

# VOLUNTEERING

## 'LEST WE FORGET'

Many moons ago in Australia, I once had an American girlfriend who was single like me at the time and try as I might each weekend to plan a social outing together, more often than not I was jilted for her volunteering commitments. Even though I was selfishly frustrated in lacking my weekend-buddy -time, I had to admit I was respectful and impressed by my friends enthusiastic fervor to her volunteering. She had a great social life and had fun with all her like-minded friends. She wasn't a casual volunteer; she was a 'lifer'.

Living a busy life in a big city didn't stoke my volunteering instincts at the time until I went traveling and lived abroad. Only then did I come to understand the rewards of volunteering. Actually, at the time it never occurred to me that I was 'volunteering' my time and talents. I was simply helping in what was my passion. It was meaningful and I had a connection to the cause that made me driven.

Being passionate and caring about certain things can inadvertently lead to volunteering such as abandoned or hurt animals, the struggling poor and the elderly, war vets, politics, schools,

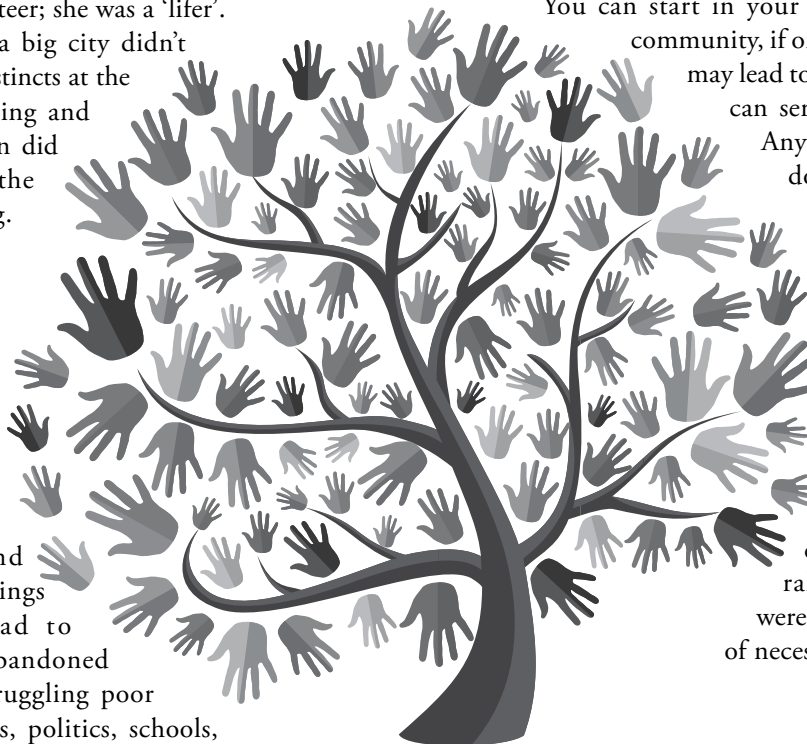
churches, community local fairs and fundraisers, orphanages, hospitals, uniting people from diverse backgrounds, the list goes on and every day we are touched by and see a need greater than ever and always greater than our own.

Volunteering means different things to different people but the common denominator is no financial gain which means switching out of a material mindset and devoting precious spare minutes in our hectic lives to helping others and organizations.

You can start in your own backyard, your own community, if only in many small ways that may lead to lifelong volunteering. You can serve on an as-needed basis.

Any selfless effort big or small does make a difference and together strengthens the community.

We need only hark back to our forefather's days before the government social security era to remind us that they survived and relied heavily on the charity of others, poor or rich at a community level. People rallied to help others who were strugglers themselves. Out of necessity during the mid 1800's



*(Continued on Page 2)*

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Emergency .....	911
Constable ( <i>Closest Law Enforcement</i> ).....	281-463-6666
Poison Help .....	1-800-222-1222
Library and Community Center.....	832-393-1880
City Services.....	Call 311
Citizens' Assistance.....	713-247-1888
Public Works.....	713-837-0600
Neighborhood Protection.....	713-525-2525
Animal Control.....	713-229-7300
Wild animal problem .....	713-861-9453
Hazardous waste.....	713-551-7355

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Street light problem.....	713-207-2222
.....(then 1 then 4)	
Power out/emergency .....	713-207-2222
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Before you dig.....	Call 811

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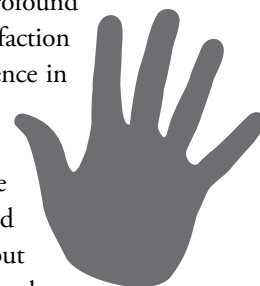
### Volunteering (Continued from Cover)



and The Depression saw the rise of the mighty Salvation Army. We learn from these tireless good souls what it means to give and help freely.

The ethos “giving back to the community” should come from a desire of free will, to want to give something and not the connotation that suggests obligation. How can we ‘give back to the community’; by saving on resources that may include supporting families and youth, beautifying the community, protecting the wildlife, health forums, helping day care centers or improving schools. There are a lot of lonely people out there who would welcome feeling needed and appreciated as volunteers or receiving the same.

Not all volunteering scenarios are positive experiences and some maybe challenging but they can be profound learning experiences that deliver great satisfaction nonetheless. I recall my volunteer experience in a Guatemalan orphanage. Emotions ran high and my heart crushed at the day's end over the numbed children, starved of the basics in life, one meal a day, unaccustomed to affection and playtime but



finding comfort from each other during nit removal from their scalps. Was I emotionally drained of energy? Yes. Did I scratch phantom nits afterwards? Yes. Did I achieve great satisfaction through learning child skills, formulating creative play, giving cuddles and witness the childish joy leap out of children seemingly older than their years? Absolutely!

Volunteering does have its rewards. For our kindness, we receive in kind. It promotes self-worth and confidence, you can discover more about yourself and talents you may not have been aware of. It can take you out of the daily norm and associated stresses. There are the networking and connections aspect for your working life. New friends and a broader social life can evolve. When you give of your time and helpfulness it gives back to you a genuine gratefulness. With this ‘feel good’ feedback and quality time spent, do we need any more reasons to volunteer other than it is healthy and rewarding for all of us?



## SEND US YOUR

*Event  
Pictures!!*

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Email the picture to [briarhills@sbcglobal.net](mailto:briarhills@sbcglobal.net). Be sure to include the text that you would like to have as the caption.

Pictures will appear in color online at [www.PEELinc.com](http://www.PEELinc.com).



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# TENNIS TIPS

By USPTA/PTR Master Professional  
**Fernando Velasco**



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4

## The Modern Game: The Top Spin Forehand

In previous newsletters, I offered tips on how to execute the basic strokes for players who are starting to play tennis or who want to get back into the game.

From this newsletter on, I will be offering suggestions on how to play the “modern” game mostly geared towards players who are happy with hitting the ball over the net and controlling the point with consistency. These players may be already playing for leagues or tournaments and are looking for more “weapons” on the court.

In this issue, I will offer instructions on how to execute the Top Spin Forehand. This shot is used when a player is now hitting the ball long and out. The ball will be aimed high over the net and hit with power. The ball will have a “top spin” so that when the ball hits the court, it will take a big hop, forcing the opponent to fall back close to the fence, or to hit the ball on the rise.

In the illustrations, Danny Rodriguez, Director of the Pre-Advanced Tennis Program at the Grey Rock Tennis Club, shows the proper technique to execute this stroke. This shot can also be executed from the service line as an “approach shot” to the net.

Step 1: The Ready Position: When Danny prepares to hit

a forehand top spin, he will change his grip toward the “semi-western” or “full western grip” (The palm of the hand is flat on the handle). His knees are slightly flexed and his eyes are focused on the oncoming ball.

Step 2: The Back Swing: Danny is now ready to perform the shot. The head of the racket is now above his head, his shoulders are turned, the left hand is in front to help him keep the center of gravity in front, and he has loaded his weight to the back foot. His grip is relaxed and his wrist is “laid back” to allow maximum point of contact.

Step 3: The Point of Contact: The success of a top spin shot is keeping the ball on the strings going from low to high in a 30 degree angle. Danny started the swing high and “looped” it to allow the head of the racket to drop down. He will be brushing the ball as he makes contact with it. His left shoulder is almost opening and his weight has now been shifted toward the front.

Step 4: The Follow Through: Notice Danny’s finish above his left ear and his elbow pointing toward his target. He has now shifted his weight on his right foot and is ready to shuffle back to his home base.

*Look in the next Newsletter for: “The Modern Game: The Backhand Top Spin”*

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