

*Remarks to the  
Jackson-George Regional Library System  
2000-01 Volunteer Awards  
11:30am  
May 31, 2001*

Thank you for the invitation to be a part of today's celebration.

I am proud to be a part of this event, and to help celebrate you, the wonderful volunteers who give so much of your time and energy.

I was overwhelmed to learn that the individual hours dedicated to each library listed here on the program amounted to over 7,700 hours.

Utilizing your skills does make a difference.

This is a tremendous commitment on your part, and you deserve our gratitude every day.

Being a volunteer is not always easy. It takes time – time that we aren't always sure we can give up.

But, when you take the time to volunteer, you are doing so much more than giving of yourself. You are giving to others.

Our state does encourage volunteerism at all levels. Our schools have food drives.

Businesses and civic clubs adopt sections of highways to keep clean.

The return you get from volunteering usually far outweighs the effort you exert. You know what I'm talking about.

I have learned a whole new respect for carpenters. By this weekend, my staff and I will have helped with two Habitat homes.

I have never been so sore in my life from hammering for three hours, painting, and climbing scaffolds.

Working next to the homeowner, and watching their face as their home takes shape, is what volunteering is about.

Tutoring a child, and being there when they have one of those “lightbulb” moments – when they understand the point being made – is what volunteering is about.

Serving food in a soup kitchen, and helping to feed someone who is down on their luck, is what volunteering is about.

Volunteering, at its core, is simply helping another human being.

Mother Teresa once said that “service is not a chore. Service is a privilege.”

I know the Jackson-George Regional Library System considers it a privilege to have you as their special friends – friends who go the extra mile.

I came across a poem recently that sums up the importance of work done in a community.

It's called "Ode to a Volunteer."

"Many will be shocked to find  
When the day of judgement nears  
That there's a special place in Heaven  
Set aside for volunteers.

"Furnished with big recliners,  
Satin couches and footstools  
Where there's no committee chair  
No group leaders or carpools.



“Telephone lists will be outlawed  
But a finger snap will bring  
Cool drinks and gourmet dinners  
And rare treats fit for a king.

“You ask, Who’ll serve the privileged few  
And work for all they’re worth?  
Why, those who reaped the benefits  
And not once volunteered on earth.”

You are truly jewels in society. Thank you for having me today to celebrate with you.

May God bless every family that is represented here in this room.