

A Heartfelt Thank You To Our:



Maricopa County Cooperative Extension

January 2018

IMPROVING THE LIVES, COMMUNITIES, AND ECONOMY IN MARICOPA COUNTY

IN THIS ISSUE

Who We Are Thankful For at MCCE

By Ed Martin

The power of a single person donating time cannot be over-estimated, as too the importance of volunteers to the programs at the Maricopa County Cooperative Extension. These very special people give their time, their expertise, and more often than not, their money to help support many of the programs we have and to help extend our programs well beyond the capacity of our paid employees. Every morning, there are Master Gardeners sitting at the Help Desk, answering questions from “What’s this plant” to “What’s this bug” to “What’s this tree”. And with each phone call and each email, over 2,000 Maricopa county residents get some much needed assistance. And just as regular as the Master Gardeners in the morning, each evening, well almost every

evening, there is a 4-H volunteer setting up for an evening event, working on ways to help our youth obtain their dreams, become engaged, and learn how to be better people. And on the weekends there’s usually something happening at the office, whether it be the Herb Association or the 4-H Fall Dance, someone always has a room or two checked out for an activity. In addition, there are hundreds of school volunteers that assist with nutrition programs, working out schedules and reserving classroom time for us to help kids and adults learn about food, nutrition, and how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Or perhaps our volunteers are working at our Family Resource Center, assisting families with children age 0-5 years, or working with our Ag. Literacy program, teaching youth that food comes from a farm, not grocery store. Finally, there are the countless growers and turf grass managers that volunteer their time to work with our faculty doing on the ground research to help improve our environment. The volunteers at MCCE, just like the employees, make a positive difference in people’s lives. Our volunteers are humble and are just happy to help out; but the truth is we are the ones who are so grateful for their time and MCCE would not be the same without them.

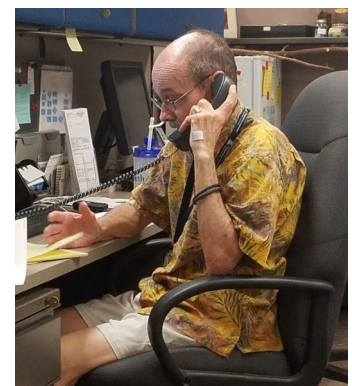
From all of us at MCCE, we just want to say thank you– we are certainly **THANKFUL** for all you do.



SNAP-Ed Volunteers



4-H Volunteers



Master Gardener Rob Mariani



Volunteers - The Heart of 4-H

By Arman Ghazi and Kim Christman

4-H, as many know, is a nationwide program that teaches youth life skills in a hands-on setting. What many may not know is that delivering the 4-H program without volunteers would be virtually impossible. While Maricopa County 4-H has 10 staff that deliver and support the 4-H Program in a variety of ways, we couldn't possibly serve all of the youth in the program directly, therefore; we rely heavily on our volunteers. We screen, train, and support our volunteers and ask them to work directly with the youth in our program.



The Volunteer Experience from a 4-H Member's Perspective

By Arman Ghazi

I have been involved in the 4-H program as a youth volunteer for seven years, and it has brought me countless opportunities that I could have never expected otherwise. During that time, I've done things from planning camps for younger members, to feeding the homeless at community service events, to travelling across the state to teach leadership workshops. I feel like as long as I am in a place that I can to serve the community, it will always be one of my top priorities. I believe that being a youth volunteer in any capacity is a fantastic way to meet people, discover places and experiences from all over, while also serving others and making the best better in our communities. "The 4-H Leaders that I grew up with, always pushed me to become the best version of me that I could be," Arman Ghazi, 4-H AmeriCorps Intern.



Regardless of age, 4-H values our volunteers and what they do to serve youth and others in our community.

SNAP-Ed Site Liaisons

By Tricey Wilks

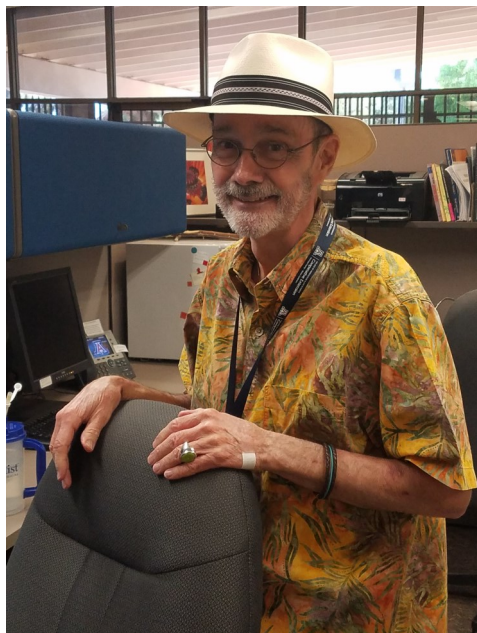
The University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Maricopa County SNAP-Ed team is extremely grateful for our Site Liaisons who are the lifeblood of the communities we serve. Liaisons are a key piece in helping to deliver information on nutrition and physical activity to the students. They create an atmosphere of inclusion by gaining the trust of the parents who volunteer, plan meetings, and coordinate various activities. The liaisons help the SNAP-Ed nutrition team by organizing the classes and events while also working hard to bring physical activities to their schools. In the school garden setting, the Site Liaisons are instrumental in spearheading garden projects and coordinating garden maintenance that teach the students how to grow their own food from a garden. In essence, without our Site Liaisons it would be extremely difficult to accomplish our goal of educating the students about healthy living. They serve as role models and assist with bringing value-based education to the students while helping to improve the lives of everyone in the community.



Volunteer Spotlight

Rob Mariani is this month's Volunteer of the Month.

He joins past Master Gardeners who were nominated by their peers and then drawn at random by Master Gardener staff.



If I was asked to describe Rob Mariani based on our interview alone, I would use words like inspirational, selfless, courageous, humble, soft-spoken, a diligent and devoted volunteer. You see, just as Rob started his Master Gardening course, he learned that his lung disease was life-threatening. He would need a lung transplant. This busy and enthusiastic Master Gardener is recovering from a bilateral lung transplant performed in 2016, but it really hasn't slowed his volunteer efforts at all.

First the background: Rob is an Arizona native. He is married and has 2 children and 3 grandchildren. He graduated from West High School (now Metro Tech High School) and attended Arizona State University. He graduated with a Bachelor's degree in secondary education, field of specialization history and a Master's degree in Educational Administration. For the next 8-½ years, he taught 7th and 8th graders, hoping not only to inspire them to love learning but also to reach their life potential. Rob enjoyed sports, did some coaching, and later became the District Athletic Director.

At some point, although he loved teaching, Rob asked himself, "What else can I do in life?" Ultimately, he left teaching and went to the pharmaceutical industry, where he stayed until retirement at age 62. Rob's pharmaceutical career started out in sales and sales management, but settled in research.

His research focused on a variety of subjects, including sleep, depression, thrombosis and infectious disease. "I was very lucky I was in two careers, and I loved them both."

Upon retirement in January 2012, Rob was finally able to take the Master Gardening course, which he had been interested in for some time. He started the Master Gardening course in 2012, but illness prevented him from completing the course until 2013. Rob had asbestosis, which had been stable. However, he came down with both Valley Fever and pneumonia, and his health began a downward spiral. After a couple more bouts with pneumonia, he was offered the chance to have a lung transplant. He and his wife agreed to the procedure.

In December 2015, Rob and his wife rented a condo in Houston and waited for a lung. Five months later, on Friday the 13th, two lungs came available. He entered the hospital, and there he stayed for 30 days. His wife kept a journal of all that went on, but Rob remembers little of it. He was discharged to his Houston condo and recovered there until December 2016. The pulmonologists at St. Joseph Medical Center in Phoenix continue his follow-up care.

Still, Rob volunteers, logging countless hours for the Master Gardener program. In 2014, although his health was declining, he served as a mentor. While he was in Houston, he wrote articles for Roots and Shoots. He is an avid researcher and an integral member of the Help Desk team. The day before our interview, Rob co-presented "Diagnostics II" for the intern class. He went from there to have a nerve block on his spine. The day we met, Rob had just attended a Help Desk meeting. Somewhere near the end of our time together, I asked Rob how he was feeling. "I hurt," he said. He went on to say, "If I can help somebody, even over the phone, that honestly makes my day." Hence, I call him selfless.

Today, 18 months after his bilateral lung transplant, Rob is a huge presence in the Master Gardener program. In referring Rob as a candidate for Volunteer of the Month, Don Sutton wrote, "Rob really believes in the mission to educate the public in the low desert...this super guy is absolutely amazing."

Yvonne Cooper, MG Program Coordinator, sums it up: "Rob has continued to keep his Master Gardener volunteer services a priority, and we are grateful for all his contributions."

Rob is ready to resume his active lifestyle. He loves Harleys and can't wait to get back on his bike. When I asked him what he thinks is the best thing about life today, though, he didn't hesitate. "I'm alive," he said.

The Director's Cut

By Ed Martin



I was just writing about Fall and now here's 2018. Looking back on 2017, I am amazed at the efforts of our staff, faculty, and of course, our volunteers. Maricopa County Cooperative Extension continues to reach out to the people and communities of Maricopa County. With support from Federal, State, and County Governments (that's where the 'Cooperative' part comes from), MCCE has been able to assist growers in combatting infestations, help turf managers make better decisions on

fertilizer and grass seed, and help our kids grow into productive, responsible young adults. Along the way, we helped get Maricopa County healthier, improving nutrition and physical education. We helped teach kids the importance of water and that food comes from a farm, not a grocery store. We've helped those who live in the county plant the right plants, at the right time, in the right location and coming from Michigan, I can tell you that's no small task. We continue to work on our building landscape and support our employees the best we can through updated technology and brown bag lunches on the use of social media and when tic-tac-toe became a hashtag (I always thought it was a pound sign, 30# of potatoes?). I'm proud of the work we've accomplished in 2017 and I look forward to what will be in 2018. If you have a few minutes, stop by the office and see what's happening at Maricopa County Cooperative Extension.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jeffrey C. Silvertooth, Associate Dean & Director, Extension & Economic Development, College of Agriculture Life Sciences, The University of Arizona.

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ABOUT TOWN

2018 West Valley Citrus Clinic

When: Jan. 13, 2018 8:30-12:00
Where: Justice Brothers U-Pick
More Information:
<https://extension.arizona.edu/2018-west-valley-citrus-clinic-justice-brothers-u-pick>

2018 East Valley Citrus Clinic

When: January 20, 2018
Where: Greenfield Citrus Nursery
More Information:
<https://extension.arizona.edu/2018-east-valley-citrus-clinic-greenfield-citrus>

Master Gardener Plant Clinic

(3rd Wed Every Month)
Where: Maricopa County Cooperative Extension
More Information:
<https://extension.arizona.edu/master-gardener-monthly-plant-clinic>

DIG: Growing Great Roses

When: Jan. 18, 2018 6:00pm - 8:00pm
Where: Maricopa County Cooperative Extension
More Information:
<https://extension.arizona.edu/growing-great-roses-phoenix-az>

How to Grow the Perfect Tomato in the Low Desert

When: Feb. 1, 2018 6:00pm - 8:00pm
Where: Maricopa County Cooperative Extension
More Information:
<https://extension.arizona.edu/how-grow-perfect-tomato-low-desert>

Smartscape 101

When: Feb. 6 3:00pm - 6:00pm
Where: Maricopa County Cooperative Extension
More Information:
<https://extension.arizona.edu/smartscape-101>

Family Resource Center - Parent-Child Interaction Classes

Where: Roosevelt Family Resource Center
More Information:
<http://extension.arizona.edu/roosevelt-early-childhood-family-resource-center>

Maricopa County Cooperative Extension Monthly Event Calendar

<http://extension.arizona.edu/maricopa>



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