

Volunteering as Part of Transitioning

You're new to the community and don't know many folks. You aren't familiar with the business community. Even if you are leaving the military in the same locale of your last assignment, you could be in this situation. You've spent your time within the confines of the base or post (USAF or Army) and haven't interacted that much with the civilian employment community.

The new TAP has you start the transition process up to two years out. Now is the time to start thinking about what you will do and how you can "research" your community and what it has to offer. You need to build your network.

Here's one way to start that process of exploring your interests and get to know the community. Volunteering is a way to learn about the community and is very successful way of crossing the bridge from military to civilian. The contacts and friendships that you can make volunteering can help you build a network that can lead to employment.

Networking will be a critical piece of your transition journey. Connecting with a group that has a common interest eases the tension and stress that arises when meeting folks in a new setting. There is automatically a common thread of conversation that will allow you to talk and create new friends.

Many organizations are looking for volunteers. Checking out San Antonio United Way's website unitedwaysatx.org is a great way of locating opportunities. Many nonprofits list their open volunteer positions on this site. Viewing this list and then researching the nonprofit's website will provide insight into the organization, its mission and the volunteer opportunities.

Being rather self-serving, there are also volunteer opportunities within the Alamo Chapter of MOAA. The Chapter is another way of connecting. We are active in the JBSA Transition Alliance, counseling and connecting with the San Antonio community. We are always looking for other opportunities to connect. You can help us in this.

Without hopefully being too simplistic about it, volunteering gives an opportunity to meet new people and explore your community while having fun. You'll feel the value of giving. The reward is intrinsic and can also lead to the extrinsic – a new job! Best of luck and happy holidays.

Kitty

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