism have lower rates of heart disease](#).

Defining Attributes: Philanthropic; convinced that humanity is inherently good; big on #RAOK (Random Acts of Kindness); loves AmeriCorps

Typical Behavior: Known to sacrifice Saturday mornings to do repair work for the elderly, build playgrounds, plant trees, mentor teenagers, and hold babies with no expectation of financial gain. Usually wears a smile and cries more happy tears than sad. We all *want* a better world; volunteers are the people who believe we can actually have one.

[826michigan](#)

Archetypal Volunteer Type: Can name writers among their favorite celebrities and finds working with children invigorating; comfortable in group situations, works well with others; bonus points for those who think wearing costumes or voice over work sound like fun

Commitment Level Required: Moderate to High

Full disclosure—I totally work here. But, that's not the only reason this place is awesome. In the 2012-2013 school year, 826michigan volunteers donated 20,909 hours to support 2,701 students across Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and Detroit. They served as tutors, workshop leaders, event planners, copyeditors, and classroom helpers. They dressed up as planets, drew lots of stick figures, and occasionally got to wear pajamas on field trips. They rocked out staffing our Liberty Street Robot Supply and Repair store. On the days they weren't with us, they served as humble ambassadors in support of our mission—to aid students ages 6 to 18 with their creative and expository writing skills and help teachers inspire their students to write. With a commitment to provide all services to students for free, and a modest staff of seven, there is no

doubt that volunteers make the magic of 826michigan happen. And, as a volunteer coordinator, I can tell you there is always room for one more. Get involved [here](#).

[Greening of Detroit](#)

Archetypal Volunteer Type: Believes the best community service requires getting hands dirty; attentive to matters of environmental justice; enjoys being in nature and working in large groups

Commitment Level Required: Mild, Moderate, or High

The Greening of Detroit provides citizens with a chance to engage in classic, transformative, physical service. Since 1989, the Greening has planted more than 81,000 trees in Detroit, Highland Park, and Hamtramck in an effort to replace trees lost to urban expansion and Dutch elm disease. Today, the Greening envisions Detroit as a powerhouse among post-industrial urban green centers. Volunteers may plant dozens of trees in one day, or they may commit to long-term service with the organization, supporting its efforts in urban agriculture, environmental education, and workforce development.

[Hospice of Michigan: Pediatric Early Care](#)

Archetypal Volunteer Type: Better listener than talker, sensitive to the needs of others, ability to remain calm in high-stress situations

Commitment Level Required: High

The [Pediatric Early Care program at Hospice of Michigan](#) is a tremendous service in that it provides chronically ill children with all of the benefits of a hospice team—including the benefits provided by volunteers—without stopping curative treatments. The service is provided to families at no cost and prioritizes support and education for the family, while helping to maintain the child's wellness in body, mind, and spirit. PEC volunteers can expect to hold babies, play with toddlers, tutor students, or engage with children in any number of ways that will provide them with companionship and comfort.

[Michigan Humane Society](#)

Archetypal Volunteer Type: May prefer animals to people; super fan of Jackson Galaxy, Cesar

Millan, or Animal Cops; zero to mild allergy to pet dander

Commitment Level Required: High

Now, we love the kids, but animals need love, too. *Cue fanfare for the Michigan Humane Society*. For 137 years, the MHS has sought to end companion animal homelessness, provide first-rate care to animals in need of service, and be a leader in promoting humane values. There are three locations in the area: Detroit, Rochester Hills, and Westland, and volunteering there is a long-term commitment. Two hours per week, for a minimum of four months, are required. Volunteers often work directly with dogs, cats, and other companion animals, but should note that sometimes, less glamorous chores are expected. Clean cages are vital to the health and well-being of animals, and volunteers should be willing to support this work. Office support is an option for fans of Fido and Fawna who get puffy eyes at the mere thought of fur, but love them anyway.

In honor of their good works, optimism, and ability to be Margaret Mead's "small group of thoughtful, committed citizens [that] change the world," consider these organizations and how you can help them contribute to the greater good.
