



Gratitude - A Simple Connection

Mark Hoisser, DARTS President

In a recent note to staff, I shared the quotation "consciously cultivating thankfulness is a journey of the soul, one that begins when we look around us and see the positive effects that gratitude creates." At DARTS, when we receive year-end contributions, we also receive letters thankful for our assistance and the lift it brings to those we serve. It's this gratitude that drives all of us to keep caring and keep helping. Now, more than ever, people will turn to us, and we want to make sure they know the many ways we can assist them.

In this newsletter, you'll see that we are moving forward while also keeping a close eye on today's needs. We are being looked to for new and expanded services that help older adults remain in their home of choice as long as possible. We are stretching our partnerships to ensure resources and options exist for the growing number of transit-dependent residents. We are engaging people of all ages to help us create aging-friendly opportunities and communities. These efforts will continue as we experience changing demands and changing demographics in the communities we serve.

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We know that the troublesome economic picture will impose some setbacks and uncertainties for DARTS, but we've confronted tough situations before. We will be practical so that older adults and their families can count on us with confidence. Serving people is our top priority. It is the unique role of all nonprofits to be a lifeline when others may not be.

My thankfulness to donors and funders for their financial support, to volunteers for their generosity of time and talent, and to staff and board for their commitment and wisdom goes beyond a simple 'thank you'. Indeed, one effect of gratitude is the determination to continue creating possibilities for everyone who connects with DARTS.

Calm water never makes a skillful sailor. DARTS will undoubtedly face some rough waters, but *with you and for you*, we will skillfully continue our journey.

A Village is Born



Jessica Hagemann (left), River Bluffs Village Director, and Gerry Seldon, Founding Member

After a final year of planning by community residents and DARTS staff, River Bluffs Village (RBV) has become a reality. As a new program of DARTS, this membership-based offering is open to adults 55 and older in the communities of Mendota, Sunfish Lake, Lilydale, and northern Mendota Heights. RBV members can access screened providers for their household needs; can schedule a ride with the bus, private car, or personal driver service; and can access social activities, such as museum and theater outings, concerts, lectures, and fitness classes. Two membership options are available. During 2008:

- The Daniels Fund* provided three years of funding to DARTS to model this innovative independent-living program and enhance the quality of life of older adults aging in place in four suburban communities.
- Community resident volunteers, led by founding member Gerry Seldon, spearheaded RBV planning efforts with DARTS staff, including membership, services, and marketing. Sadly, Gerry passed away in late November, but her ideas and work continue to shape RBV.

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• Jessica Hagemann, RBV Director, and Cynthia Sattler, RBV Coordinator, were hired by DARTS to administer the program.

River Bluffs Village officially launched on January 15. Membership information is available by contacting Jessica at 651-234-2241 or www.riverbluffsvillage.org.

* The Daniels Fund operates the Daniels Fund Scholarship Program and the Daniels Fund Grants Program in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. The Fund was established in 1997 by Bill Daniels, a pioneer in cable television known for his kindness and generosity to those in need.

Put your Passion to Action...Volunteer!

• More than 60 community residents have put in 1,500 volunteer hours to help DARTS and Dakota County work toward a vision of aging-friendly vital and accessible communities throughout the County. Called *Living Longer and Stronger in Dakota County*, projects underway in 2009 will target transportation, services, housing, finances, health and wellness, and work and community. **We need residents, businesses, and community organizations to GET INVOLVED!**

Living Longer AND STRONGER in Dakota County

A partnership of *Dakota* and 

• Families, friends, and individuals help brighten the day of older residents by spending time visiting, doing shopping errands, and giving a break to family caregivers. **Make a difference in your community... connect with DARTS!**

• Individuals, companies, families, and community groups help older residents maintain their yards through DARTS' Outdoor Chore program. **We need volunteers year round!**



New buses and a new website are coming

Keep an eye out for new DARTS buses on the road soon. Through our Metropolitan Council contract, 21 of our well-traveled and well-worn diesel buses will be replaced with smaller, gas-powered vehicles under a fixed replacement schedule. DARTS is your ride connection and more!

By early spring, DARTS will have a new website with more ways to connect with needed information, services, and work/volunteer opportunities, as well as ways to support DARTS.

Call DARTS when you or someone you know:

- needs a little help at home with cleaning, shopping, and other tasks
- could use some resources and support to care for a loved one
- needs some options to driving a car
- is facing a new challenge and needs help navigating the system
- wants more connections to their neighborhood and community

651.455.1560 (Main)
651-455-1339 (Transportation)
www.darts1.org • www.caregivermn.org

Help support DARTS

Make online donations at www.darts1.org (it's safe and easy).

Support **special events** like the DARTS Golf Classic or create your own event.

Donate your vehicle and receive a tax deduction! DARTS partners with Courage Center and has vehicle drop-offs at DARTS and St. Paul Automotive.

Be a **business sponsor** and receive recognition at various venues.

Provide **in-kind products and services** that can benefit our work in the community.

Honor someone special with a **memorial gift** or a **tribute gift**.

Leave your **legacy** by naming DARTS as a beneficiary in your will, retirement account, or insurance policy.