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Be a superhero

By Monica Eng | Chicago Tribune reporter
July 24, 2008

Batman, Iron Man and the Hulk are pretty cool. But, let's face it, they're comic book characters and unlikely to actually help anyone in real life. You, however, are real and probably able to do some good in your community. To give you a start, we've compiled a list of volunteer opportunities that will help you act super in your own Gotham.

Save lives: Learn the ultimate superhero skill—saving lives—by taking a class or volunteering at the Red Cross of Greater Chicago, www.chicagoredcross.org.

Sign up for classes in first aid, lifesaving, CPR and more through the Red Cross at locations across the area and check out volunteer opportunities for trained life savers.

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Fight crime: Fight city crime like Batman and **Spider-Man** through Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (C.A.P.S.) groups, cityofchicago.org/police or dial 311.

Join your local C.A.P.S. and attend beat meetings with your beat officers and neighbors. Discuss solutions to crime issues in your community and get training on how best to solve them. Superhero suits not included.

Save the planet: Help protect the environment like Wall-E or Aquaman by joining Friends of the River, 28 E. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1800; 312-939-0490, www.chicagoriver.org.

This organization strives to make the **Chicago River** "a greener, more accessible, and better cared for" waterway through "outreach,

policy and planning, and on-the-ground projects." Volunteers need to get special training and commit for a fairly long period to do jobs like leading canoe trips, serving as docents, registering people for river events and leading classroom field trips to the river.

Protect women: Inspire young girls to be strong like Wonder Woman by volunteering at Girls on the Run, 1415 N. Dayton St., Suite 1; 312-266-8200.

Girls on the Run serves approximately 2,000 girls in the Chicago area each year by training them for races. The philosophy is to help the pre-teens learn self-respect and healthy lifestyles through running. They offer a variety of volunteer opportunities at www.gotrchicago.org

Rescue animals: Be like Underdog and empathize with animals at PAWS Chicago, 1997 N. Clybourn Ave.; www.pawschicago.org, or contact Sharyn Hosemann at shosemann@pawschicago.org or 773-687-4715.

Volunteers 18 and older at this no-kill animal shelter help with variety of duties. These include post-operation care, adoption events, animal socializing, foster care and administrative services. PAWS also offers programs for kids 12 and older who are

accompanied by a parent.

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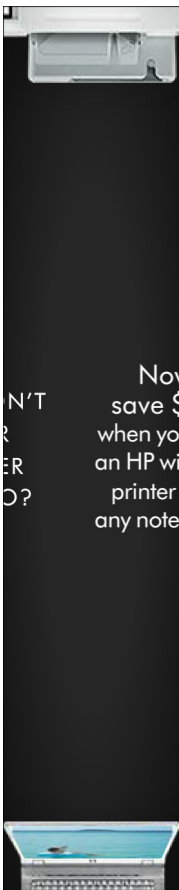
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