Nea Today
For Nea- Retired Members

Baby boomers are starting a new revolution in giving back.

By Cindy Long

There’s no doubt millennials are making their mark on the world, but the baby boomers may be just as active, energized, and idealistic. After decades in the workforce, they aren’t ready to head to the golf course or the front porch rocking chair just yet. In fact, they are determined to put their experience to work in new ways to make their mark on the world again.

Many have found their second calling with the help of Encore, a nonprofit organization that mobilizes Baby Boomers for social change. One of them is Patricia Hall, a retired teacher from Bear Lake, Minn. She found her second calling as president of H2O for Life, a service-learning organization with a mission to engage, educate, and inspire young people to learn about the global water crisis through investigation and local and global actions.

“I volunteer my services to the organization, typically providing 40 hours or more a week doing the outreach to schools and donors for our work,” she says.

Since 2009, the H2O for Life curriculum has reached more than 500,000 students and has provided more than $2.5 million dollars for water, sanitation, and hygiene education projects (WASH in Schools) for schools around the world.

“I spent 30 years in education, with a focus on special ed...” Hall says. “My passion for education led me to help create H2O for Life. My advice for pursuing your encore is to recognize that, as an older adult, you have many skills and time to contribute. Find your passion and have the time of your life.”

Retired teacher Patricia Hall is now CEO of H2O For Life, a service-learning organization with a mission to engage, educate, and inspire young people to learn about the global water crisis.

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Of the 1,510 adults surveyed, 80 percent of respondents said “making the world a better place for the next generation is important or very important.” Most (65 percent) also believe that cooperation between young and old will be a source of national strength in an era characterized by rapid population aging, the experiences, diversity, and persistent partisan gridlock. And 77 percent of respondents 60 and older said life after age 60 is a time of mostly “freedom, growth, and giving back.”

Now, more than ever, we need people who feel passionate about social change to be out in the world making that change,” says Marcie Alberhr, vice president of H2O for Life and author of The Encore Career Handbook: How to Make a Living and a Difference in the Second Half of Life. "Retired educators are uniquely positioned to connect with young people, both as guides and mentors, but perhaps even more importantly, as listeners and comrades. These are exactly the types