

MARIANNE MAY

MARIANNE HAS BEEN VOLUNTEERING with the Jazz Institute for three years. In 2011, she contributed 50 volunteer hours and was instrumental in the success of several events. Marianne joins elite volunteer status by volunteering at the Gala, Jazz Club Tour, and all four days of the Chicago Jazz Festival in 2010! Her eye for detail, great sense of humor, and deep love for the music have helped keep many volunteer teams focused and jovial.

HOW DID YOU START VOLUNTEERING WITH JIC?

I've been a jazz fan since I was first introduced to jazz back in high school, but I won't say when that was. I've been enjoying jazz and attending the Chicago Jazz Festival off and on through the years since the very first one in 1978. I guess I was two years old at the time. I finally attended my first Jazz Club Tour in 2009, which kicks off the Jazz Fest every year, and decided it was time to become a JIC member. From there the natural progression was to support the music I love by not only being a member of the audience but by helping out at JIC-sponsored events.

WHY DID YOU START VOLUNTEERING WITH JIC?

I guess volunteering is in my blood, I've been volunteering my time for many organizations since I was ten or eleven years old. My first volunteer effort was with the Hemophilia Foundation of Illinois. All three of my brothers were hemophiliacs and it was a way for me to give back to an organization that was so helpful to my family. Again, once I became a JIC member, it was only natural that I volunteer my time to help support the music I love and that is such a part of my life. I get out to support live jazz several times a week, in fact on some evenings I might catch two performances at different locations. While I appreciate the discount offered with my JIC membership, I'd like someone to issue a "Jazz Gold Card" or something, so I could earn points or get 1/2 off on ALL of my jazz oriented expenditures.

WHAT KEEPS YOU COMING BACK?

I love helping out and I love working with and talking to people. Since I do get out to many different jazz

venues, I'm able to share that experience with the folks that attend the JIC events, and they seem appreciative, which makes me feel like I'm enhancing their jazz experience. Also, the JIC staff is very welcoming, and great to work with, and I've met some wonderful people and worked with some great volunteers, so it's a win-win situation. Don't you wish everything in life was that way?

WHAT'S BEEN YOUR FAVORITE EXPERIENCE SO FAR AS A VOLUNTEER WITH JIC?

There are two, in 2010 I volunteered for the Gala and that was a wonderful experience. I was lucky to be one of the folks escorting guests to their tables for dinner, I was just finished with my dinner break and I was heading back to work. The elevator doors opened and a new guest had arrived, waiting to be seated and it just happened to be Ramsey Lewis, who was one of the honored guests that evening as the recipient of the Walter Dyett Lifetime Achievement Award. Wow, I got to seat and talk with Mr. Lewis and tell him that one of my favorite Christmas CDs is his "Sound of Christmas" recorded in 1961. I also had the privilege at the end of the evening to have a one-on-one conversation with Bobby Lewis (no relation to Ramsey but I'm sure everyone reading this will know that) who was one of the performers that evening for the "Pride of Trumpets." What a great way to end a very memorable volunteer experience! My second favorite experience was helping set up the JIC booth for the Jazz Festival that same year. I wasn't scheduled to volunteer, but I found out the night before while volunteering for the Millennium Park performance that help was needed the next morning for set-up, so I decided to help out. It was just a great experience that I'll never forget, again working with great people.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO PEOPLE THINKING ABOUT VOLUNTEERING?

If you're a lover of jazz music, and I certainly don't understand who wouldn't be, but hey that's just me, don't think about it, just DO IT! The jazz community needs all the support it can get, we all need to do whatever we can to help keep this great music alive. Volunteer your time with the JIC and you'll get back much more than you give, I can assure you that.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

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