

S. Carl Wells

Carl Wells has dedicated much of his life to serving his community, from assisting the homeless at the St. Francis Center to fundraising for Bluff Lake Nature Center. Carl is the husband of Allie Wells, father of 3 sons and grandfather of 9 grandchildren. He moved to Denver in 1971 and since that time has been involved in many different aspects of his community.

Carl began his work at the St Francis Center in the 1980s where he helped shelter guests with their basic daily needs. After several years contributing his time with hands-on activities, he decided to become involved in the administrative duties of the organization. He was instrumental in establishing their 501(c)3 non-profit status in 1995 and served as the board president for the following three years. In the last couple of years Carl has stayed involved with the organization through fundraising assistance for their capital campaign to build a housing facility designed to move people out of homelessness.

In the 1980s and 1990s, he was the President and Trustee of Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital. He was also a board member of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the National Stroke Association. He soon was voted to be Board Treasurer and later the Board President.

Most recently, Carl has been a valuable contributor of time, effort, money, and passion to Bluff Lake Nature Center, a non-profit wildlife refuge and outdoor classroom in northeast Denver. Carl has worn many different hats since he became involved with Bluff Lake in 1999. He began as a Volunteer Naturalist, and to this day continues to share his love of birds and the outdoors with elementary school children, primarily from nearby low-income schools. The majority of students that visit Bluff Lake Nature Center have rarely had the opportunity to visit open spaces and are often surprised to hear that so many animals live so close to their neighborhoods. Often when they arrive they express fear of being attacked by snakes and coyotes. Carl's patience and extensive knowledge of wildlife and ecology puts the students at ease and encourages their natural curiosity about the outdoors.

The following are comments from teachers that have attended Bluff Lake school programs in the past year and have gone with the groups that Carl led: "I will also like to say thank you again to our Nature Teacher Carl. His patience with the students and

level of knowledge made the trip memorable. I will definitely sign up for this program again," McGlone Elementary 5th grade teacher. "Carl was very helpful and knowledgeable. He was extremely patient with my students and shared their excitement for things they discovered. Thank you!" Schenck Elementary 4th grade teacher.

Not only does Carl share his love of the outdoors with elementary-aged students, he organized and leads the monthly Bluff Lake Birders around the wildlife refuge in search of new bird species as well as the regular residents. Through his efforts he has established a dedicated group of birders the visit Bluff Lake regularly to document the various avian inhabitants of the wildlife refuge.

After serving 5 years as a dedicated Volunteer Naturalist, in 2004 Carl was voted onto the Bluff Lake Nature Center Board of Directors. He served as the Board Treasurer 2005 to 2008. In this role he advocated for Bluff Lake through fundraising at special events, encouraging friends to become members, managing Bluff Lake investments, balancing the budget, and being a Bluff Lake advocate in the community. He was responsible for ensuring the financial stability through careful analysis of expenditures, investments and projected expenses.

Carl is an excellent example of a volunteer that non-profit organizations, like Bluff Lake Nature Center, need to fulfill their mission. Since 2001 he donated almost 1,000 hours of service! He is willing to contribute whatever he can whenever he can. His passion and commitment to preserving wildlife habitat and providing outdoor education for low income students is evident to all that meet him. He has worked hard to bring Bluff Lake out to the community and the community to Bluff Lake.