We recently hired an employee at Steve Gilliland, Inc. who stated in her biography that when she wasn't at the office one of her greatest joys was volunteering.

It affirmed what I have always believed, which is the more we can "engage" with the world, the better off we are. The better off we are, the happier we feel. When we focus on others, when we give back to our communities, it turns out that we not only help make the world a better place, but we help to heal ourselves as well.

Volunteering covers a huge range of activities from walking dogs at your local animal shelter, to reading to the ailing, to helping build a home for a disabled veteran. If helping to clean up a local park is your cup of tea, then do that; if you would rather wrap toys for children who are battling serious diseases, that's a blessing as well.

Know someone slightly on the cantankerous side whose favorite spot is plunking down in front of the television for hours on end? Here are 5 Great Reasons to coax them off the couch!

1. **Find Your Passion!** Psychologists and social workers tell us the best way to find ourselves again is to do something we are passionate about. If you have lost a loved one or have gotten fired, or you are recently divorced, it is often difficult to find anything to feel happy about. Volunteering often rekindles a long lost spark and puts our focus on others rather than ourselves. Like animals but live in a tiny apartment? Volunteer at the local humane society! Love baking but feel there is no one left to bake for? I guarantee you there are kids and parents at places like a Ronald McDonald House who would be extremely thankful for your cookies!

2. **Recharge Your Resume!** It's the old conundrum: you want to change jobs to a career in a field you love, but you have no experience in that area. Volunteering breaks that cycle. No one says experience has to be paid experience! If your work experience is selling Christmas sweaters, and it is your desire to be an administrative assistant, don't turn down the opportunity to volunteer as the administrative assistant at your church or social organization. It is still experience. Learn as much as you can while on the volunteer job. The more you know, the more you will impress a future employer.

3. **Do Something Positive for Your Community!** How often do we hear people say their communities are falling apart? How many times do we hear people complain about "those people" or "that block"? Volunteering brings us together, and it creates new bonds. I am always amazed when people in a community are brought together when a flood threatens or after a severe storm hits. There is no time to judge or to compare; there is only the need to bond and to help. However, it does not have to be
something as extreme as a flood or a thunderstorm. It can be to help cut the lawn for an elderly person or to serve meals in a shelter. Every act of volunteering in a community strengthens and heals a community. I once heard a powerful saying: "You can’t hate someone if you know their name!" How do you get to know a stranger's name? Volunteer with them!

4. **Be a Role Model!** Volunteering not only gives back to the community, but you can also give something back to your family and your children. When children see their parents, aunts and uncles volunteering, it gives them and shows them very powerful images that will last a lifetime. It is very meaningful when families put down their cell phones and computers and go out into the world to help others. When a parent hears a child complain: "Why do we have to do this?" It forces the parent to reflect and explain about helping others and the meaning of selflessness.

5. **It’s Healthy!** Volunteering makes us move! Whether we are weeding a garden in a park, stocking the shelves in a community pantry, sorting used clothing for the homeless or helping out at the local hospital, we are moving and exercising. When we move, we are happier and healthier. We probably won't remember a television show we watched last weekend, but we will remember the smile on a physically challenged person's face after we and a group of volunteers have painted their home. Yes, you will have a sore muscle or two, and you will not be paid, but your heart will be happy and the experience will be priceless.

*Enjoy The Ride!

Steve*
On July 18, 2016, Steve delivered his signature presentation **MAKING A DIFFERENCE** at the Keller ISD Kickoff of Keller University & Administrator Summit.
Never ruin an apology with an excuse.
South Dakota Municipal League

To whom it may concern,

Steve spoke at our Annual South Dakota Governmental Finance Officers' School. He was a hit from the very beginning! His morning topic “Making a Difference” and afternoon topic “Hide Your Goat” really resonated with this group. I had the opportunity to visit with Steve’s staff prior to the Conference and was pleased to be able to have the opportunity to share the challenges that the Finance Officers in our state face on a day-to-day basis. It was very apparent that Steve used this information to speak to their need to be inspired and encouraged. A few of the comments that we received on an evaluation form that we have attendees fill out are as follows:

“Loved - Loved - Loved the special speaker.”
“Loved the speaker this year – fabulous.”
“Steve Gilliland was the best speaker I’ve heard in a very long time – if ever. You should bring him back again sometime.”
“Steve Gilliland was excellent. Should mark it down to invite back in 2 to 4 years.”
“Steve hit it out of the park.”
“Seems like we all need the inspirational speakers to keep us going.”
“Loved the keynote speaker! Very fun and inspiring.”

Steve found that this group can be very appreciative, yet loves to “play” with the speakers with some friendly heckling! Steve responded in kind and they loved it! Even with a group of 150 individuals, Steve made all attendees feel at home to freely express their emotion, laughter and teasing nature. This conference is like a mini vacation for the Finance Officers, and Steve’s presentations were a welcome departure from the worries and stress of their everyday jobs. He brought humor, compassion and an inspirational message that attendees found themselves “writing down on paper” as they listened. Steve’s final presentation was rewarded with a standing ovation from all attendees!

Thank you, Steve, and we look forward to working with you in the future if we are able to do so!

Sincerely,

Lori Martinez
South Dakota Municipal League
Director of Research and Training

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Looking Ahead...

Steve's August 2016 Schedule
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Dr Daren Martin
@DarenMartin

@SteveGSpeaks rocking the stage at DL Rogers company meeting!