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story

Volunteer Opportunities in Lewisville

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By Shelley Kaehr



CCA trucks sit next to the new community garden which always needs volunteers

Whether you voted for him or not, one of the best things President Obama did in his early days in office is to remind us all in order to change the world, we first have to change ourselves and change starts right here at home.

contributor information


 Shelley Kaehr
 Lewisville
[more from this contributor](#)

I've lived and worked in this area since 1990 and thanks to a couple of my prior jobs at both the Lewisville Leader and as Customer Relations Coordinator for Texas-New Mexico Power Company, I've had a chance to meet lots of wonderful folks in our community and do a lot of interesting volunteer jobs, which I will briefly outline for you here in hopes it might inspire you to try some for yourself.

Citizen's Police Academy

Now that I'm a full time novelist (my first two romances *Kiss at Blarney Castle* and *Road to Casablanca* by Leah Leonard just came out in print on Amazon.com-yippee!), I contacted the Lewisville Police Department a couple years ago when I was writing my book *Deep Currency*, a murder mystery novel about a Mexican-born police sergeant named Mario Martinez (this book will be released this summer from Red Rose Publishing under my other pen name, Annette Shelley) to see if they would let me ride out.

I wanted to see what it's like to ride around in a police car for character research, but when I asked if I could go along, they said yes I could *if* I complete a 13-week program called Citizen's Police Academy. In this course, instructors from our *real* Police Academy (yes, Lewisville has one!) instruct regular citizens like me in all the ways of the police department. The idea is that the more you and I are aware of what is going on out there, the safer everyone will be.


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When I found out about this class, which is **totally free** and covers nearly everything you would ever want to know about police work, I said, "WOW! Where can I sign up?"

This was an awesome experience! We talked to homicide detectives, searched abandoned buildings, pretended to pull over drunk drivers, learned self-defense and went to a firing range. I even got to do target practice in an extremely sophisticated training facility. You need to realize Lewisville has one of the very best trained police teams in the USA!!!

The experience left me with such admiration and respect for our police force, I can't even tell you...these men and women are putting it on the line for you and I on a daily basis, **big time**, and after this course, I can fully say all my being-a cop-fantasies I used to have from time to time are all worked out. I could not possibly do what they do, but I appreciate them for it!

I also joined the **Citizen's Police Academy Alumni** group. This is incredible and from time to time they call us to come help train new police academy students in exercises where civilians are needed. It is really neat!

Citizen's Fire Academy

I was so inspired by the police course, last year I signed up for Citizen's Fire Academy. This was also an amazing program! We got to visit every fire station, see the different specialties each team has, look inside the paramedic and fire vehicles, and one day I even got to try out the jaws of life on an old junked-out car! That was awesome, and again it is all **free!**

There are no words to describe the level of commitment of our Lewisville Firefighters. I'm sure I don't need to tell you that, but it's true! Did you know we have one of the best dive teams in the entire state and entire USA? Yes! When things happen on the lake, there is a special team in Old Town dedicated to taking boats out and doing search and rescue missions...incredible!

Western Day

One of things I've seen in Lewisville lately was the last Western Days Festival in Old Town. I was stunned as I walked through the streets looking out at a sea of humanity, all the huge stages and the big WOLF radio signs everywhere. It was really neat!

Back in the day (now I'm aging myself! LOL) I used to do Western Week with some friends from Old Town Business Association and the Chamber of Commerce. It was a ton of fun and a ton of work! I am happy to see this event consolidated into the one-day-format and the potential this event now has to attract people to our area from all over the DFW Metroplex! Good job!

I am certain the organizers of the event would love you to come volunteer a few hours of your time to help promote our wonderful city!

Holiday On the Hall

Again, years ago, I volunteered to be the Chair for what was then called The Old Town Christmas Stroll. Wow, what an event that was! Choo-choo trains, Santas, Christmas Carolers...quite an event, to be sure!

It's been awhile since I've volunteered for this, not since our gorgeous new City Hall was built and the event changed names, but I know for sure this holiday season, if you want to, somebody will put you

to work on that one! It is a ton of fun!

Christian Community Action (CCA)

There are no words to express what CCA means to me! This is an awesome organization designed to help the folks right here in our own back yard. Over the years I've had the opportunity to do a variety of things with CCA including decorating the Holiday Toy Store where people go to pick out gifts for their kids, working in the food pantry, grant writing committees, etc. I was even on the Capitol Campaign Committee back when their beautiful new building was only an idea in an architect's mind...

Even giving of your unused items is a help! Did you know they can use just about anything you can't? Even your worst beat up old pair of shoes can help somebody. I know sometimes people feel embarrassed to give shoddy used things to charity because they think it isn't good enough for anyone, but in this case, you need to understand that CCA makes money by selling these items by the pound. Years ago I had the incredible opportunity to take a tour of the inside operations back when Tom Duffy was still there, and let me tell you, it is really something! Please think twice before putting things in the dumpster! CCA needs us all! <http://www.ccahelps.org>

Lewisville Chamber of Commerce

You can join our local Chamber of Commerce, which I highly recommend, especially if you work in or own a business in our community. Years ago, I practically lived at the Chamber! They do ribbon cuttings and bring awareness to our local business owners who make our community great.

Through the Chamber, I received an Outstanding Service Award and was nominated to participate in a great invitation only program called **Leadership Lewisville**, which, like the Police and Fire Academy courses is designed to teach you more about the place where you live. It is highly recommended and a great place to form lifelong friendships with your fellow classmates. One of my very best friends in the world was in Leadership with me, and I am so glad for it!

Habitat for Humanity

Back when I was with Texas-New Mexico, I served as Publicity Chair for our local Habitat for Humanity organization. It was an easy thing for me to do for such an incredible organization. Several local charities worked cooperatively to bring housing into our area. I am not aware of any current projects, but it is worth looking into if you're handy or passionate about the cause.

Sue Weaver CAUSE

Speaking of CAUSE, personal friends of mine are on the board for this incredible organization whose mission is to make our homes safer by requiring more stringent background checks for service workers who come into our homes. Spreading the word about safety and creating new national standards are on the agenda and I for one know they will succeed! I wrote a whole Neighbor's Go article on this one you can check out!

A few others worth mentioning: The following list includes those organizations who I have not had as much personal contact with, but who deserve your attention, nonetheless...all deal with kids!

Pediplace

This group ensures that underinsured children are able to receive

the necessary medical treatments at no cost. The mission, according to their website is to: "provide high quality healthcare for children of DentonCounty who have no access to such services due to economic, geographic and/or cultural barriers." Big-hearted physicians and volunteers donate time, money and energy to make sure no child suffers. Need I say more? <http://www.pediplace.org>

Youth and Family Counseling

I often go to the holiday luncheons for this organization. Donors decorate wreaths and a silent auction is held to raise money to help at risk youth. This is a first offender program developed initially by law enforcement to assist kids in getting back on track before it's too late.

<http://www.youthandfamilycounseling.org/history.htm>

CASA - Court Appointed Special Advocates

CASA has been on my radar screen for years - I still hope to do this someday. They provide specially-trained advocates for children who are abused and neglected who need a champion in the civil court system. <http://www.casadenton.org>

I know there are many more great causes out there, but this is only a short list. Remember, if you're wondering what to do in Lewisville, there's plenty of activities to keep you busy!

Things in our world are tough today, the economy, job losses, etc, and it's easy to get bogged down with worry. I believe things are cyclical and this too shall pass. Helping others makes you grateful for all you have and when we all focus on our strengths and all we have to be thankful for in this great country, things will begin to turn around more quickly.

Lucky for me I've matured a bit over the years. I no longer believe I need to change the world singlehandedly. The world is fine just the way it is and is only getting better. The best way to have positive impact on humanity is to start at home, in your own back yard, and volunteering is as good a place as any to begin.

Posted by [Shelley Kaehr](#) Mar 5, 2009 1:46 PM, [Comments \(6\)](#)

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LCWB



Date Posted: Mar 6, 2009 at 1:58 PM CST

Another great place to volunteer is in your neighborhood in a Neighborhood Crime Watch. The newly formed Lewisville Crime Watch Board is working closely with the Lewisville Police Department in recruiting additional Coordinators, Block Captains, and other volunteers to help form new Crime Watches and reactivate less active Crime Watches. This is an excellent opportunity to help make a difference in our community. Thanks for you intensive list. I also enjoyed attending the Lewisville Citizens Police Academy this last fall 2008. Allie

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Date Posted: Mar 5, 2009 at 9:35 PM CST

Shelley, you have always been a inspiration and a very noble and moral soul that has done nothing but try to help and inspire others. I can't think of anyone better to be a leader!! It has been an honor to know you and call you "friend".

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Cosmic Cowboy

Date Posted: Mar 5, 2009 at 5:57 PM CST

God job Shelley. We are the ones we have been waiting for. We just have to get off the couch and do something. You have pointed the way to many great opportunities to get involved. Thanks!

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