

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: PRAYERNA UPPAL

By: Steven Oei Reporter

Prayerna Uppal, a senior in Valencia's AP and IB program, is serving the community by helping volunteer at elderly care facilities. Prayerna, alongside her sister Mayher, has been volunteering at hospices and retirement homes since the age of sixteen. Her interest in volunteering with the elderly stems from her relatives and her cultural background. Prayerna's grandmothers have worked with the elderly, one as a nurse and another as a volunteer, just like Prayerna herself. In addition, her father is also involved with hospice care, allowing access to senior citizen centers such as Riverside Board & Care and Valley Hospice Care Services. When asked what inspired her to dedicate time and energy with the elderly, Prayerna responded, "I figured I could make those CAS hours count for more than just a fulfillment of requirements. I could do something real and special for the community." Having a strong connection with her culture, she was taught from a young age to treat higher-ups with the utmost respect.

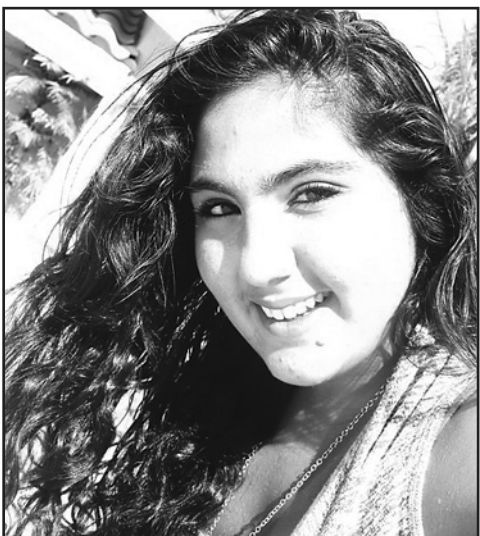


PHOTO COURTESY FROM: PRAYERNA UPPAL.

After gathering more volunteers each visit, Prayerna and Mayher decided to create the Rising Leaders' Organization of Volunteers for the Elderly, or RLOVE for short. By visiting their website at RLOVE.us, users may search for senior citizen-related volunteer opportunities in their area. Although Prayerna began volunteering with the elderly in fulfillment of CAS hours, she has no intentions of stopping after graduation. "After having done this for a while, I've realized that it's not something I'd be able to ever stop; it's a permanent part of my life. When you go visit [...] a terminally ill senior at a hospice care facility, you may be the last person to ever show them even the slightest caring gesture before they pass away. Your impression may, quite possibly, define the quality of the final days of their lives, and you have this amazing opportunity to assure their happiness before they die. Making an impact like that is-- well, it's impossible to just stop at any given moment. We spend most of our lives taking. This is an opportunity for me to give something back to others." If you would also like to help the elderly, Prayerna and Mayher have started the RLOVE Club on campus. To join, please see their club advisor Mr. Stanley.

SOPHOMORE SPOTLIGHT: ELIZABETH ESQUEDA

By: Emilie Cady Reporter

'Tis the season to be giving, and Sophomore Elizabeth Esqueda (10), is always finding time to give by volunteering in church, the Valencia Library, and the Placentia Library throughout the year. Esqueda volunteers occasionally afterschool, even with a heavy homework load from both Honors and AP classes and having to practice the flute with Valencia's Tiger Regiment. Esqueda sometimes volunteers to help out at the Valencia Library. When asked why she chose to volunteer at the library, she replied, "I really like to go to libraries, and I guess I just wanted to contribute to the library myself." She helps teach religious faith for children at her Catholic

Church; every Friday during the school year she volunteers to teach and prepare children who are receiving their communion. She knows exactly what to do to aid the children in their journey to Communion because she's in her second year of Catechism, "I volunteered mostly because my mom put me in it, but it's also fun to work with kids." During the summer, when she's not spending time with her friends, going to Band Camp, or taking trips to Mexico with her family, Esqueda volunteers in a club called P-TAC at the Placentia Library. In the club, she mostly assists at children's events, such as the winter themed Arts and Crafts event that took place last Saturday at the library. In addition to helping during events for kids, she also volunteers her time at book sales that the Placentia Library holds every second Sunday of the month.



PHOTO COURTESY FROM: ELIZABETH ESQUEDA.

JUNIOR SPOTLIGHT: BRIANNE COULOMBE

By: Elizabeth Knarr Reporter

While many people only give back while in the holiday spirit, Brianne Coulombe (11) volunteers her time with Meals on Wheels all throughout the year. Meals on Wheels is a service that provides daily inexpensive meals to elderly and handicapped people who are unable to leave their houses. The meals cost about six dollars a day, and all of the meals are delivered in couples (for example, mother/daughter or husband/wife). Coulombe became involved with Meals on Wheels through National Charity League, which is another organization in which she participates. National Charity League (NCL) is a mother-daughter organization that was founded during World War II as a way for women to actively participate in their communities while their men were off at war. NCL encourages women to develop leadership skills through their commitments to community service. Five years ago, through NCL, Coulombe signed up to volunteer with Meals on Wheels, and she has been volunteering ever since.



BRIANNE COULOMBE (11) HELPS OUT FOR THE MEALS AND WHEELS PROGRAM. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: DALE, VALERIE, AND BRIANNE COULOMBE. PHOTO COURTESY FROM: BRIANNE COULOMBE.

Once to twice a month, she and her mother go out to deliver meals. She says that volunteering for Meals on Wheels is always a learning process, and that she is grateful for being able to talk to the Meals on Wheels recipients. Coulombe articulates, "I think Meals on Wheels is important because it gives the recipients the opportunity to talk to other people and share about their lives and experiences. Since a lot of them don't have families living with them, the social interaction they get from Meals on Wheels is an important part of their day." Meals on Wheels also offers Coulombe the opportunity to spend some quality time with her mother. Through their numerous Meals on Wheels deliveries, they have made memories and grown closer together. Meals on Wheels allows them to experience the joys of volunteering together, and Coulombe emphasizes that her mother continues to inspire her to give back to the community. While Coulombe is giving back to her community, she maintains that she receives much more than she gives. Coulombe says, "I really love getting involved and having the opportunity to meet so many really cool people. I remember one time, my mom and I ran into a lady at the store, and she recognized us from Meals on Wheels. She said hello and thanked us for volunteering. It felt really good to know that I made a difference in her life."

FRESHMAN SPOTLIGHT: SAVINA DHUPAR

By: Andy Anusiem Reporter

There are students who help. There are students who volunteer. There are students who are active in their community. And then there's Savina Dhupar (9). Dhupar, an extremely productive volunteer, has played a big role in the Placentia Library's success and has helped organize their activities and events. Many students simply volunteer for hours, and others may go a little over, but Dhupar has reached 63 hours in just the first 4 months of her freshman year. During the month of October alone, she volunteered 4 to 5 hours a day, twice a week. She is dedicated and determined to show her organization and event-planning skills. Some of the activities Dhupar is involved in include orga-

nizing events, looking for ways to improve the library's production. "We plan events. We have two bi-monthly meetings to plan who's going to partake in what activity and what is needed for each activity", she commented. In addition to that, she has donated many hours to the library with once-a-month family game days that Dhupar and her crew completely arrange. Volunteering not only helps our Placentia community, but it has also changed Dhupar. Dhupar recognizes "It makes me feel like a better person because I am able to help others and my community".

PHOTO BY: STEVEN OEI.

