

Citizen Participation

“Collaboration is the hallmark of volunteerism in Springfield.”

Tom Carlson, Mayor, Springfield

Citizen participation enriches the social capital of our community. The degree of volunteerism and the extent of willing cooperation among agencies and organizations in Springfield and Greene County are, if not unique, unusual and noteworthy. Citizen involvement creates information networks and fuels collective action; these strengthen our ability to be truly self-governing.

VOTING INFORMATION

Greene County Registered Voters, November 2004	184,000
August 2004 Primary Election Voters	79,178 (47%)
November 2004 Presidential Election Voters	126,258 (69%, a record)

Voter registration is strong and for the presidential election in November 2004, sixty-nine percent of registered voters came out to the polls. The League of Women Voters publishes two periodicals a year, maintains a website, provides displays at our public libraries, and broadcasts a weekly radio show. Over 1,500 volunteer hours were given to these endeavors.

Volunteers Make a Difference

Springfield is the beneficiary of generous individuals and groups working collaboratively to deal with observed needs. No job is too small or great for volunteers, who do such diverse things as clear Greenways trails, build Habitat houses and usher at theaters.

Volunteering fosters our ability to trust one another, increases our commitment to shared goals, and expands our vision about what can and should be done to shape our community. Springfield/Greene County’s civic life is rich in social capital; it strengthens our connections to one another and provides resources for maintaining the health of our community. The following is a representative accounting of volunteer activities and hours.



People in Springfield and Greene County are generous with their time. The Southwest Missouri Volunteer Administrators Association lists the following counts for recent volunteer hours:

Organization	2003 Estimated Number, Volunteer Hours	2004 Estimated Number, Volunteer Hours
Community Hospices of America	5,999	Not available
Convention and Visitors Bureau	9,181	N/A
Dickerson Park Zoo	4,706	N/A
Girl Scouts of Dogwood Trails Council	92,000	N/A
Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts	10,800	N/A
Habitat for Humanity	40,000	N/A
Master Gardeners	11,432	13,470
Ozark Greenways	3,157	3,260
Springfield Conservation Nature Center	15,500	N/A
Springfield-Greene County Library District	16,000	16,000
Springfield Little Theatre	47,000	N/A
Wonders of Wildlife	23,621	16,000

St. John’s Health System	654 Volunteers	138,477 hours (July, 2003 to June, 2004)
CoxHealth System	1,263 Volunteers	129,029 hours (2004)

SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Parent-Teacher Associations	
Operate in Each School:	8,927 members (2004)
Volunteers in Springfield Public Schools:	1,319 registered volunteers 54,783 volunteer hours logged

Members of the community are also generous with their money and resources. Numerous individuals and foundations give to worthy projects and organizations.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE OZARKS (CFO)

Assets, 2003	Assets, 2004	Assets, 2005, through March
\$52.2 million	\$71.2 million	\$81.2 million
CFO Grants and Distributions, 2004: \$4.7 million		

In response to needs identified in the 2004 Community Focus Report, CFO has pledged \$1 million in unrestricted funds to tackle community red flags over the next four years. CFO anticipates awarding annually, an additional \$600,000 (approximately) in discretionary grants for projects addressing the red flags noted in this report.

UNITED WAY OF THE OZARKS (UWO)

United Way of the Ozarks has partnered with many of its current member agencies since its origin in 1930. In 2004 the UWO raised \$3,372,514 and managed an additional \$2,174,951 in grants and contracts in collaboration with Community Partnership. The 26 member agencies generated 1,406,284 volunteer hours through the efforts of 23,235 volunteers. Day of Caring alone had 1,400 volunteers painting, cleaning trails, and building structures. UWO is the only United Way known to include both endowment and grant initiatives (Cancer Fund, Children and Youth, Women's Initiative, and Children's Dental Fund) in its annual campaign.

THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF SPRINGFIELD

The Junior League of Springfield (JLS), an organization of women, has impacted our community since April 1959. League members identify unmet needs, forge effective coalitions, and work together for change. Since 1959, the League has grown from 31 to 600 members (160 active), given over \$2 million and



Junior League members "make over" a cottage at the Regional Girls Shelter this spring.

volunteered more than 1 million hours of time to the community. In 2004, JLS assisted 14 non-profit agencies with resources and volunteers.

JUNIOR LEAGUE VOLUNTEER HOUR AND MONEY COMPARISON WITH PEORIA

	Number of Volunteers 2004	Volunteer Hours 2004	Money Contributed 2004
Springfield	160	11,000	\$126,000
Peoria	160	18,000	\$ 25,000

As a result of last year's Community Focus report, the Junior League of Springfield will be addressing the issue of child abuse and neglect for the next three to five years.

Faith-Based Organizations

COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF THE OZARKS

The Council of Churches of the Ozarks is a 36-year-old umbrella organization sponsored by 84 area churches and supported by funds raised from the community at large. It currently administers nine social action projects, including Ozarks Food Harvest, Crosslines, and Daybreak Adult Day Care.

Total estimated volunteer hours for all Council projects:	262,820
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CHURCHES OF SPRINGFIELD

Churches of Springfield represents a group of individuals from some 70 churches who provide 200 reading tutors for Springfield Public School children, grades K-3, one day per week. These volunteers also address the five-year maintenance needs in a designated school, as identified by city leaders, in a one-day annual megaproject involving more than 200 people.

