

North Raleigh News



A good start on '06 goals

By **DAN HOLLY, Staff Writer**

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The plea came to me in December, a few days after I wrote a column stating that one of my New Year's resolutions for 2006 was to volunteer more.

We need volunteers, said the e-mail message from Susan Milliken, executive director of a group called Futures for Kids.

Milliken had not even read my column -- talk about lucky timing!

I can't imagine a less painless way to fulfill my resolution.
I'm signing up.

Futures for Kids, a North Raleigh-based organization that began in 2001, needs career coaches to discuss their jobs with middle and high school students who are trying to figure out what path in life to take.

"The time commitment is minimal -- 10 to 15 minutes a week -- and it is done all online," Milliken said.

I can make the world a better place from the comfort of my own computer? Hey, this may be easier than I thought!

According to Future for Kids Web Site (www.f4k.org), the interaction between students and career coaches is mutually beneficial.

"During the next decade," it says, "we face a critical labor shortage as the baby boomers reach retirement age. As this workforce issue looms, our public school systems are struggling with low graduation rates and insufficient resources to help students achieve their goals."

By helping to coach students, businesses help train the workers they will need in the future. And students, of course, get the advice they need. "It's a win-win situation," the Web site says.

The group needs coaches from a wide variety of careers. They do extensive background checks (be forewarned, they'll ask for a lot of personal information), and they have a lot of rules to follow. But that's for everybody's protection.

Milliken, at least, is optimistic about what one person can do.

"Your help could really make a difference in a young person's life," she said.

And perhaps in mine, too.

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