

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Volunteers: Towns couldn't survive without them **National Volunteer Week celebrates the power of volunteerism**

EDMOND, OK – A note card by Jimmie Cook's computer helps keep her going every day. It's a quote from George Bernard Shaw: "I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can ... for the harder I work the more I live."

Those words give Cook inspiration to stay active serving others. A retired Oklahoma State University (OSU) professor, she was a longtime tour guide at the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa as well as the Oklahoma Aquarium in Jenks. Now she volunteers at the Oklahoma Governor's Mansion after recently moving to her new Edmond home at Touchmark at Coffee Creek, which is closer to the capitol.

Cook also credits her love of volunteerism to living in a small town for many years. She saw Drumright go from being an oil boomtown of 23,000 residents to a small community of only 3,500. She is very proud of the 16 murals in Drumright that depict Oklahoma history.

"We learned to get acquainted quickly, and we also learned to jump in to do things that needed to be done and to give our ideas to help. It's a beautiful and wonderful thing," she said, adding that a small town or small community could not survive without volunteers who cheerfully do the jobs that could not be afforded otherwise.

The week of April 21 is National Volunteer Week, and Touchmark annually honors the many residents who volunteer in the community.

Cook's neighbor, John Wayant, also is a longtime volunteer.

In fact, it is hard to catch Wayant not busy as he spends many days and evenings throughout the month visiting the frail, helping at his church and participating monthly in a community meal — Cooks Night Out — at the First Presbyterian Church of Edmond. He also exercises weekly at the YMCA, is a Stephen Minister, former deacon and involved in a weekly men's Bible study and faith-renewal group. An avid OSU fan, he attends many of the school's sporting events.

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TOUCHMARK *at Coffee Creek*

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“I feel like I have a calling to be a servant, serve, please and help others and be a follower of Jesus,” he says. The turning point for this realization was when he became a deacon and started making hospital calls. “All my life, I’ve waited on and called on people and interacted with them.”

Cook and Wayant are among several volunteers Touchmark is recognizing this month.

Established in 1974, National Volunteer Week celebrates people doing extraordinary things through service. The week focuses attention on the impact and power of volunteerism and service as an integral aspect of civic leadership. The week draws the support and endorsement of the President and Congress, governors, mayors and municipal leaders as well as corporate and community groups across the country.

An award-winning retirement community, Touchmark at Coffee Creek offers a variety of lifestyle options, including the Parkview neighborhood, independent and assisted living as well as memory care. Located in Edmond at 2801 Shortgrass Road, Touchmark is part of the Coffee Creek 638-acre planned residential development, which includes a golf course, recreational centers and walking and biking trails for Coffee Creek homeowners. For more information, visit www.TouchmarkEdmond.com

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Photo captions:

John Wayant spends a great deal of time visiting and spreading good cheer, here with Rosie Hartzog.

Volunteer Jimmie Cook, fourth from left, conducts tours at the Governor’s Mansion, among many other volunteer activities in which she participates. Here, she treats her Touchmark at Coffee Creek friends to a tour, from left, Liz Codding, Rita McLanahan, Joan Crooks, Cook, Verna Holtzen and Bev Crowe, Jimmie’s daughter.