

# *Peas: A Turning Point*

By Loretta Lindell

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A turning point in my life as a community volunteer came when I was too young to appreciate it. In a scene that I am sure repeated itself many times across America during World War II: a young mother sits near her child, encouraging her to eat something nasty-looking, green, and cold on her dinner plate.

“Peas are good for you!” the mother entreats.

“You will grow big and strong,” she adds.

“Children in Europe are starving and would love to have your peas to eat,” she says in desperation.

The child sees the solution to the problem. “Mummy, you can send them my peas!”

So began my life as a volunteer, seeing a need and working to resolve a problem or fill a need. As a child, my activities centered on church and school with my mother providing the example to follow: helping to pack boxes of donated clothing to send to Europe for those displaced by the war; teaching Sunday school; forming a trio with two friends to sing at various meetings around town and on one occasion, with my accordion in hand, traveling with them to a Veterans Administration Center some distance away to sing and play for the patients. (My mother was the “wedding singer” in our church.)

Soon, giving my time and talents became something that I did because it benefitted others and brought satisfaction, enjoyment, and good learning experiences to me. As a candy striper, I learned that a career in the nursing field was not for me, but as an adult, I learned that a Red Cross volunteer could provide a variety of services in hospitals or healthcare facilities.

Following my career Air Force husband around the countryside with four small children in tow provided more volunteer opportunities in a variety of

settings and situations, especially in the schools. I loved working in the classrooms and learned to manage an elementary school library. Volunteering for Special Olympics was an especially gratifying and humbling experience. Historical societies, arts councils and museums, professional organizations, all gave me a broad perspective on and appreciation for the meaning of “community.”

I returned to college and graduated in the same month as our eldest son graduated from high school and went on to work for many years as a volunteer services manager. Being a volunteer, as well as being part of an agency requiring volunteers, gave me a deep appreciation of the value that one individual can bring to a given circumstance. And each circumstance can be a turning point in one’s life.

For me, it all began with peas.



*Loretta Lindell has been a dedicated board director for the Pahrump Arts Council (PAC). She has graciously served in many capacities, volunteering her efforts to leadership positions in order to bring art and culture to the Pahrump community. She has been a source of great inspiration to members, other organizations and businesses, and the community at large.*