

## **Cedar Amateur Astronomers Volunteering Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)**

**Q:** I don't know anything about astronomy. I don't think there is anything I could do as a volunteer.

**A:** There are many things that Volunteers can do that do not involve astronomy. Support of the facility takes a host of "Handy-man/Handy-woman" skills. Many of our programs involve large groups which take "crowd-control" skills. We also need expertise in Information Technology, PA audio, and security system. Also specialized skills such as video production. There is a very long list of non-astronomy related tasks.

**Q:** What is outreach?

**A:** Outreach is engaging the public, especially children, in astronomy. We support community organizations, scouting, church groups, schools, universities, and the general public.

**Q:** I don't live in Iowa but would like to volunteer. What activities can be done remotely?

**A:** Generally, things that can be done via the Internet. We are always looking for someone who will provide articles for our Newsletter or identify interesting articles found on the Web. There are also some things that are normally done remotely, like answering our telephone messaging system and helping manage social media.

**Q:** What is membership work?

**A:** There are many tasks involving keeping track of our members. Reminding members of expiring dues payments, tracking requests such as magazine subscriptions, insuring distribution of the Prime Focus Newsletter, issuing special email distributions, adding new members and deleting delinquent memberships.

**Q:** What is involved with magazine management?

**A:** CAA receives a discount on the purchase of several astronomy related magazines. We could use help tracking orders, managing renewals, and managing special purchases such as calendars.

**Q:** What volunteer activities involve software?

**A:** Various displays are, or plan to be interactive. We are using laptops, desktops, and Raspberry Pi computers manage these displays. We also have telescopes that are run by software programs that require updating and modifications to operate properly. One of our telescopes has a control program written under Linux so that expertise would be very helpful.

**Q:** Do you need help in website management?

**A:** Yes, there are things that could be done on our website ([www.cedar-astronomers.org](http://www.cedar-astronomers.org)). Our webmaster is very busy. Skills with Joomla and HTML could be useful.

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Q: Do you need volunteers to update schedules?

A: Yes. Tracking events and managing associated support is always needed.

Q: Do you need volunteers to help manage your Facebook page?

A: Wendell Clifton runs our Facebook page. If you are interested in managing a Facebook account, we will get you in contact with Wendell.

Q: I am a ~~high school~~ student. Is there anything that I can do?

A: You can volunteer and help like any other volunteer. Sometime transportation to our Ivanhoe Road Observatory is a problem for students. You may even be able to get credit for special projects as an intern, consult with your school adviser.

Q: I would like to volunteer but I don't like to drive at night. Most of your events are at night.

A: While it is true that many of our events are at night, many are also during the day, especially those involving younger students. Also, one can share a ride with another member to attend evening events.

Q: I like to teach very young children. What volunteering activities do you have for me?

A: Many of our programs involve younger children. These are generally during the day and the more support the better. You can also help with organizing programs and developing content.

Q: Do you have volunteer work for a machinist?

A: Telescopes and associated mounts are mechanical and sometime require the skills of a machinist.

Q: What activities do you have for someone interested in finance?

A: Our club treasurer handles most finance, but I am sure he would like some assistance.

Q: What volunteer activities do you have regarding publicity?

A: We are always in need of a publicity coordinator who can operate alone or as part of a team.

Q: What communication activities do you have?

A: Historically communication involved distribution of brochures and other such material. We have also had occasion to be involved in local television reports and some members have participated in radio programs.

Q: I have my own telescope that is easy to use and I have fun with. Is there a way I can use my own telescope and help?

A: We used to have several members that would bring out their own portable telescopes to events to show the public something that is more like what they could use. Those people are mostly not active now and we could use some of that kind of activity to attract new members and excite the public into using their own equipment. We have great

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support for you if you would like to show off some more typical amateur astronomy equipment.