

**Volunteering as a family at Sanctuary One****The family that mucks together sticks together**

BY WESTI HAUGHEY

*Is this a good idea?* Doubt plagued my mind as I loaded my family into the car. *Will they complain the whole time? Will my daughter insist I carry her because she's "just too tired"? Or will we have to turn around and head home because of a meltdown?* We were headed to Sanctuary One to volunteer as a family for the first time. I was already an experienced Sanctuary volunteer, having spent two years mucking the barnyard,

hiking with dogs and even trimming goat hooves. But that was without my family in tow, when the day's chore list and connecting with earth, people and animals were my only concern. I shelved the uncertainty, turned the key and rolled on.

**Practical worries aside, the decision to volunteer as a family was easy.** When I first suggested it to my husband he agreed without hesitation.

*Grace and Emmett Haughey get ready to muck the barnyard at Sanctuary One.*



Surprised by his eagerness, I pressed on explaining why I thought this was a good idea. *Service learning was a cornerstone of my childhood, I clarified. I can directly credit my personal and professional success to those early years spent volunteering.* He nodded. I didn't need to explain the rest, because he was already on board, but I continued to think about how giving your time, without any compensation, is often the most rewarding work you can ever do. We are so quick to teach children the concept of working for an incentive—*Mommy goes to work so we have money to buy groceries or if you clean up your room we'll get ice cream*—that kids are often unfamiliar with the concept of serving without a tangible benefit.

Beyond the service aspect, there's also the opportunity to learn new skills: technical, physical and emotional. At the farm you work directly with a variety of animals with greatly differing personalities and history. Some animals require you to be calm and earn their trust. Others need you to help them keep their excitement under control. You also quickly learn how to maneuver a wheelbarrow, when to choose a square or round-pointed shovel, and how to negotiate a gate without letting an eager animal loose. Whether your child is 5 or 25, these basic skills are often outside of what kids learn today. They've mastered technology, focused on the Common Core at school, but forgotten (or completely skipped) the basics. Sanctuary One's mission of caring for the Earth, People and Animals, should be the core of every child's—every human's—education.

**And then there's the obvious benefit:** time spent outside with your family, getting exercise and breathing

fresh air. For three to four hours you are together, away from technology (bonus: no cell signal at the farm) and absent from life's distractions. Instead of nagging about homework, listening to protests about limited TV time, or worrying about chores, you can observe nature and talk about the big ideas. *Notice how the squirrels are gathering acorns for winter? What are your goals for this year? How can we incorporate the Sanctuary's principles into our daily lives?*

So this was why we were here. We parked the car and headed to the dog cottage. Both kids homed in on two poodles currently in residence and selected brightly colored leashes to their liking. We hiked for an hour. No complaints, no fighting. Even after a spill down a rocky path and wet socks from splashing in the creek, my kiddos were still game. We had smiles on our faces and the dogs did too.

**Today, we have our own little Sanctuary One routine.** My daughter and husband happily head over to the cat cottage to meet the latest additions, clean, and swing a feather for playful felines. My son and I visit the dog yard, where he loves throwing tennis balls for happy retrievers while I fill water bowls and scoop up. Then we all head out for a walk in the woods with four-legged companions by our sides. It's pretty simple and pretty great. I'm glad I put my doubts aside and shifted from solo volunteer service to the whole clan. You can do it too. Visit [sanctuaryone.org](http://sanctuaryone.org) to learn more.

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**Moving on from the 'perfect job'**

BY DELLA MERRILL

When this paper's editor asked me to write about my plans after leaving Sanctuary One, I was reminded of a quote by poet Mary Oliver: "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

At 57, my wild days are mostly over, but I never take for granted how precious my life is. And it's this very acknowledgment that prompted me to leave the "perfect" job to pursue new directions.

The past four years of building the Sanctuary's core programs and services were truly the highlight of my professional life. And in many ways, the experience helped me focus my intentions for what now lies ahead.

**My job as general manager integrated many of my passions,**

including teaching, gardening, horses, fundraising and even driving tractors. It's been an amazing ride with many accomplishments and some disappointments, but I leave feeling satisfied about my contributions and grateful for the many new friends I met along the way.

Now I press on, with poet Oliver whispering in my ear "...what is it you plan to do?"

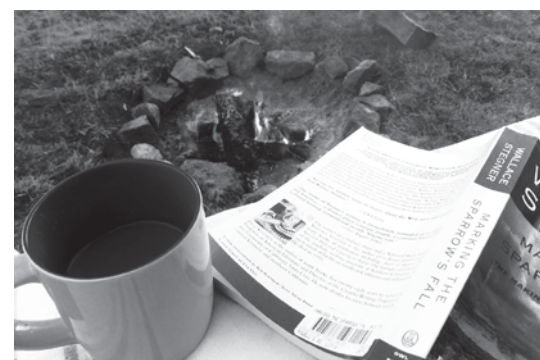
I don't have a specific plan or that "something else" lined up, nor a clear picture of where I'm headed. What I do have is the same energy and passion I brought to Sanctuary One and still a burning desire to align my life with my work as I try to reimagine this world and my place in it.

**As I explore my professional options,** a concern that seems overriding

to me is climate change. The deeper I delve in, the more I'm struck by the overarching and complex nature of the issue and how it touches every part of our lives—from the personal to the financial, gastronomical, environmental, religious...and the list goes on. In essence, it's about who we are as human beings and the choices we make every single moment of our lives.

**There are no easy answers, but for me, at least, there is clarity.** Like my job at Sanctuary One, my next pursuit will be one that I believe in. One that excites me every morning when I wake up. One that weaves my work's objectives with the way I live my life.

Amid the uncertainty, there are three things that I do know: in November I will have attended the Slow Money 2014 gathering in Louisville, KY, where the great American poet, philosopher and farmer, Wendell Berry, was a featured



*Recharging...*

speaker. When I return, I plan to serve as a volunteer on a newly formed development work group for the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy. And lastly, I'll be participating in a leadership and advocacy training sponsored by Rogue Climate.

Now, while I enjoy my downtime regenerating and being present in the moment, I remind myself to *never* take for granted this "one wild and precious life."

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