



Pillars Volunteer Spotlight: Ida Green

Ida Green has been volunteering with Pillars' Sexual Assault Program for 15 years! She is Professor Emeritus at Prairie College, where she teaches freshman nursing lab and two online nursing courses.

Ida on volunteering: "You can tell you are making a positive difference to someone who has been through a very difficult experience."

How long have you been volunteering as a crisis advocate, and how/why did you become involved?

For about 15 years... it was either 1998 or 1999 when I started. I was finishing up an internship in counseling and came across the information about the volunteer opportunity, and thought this was something I would really like to do. I am very committed to peace and nonviolence.

What has been the most rewarding part of your volunteer experience?

You can tell you are making a positive difference to someone who has been through a very difficult experience.

What is most challenging?

Trauma victims can be withdrawn. Sometimes it is difficult to know exactly how to help. They often feel responsible, so I try to help them understand that the assault was not their fault.

What have you learned from your volunteer experience?

There are some wonderful people out there who are committed to helping victims. The staffs at hospitals are usually very compassionate. On a personal level, this work has helped me to improve my communication skills. I have also learned how to do the best I can in the moment.

Can you tell a story of an individual you have helped through your volunteer position? How did you feel about your experience?

I helped one girl, about 15 or 16 years old, who was raped at knifepoint in a car. She escaped, and then was a victim of a hit and run. The hospital called the hotline and I was able to wait with the girl until her mom arrived. I really felt like my presence made a difference. I was there to support her and hold her hand during the wee hours of the morning while her wounds were being sutured—it was well worth the loss of sleep! The youngest victim I helped was 8 years old. She had been sexually assaulted by a neighbor. I was able to sit with her in the emergency room as well. Her mother was in jail at the time. Two cousins brought her to the ER but did not stay in the room with her so she had very little support. We passed the time and occupied her mind by practicing spelling words which was something she loved to do. Upon discharge, the girl was placed into foster care. The work can be heartbreaking at times but our presence can be such a help.

Would you recommend our volunteer program to others? What advice would you give to a new volunteer?

Be yourself, and you can be a great help to a person. You realize you have something to give to someone else. You can also meet a lot of nice people through volunteer work.

What advice would you give to someone who may need help, but who is afraid to reach out?

You don't have to deal with this alone. There is help available. The first step is the hardest. Call the hotline (708.482.9600). You can remain anonymous. Just reach out!

Thank you, Ida, for your commitment to Pillars and for sharing your story!

