Gerrard Jolly hated history. He felt no connection to his past…

. . . until his aunt guided him to a volunteer opportunity at the Tuskegee Institute National Historic Site, introducing visitors (and himself) to Booker T. Washington's courage and George Washington Carver's genius. By the time Gerrard was done, he was headed to college - as a history major. Later, pursuing his Masters Degree in Akron, Gerrard volunteered at Cuyahoga Valley National Park, working with inner-city youth, guiding them through their first encounters with open space, freedom, and trust in each other. What was just a summer job to escape the city heat became a revelation. Learning his connection to his past awoke Gerrard's passion to serve others; his volunteer experiences in the Parks revealed his gift: to pass along to kids the same magical power of personal transformation he had discovered. Gerrard Jolly became a Park Ranger, and today he's on staff at the National Park Foundation, helping to transform its Volunteerism Grant Programs for generations to come.

NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION

TRANSFORMING VOLUNTEERISM

INDISPENSIBLE TO THE PARKS' SUCCESS, INSEPARABLE FROM THEIR CHARACTER

Gerrard Jolly discovered his lifepath in his National Park experience, as thousands of Park volunteers do every year. But volunteers give back to the Parks in equally heroic measures. **Without volunteers, the Parks as Americans love them wouldn't be the same.**

Competing needs and budget realities often mean that Park programs rely on volunteers more than ever to provide a quality experience for the visitor. Volunteers also help take Park programs beyond the basics - especially in the area of conservation. Volunteer support can turn standard exhibits into world-class learning opportunities and guide programs off the drawing board and into the field.

Just as importantly, though, volunteers continue an evolving tradition essential to the character of the entire National Park System. Volunteers like Gerrard Jolly are transformed by their experiences, and, in turn, their infectious passion and dedication can transform Park visitors into lifetime Park supporters.

In so many ways, Park volunteerism is a model of civic engagement.

Yet, as much as volunteerism has given the Parks, there is always more to be done - more volunteers to be engaged and more value to be derived fromVolunteer Programs -to continue creating powerful volunteer experiences. Private philanthropy will allow us to transform our ability to locate, recruit, and train the finest volunteer candidates available. Specifically, we need to fund Volunteer Programs that:

- Seek out innovative new partnerships to support volunteer experiences for new audiences.
- Explore and discover new ways for people to volunteer their time and unique talents.
- Collaborate with schools to create powerful Service Learning opportunities for students.
- Increase the National Park Service's ability to attract volunteers and sustain volunteer programs by coordinating resources, expertise, and innovations from the private, non-profit, and government sectors.

NPF AT WORK: VOLUNTEERISM GRANT PROGRAMS

Few resources have greater volunteerism potential than the wisdom, skill, and experience of America's senior citizens. The **Volunteer Senior Ranger Corps** works with local senior organizations to create volunteer opportunities for seniors to help solve National Park conservation problems and mentor young people. The **National Park Volunteerism Enhancement** program helps train National Park staff to recruit and retain effective volunteers. It also provides funds to plan and market volunteer projects, recognize volunteer contributions, create community volunteer events, as well as to secure uniforms, supplies, and other volunteer-related needs.

"My mother, who had great difficulty walking the mile from the parking lot to the lighthouse, would be so proud to know that through the Volunteer Senior Ranger Corps I designed seating so that people of all ages can now sit where she had to walk."
- Senior Volunteer, Fire Island National Seashore