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# Celebrate OHCE members during National Volunteer Month

It’s always good to show appreciation to volunteers, and there’s no better time to do that than National Volunteer Month, which takes place in April.

[Oklahoma Home and Community Education](https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/oklahoma-home-and-community-education/index.html) members know a thing or two about volunteering. Since its origination in 1935, group members have worked hard to make families more resilient, raised money for scholarships for local high-school students, sewed thousands and thousands of face masks in the height of the pandemic and so much more.

Suzette Barta, community engagement coordinator for OSU’s College of Education and Human Sciences - Extension, Engagement and Continuing Education, said OHCE members are driven and motivated to volunteer.

“People are motivated to action because they feel a desire within themselves to do something. This is called internal motivation,” Barta said. “We do the things we do within our communities, our counties and the state because we know they make a difference to the residents. We are also motivated by friendship, affiliation, and yes, even fun.”

Research shows that individuals often seek to volunteer in groups such as OHCE to help fulfill personal needs that can’t be achieved alone. Two Harvard professors classified volunteer motivators into three types: achievement, affiliation and power, and there’s a place for all three types in the world of volunteering.

Now that cases of COVID are declining, Barta said OHCE groups are getting out more and doing more things in person.

“We obviously weren’t meeting in person during the height of the pandemic, but our group members worked hard to not let it slow down their goals for their counties,” she said. “It’s exciting to hear about all the projects they’re working now that they can do more face-to-face activities.”

However, some activities are still being done virtually, such as the Valentine party that took place in February. Groups are participating in the virtual Hop into Spring event in April which is designed to get group members in the spring spirit and will include fun information about gardening, backyard bird photography, preparing Easter dinner and even a special surprise that involves deviled eggs.

In 2021, OHCE groups around the state made a big splash with all of their community activities, including volunteering nearly 78,400 service hours valued at more than. $2.1 million; raising $466.881 for community projects; and completing 25,828 hours of exercise time.

“Oklahoma’s OHCE members are top-notch and are such a valuable asset to their communities,” Barta said. “They are prime examples of what it means to be a volunteer.”

More information about OHCE is available online. Anyone interested in joining this organization can contact their [county OSU Extension office](https://extension.okstate.edu/county/index.html).