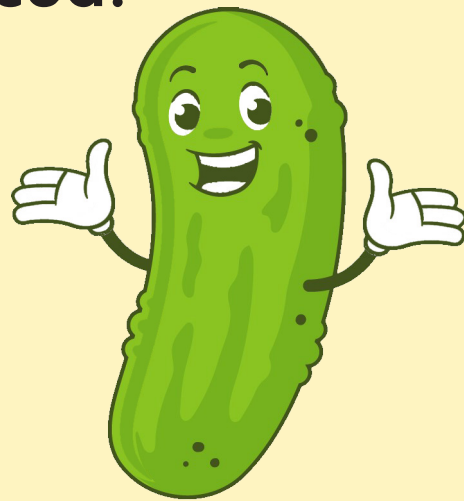




Cleveland Pickle Fest® 2025 Details Announced!

Save the date! The 7th Annual Pickle Fest will be held Saturday, September 20, from 11 a.m. – 6 p.m. at Mall C in downtown Cleveland.

Watch our social media for further details on volunteer opportunities, sponsorships, entertainment lineups, and more.



Joy Banish, Executive Director, Announces Departure

Dear Friends,

I have been honored to be a part of Greater Cleveland Volunteers for more than 30 years and serve as executive director for the past 26 years. I will be retiring from our organization at the end of March.



I have been blessed to work with so many incredible people over the years including thousands of dedicated and compassionate volunteers, many of whom I have come to know personally. I have had the pleasure of working with an outstanding team of staff, board, and committee members, who are all committed to helping us reach our mission to engage people in volunteering to make our community a better place.

We have achieved so much together!

When I started at GCV we were the Cleveland chapter of the national RSVP program which engages older adults in service to the community. We expanded to serve all of Cuyahoga County and started engaging younger volunteers as well. We have created and managed many different volunteer programs, collaborated with organizations on special projects, and provided volunteers to more than 650 local agencies so they can deliver their programs and services.

Many changes were made throughout the decades to adjust to funding shifts and challenges, trends in how people want to serve, and to address ever-changing community needs. I am proud of all that we have accomplished together and excited for Greater Cleveland Volunteers' future.

Thank you to all of our generous funders and donors for helping make our work possible and to all the wonderful people who have been, and currently are, a part of Greater Cleveland Volunteers.

I appreciate your support during this incredible journey!

With love and respect,
Joy Banish, Executive Director

New Partner Agency Spotlight: Imagine Bella Academy of Excellence



Greater Cleveland Volunteers is proud to partner with Imagine Bella Academy of Excellence in Cleveland. GCV will be recruiting reading tutors for the school. Imagine Bella Academy’s vision is to prepare students for academic excellence and lifetime achievement.

Founded in 2004, Imagine Schools is a national non-profit family of public charter schools preparing students for lives of leadership, accomplishment, and exemplary character. The nonprofit network consists of 60 public charter campuses educating more than 30,000 students in 9 states and the District of Columbia. Imagine Schools partners with parents and guardians to educate their children, providing high-quality schools that develop the character and enrich the minds of the students they serve.

Imagine Bella Academy’s work is guided by three shared values: Justice, Integrity, and Fun. The school applies “Joy at Work,” a unique organizational culture that puts teachers and school leaders squarely responsible for the decisions affecting the schools and students.

GCV welcomes Imagine Bella Academy of Excellence and is pleased to place volunteers in the school who share its values.

CHAT PALS COMMUNITY IMPACT SURVEY

PARTICIPANTS

Both participants and volunteers rate the program as 4.7 out of 5.

VOLUNTEERS

86% of respondents have been matched for 6+ months.

How often do you lack companionship since being part of the program?

Hardly Ever: 57%
Sometimes: 36%

“She is wonderful and I would consider us really good friends. We have decided to meet in person and continue our friendship outside of the program!”

-- Participant

“My Senior Chat Pal has a lot of stories to share. He joined Chat Pals because his wife passed away. Each time we talk, he says he is grateful for our connection.”

-- Volunteer

How often do you feel left out since being part of the program?

Hardly Ever: 71%
Sometimes: 21%

How often do you feel isolated since being part of the program?

Hardly Ever: 64%
Sometimes: 29%



For information on Chat Pals, visit <https://greaterclevelandvolunteers.org/chat-pals/> or email kriley@greaterclevelandvolunteers.org

87% of respondents have been matched for 6+ months.

How often do you lack companionship since being part of the program?

Hardly Ever: 80%
Sometimes: 13%

How often do you feel left out since being part of the program?

Hardly Ever: 87%
Sometimes: 13%

How often do you feel isolated since being part of the program?

Hardly Ever: 80%
Sometimes: 13%

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED IN ARTS & CULTURE

Volunteers play a vital role in the Greater Cleveland’s vibrant arts and culture sector, offering invaluable support to ensure that creative endeavors thrive. Their contributions range from assisting with event organization to guiding visitors in museums, all while fostering community engagement.

Volunteers help reduce costs for arts organizations, allowing more resources to be allocated to programming and outreach. Moreover, they often bring diverse perspectives, enhancing the cultural experiences offered to the public.

By dedicating time and skills, volunteers also help cultivate a deeper appreciation for the arts, making them more accessible to a wider audience. In many cases, volunteering offers individuals opportunities to develop new skills, build networks, and gain a sense of fulfillment. As arts and culture programs continue to face funding challenges, volunteers remain a cornerstone of their sustainability, ensuring that the arts remain an integral part of society’s cultural fabric.



Volunteer Opportunities in Arts and Culture
Hands On—Theater Usher, Docent, Musician,
Museum Visitor Experience Volunteer
Education—Library Assistant, Craft Instructor, School Guide,
Story Time

Visit greaterclevols.vsyslive.com for volunteer opportunities, or scan the QR code.
Contact Nancy Dzurnak at contact@greaterclevelandvolunteers.org
or 216-391-9500 x2123 for more information.

UPCOMING EVENT OPPORTUNITIES

Fight For Air Climb—Help the American Lung Association climb to their goal on Sunday, March 2, 2025 from 7 a.m.–1 p.m. at Key Tower. Help with t-shirt distribution, registration, or as a wayfinder/cheerleader. Beverages and snacks provided, \$5 parking. Volunteer t-shirt provided, to be worn with clean, no-holed jeans/pants, with comfortable shoes.

Cleveland Kurentovanje—Join the celebration by volunteering at the “Slovenian Mardi Gras” festival, celebrating the end of winter and the beginning of spring. Festival is Saturday, February 22nd and Friday, February 28–Saturday, March 1st from 9 a.m.–11 p.m. in the St. Clair-Superior Neighborhood. Festival Bartending, Parade Support, and Children Village Helpers are just a few of the many volunteer options. All volunteer shifts are 2 hours. Free parking and volunteer gift. Indoor and outdoor volunteer opportunities available.

Visit tinyurl.com/GCVEEventVols to see these and other opportunities to make our community more equitable and just. Contact Nancy Dzurnak at ndzurnak@greaterclevelandvolunteers.org or 216-391-9500 x2123 for more information.