



January 2002

## Volunteers

### Yes, Driving Can be Fulfilling!

Some 35 DARTS buses transport seniors all over Dakota County, but occasionally a senior isn't able to use the bus service. That's when volunteer drivers like Elmer Donnelly come to the rescue – they drive their own car and provide the same door-through-door service that DARTS buses provide.

Elmer has been taking seniors to various appointments for 4 years. Once he received DARTS' volunteer training and a handicap sticker, he was ready to roll. Typical trips are to medical appointments – Elmer has driven seniors to Fairview Southdale, Fairview University, and even a downtown St. Paul clinic. Usually these appointments don't take very long, so Elmer will just sit in the waiting room or go to the cafeteria for a cup of coffee.

Elmer says, "I enjoy it. Every one of the seniors is very happy to be picked up, which makes me happy too!" One regular rider even treats Elmer like family and makes sure he has the paper to read while he waits during an appointment.

At times, Elmer will have a small treat for his riders to brighten their day – something from his overflow of fresh garden vegetables. He says he'll always fit volunteering into his life because he enjoys being with people every day. When he can bring happiness into someone's life, it's a fulfillment in his life too.

If you too would like the fulfilling reward of providing service as a volunteer driver, contact Barb Koenig at DARTS, 651/234-2254.

### News from Jason: Looking back and looking forward

As we look back on another great year at DARTS, a few highlights come to mind:

- We have over 1,000 volunteers at DARTS. Thank you for all the time, talents, and energy you put into your volunteer job.
- DARTS' intergenerational Reading Buddies program is now up and running in 21 schools with 175 volunteer "buddies".
- We have 67 grocery shopping and 103 visitor volunteers.
- A record number of families volunteered at DARTS in 2001.
- In celebrating the opening of our new Transportation Center and renovated Administration building, we hosted some 400 people at a September open house – a big part of which was to recognize what you as volunteers do for DARTS and the community.

What are we looking forward to in 2002? First, DARTS will offer several training opportunities for DARTS volunteers throughout the year. *Topics will range from reminiscing tips to hearing loss accommodations to a safety tips camp.* Please keep checking this newsletter for training days and times.

Second, we will be expanding our means of communicating with you by gathering e-mail addresses of volunteers. Because we know many of you are already online, we will be surveying volunteers to get e-mail addresses. This will allow us to save some costs by sending you updates and newsletters via e-mail, and it will allow you, the volunteer, another option for submitting volunteer hours. We are always trying to make it as easy as possible for volunteers to submit their hours.

Just a reminder, please stop in and have a cup of coffee and enjoy a tour of our new DARTS campus. We have a wonderful gas fireplace you could sit by while enjoying a cup of hot coffee in the atrium. You could also view the beautiful quilt that the DARTS quilters are creating. A DARTS Visitor Volunteer and her client recently dropped by to say hi and tour our new and renovated buildings. I encourage you to do the same; we would love to see you.

Again, thank you for your hard work this past year, and we look forward to another year of serving seniors in Dakota County.

Jason Sanders  
Director of Volunteer Resources

# What's Happening?

## → January

- 29 Orientation for new DARTS volunteers serving seniors, 6:30 p.m., Galaxie Library, Apple Valley
- 30 Orientation for new DARTS volunteers serving seniors, 12 noon, DARTS, West St. Paul
- 30 DARTS-sponsored caregiver education program: Advice on Eldercare Legal and Financial Issues, 7:00 p.m., Farmington Community Senior Center

## → February

- 4 DARTS-sponsored caregiver education series: Caring for an Aging Loved One, Mondays, Feb. 4 to Mar 4, 2:00 p.m., Augustana Lutheran Church, West St. Paul
- 6 DARTS-sponsored caregiver education program: Caregiving as a Family: All for One and One for All, 7:00 p.m., Farmington Community Senior Center
- 26 Orientation for new DARTS volunteers serving seniors, 6:30 p.m., Galaxie Library, Apple Valley
- 27 Orientation for new DARTS volunteers serving seniors, 12 noon, DARTS, West St. Paul
- 28 In-service training on reminiscing – see notice in this newsletter

## → March

- 26 Orientation for new DARTS volunteers serving seniors, 6:30 p.m., Galaxie Library, Apple Valley
- 27 Orientation for new DARTS volunteers serving seniors, 12 noon, DARTS West St. Paul

# Volunteer Opportunities

## Visitor

Every senior enjoys a special friend – it could be you! Enjoy sharing coffee, lunch, a walk, or helping with errands. A couple hours weekly means so much to a senior who has little company.

## Volunteer Tips:

### Why turn in time sheets?

- Volunteer hours reported are used for funding reports to help DARTS continue providing quality services to seniors and their families.
- Time sheets are a great way to communicate information about how your volunteer experience is going and a way to share information about the senior client you are serving.
- Hours are recorded for future reference so they can be used for graduation standards and other work or service accomplishment needs (upon request).
- Hours are recorded to recognize your service commitment.
- Volunteers hours can be e-mailed, faxed, mailed, phoned in, or dropped off at the DARTS office.

Who reports hours? Volunteers who serve seniors by shopping, providing respite, visiting, escorting, and volunteer driving fill out monthly time sheets. Other DARTS volunteers either sign in at the Administration office or at their work site. Reading Buddies/Pen Pal program volunteers' hours are recorded for you. Use any of these means to submit hours:

Call Barb Koenig at 651/234-2254 • Fax to: 651/234-2280  
E-mail to: [barb.koenig@darts1.org](mailto:barb.koenig@darts1.org) or e-mail your senior client's Service Coordinator

## DARTS greeter

Join our new group of volunteer greeters! Greeters provide that warm welcome to DARTS visitors and direct them to the right person and meeting place. Currently we need greeters to fill in occasionally during a morning or afternoon or on a regular basis Wednesday mornings.

## Challenged by what to do or say during your senior client visits?

DARTS volunteers serving seniors are invited to attend an in-service training called "*Making your visits more meaningful by reminiscing.*" It will be held Thursday, February 28, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., at DARTS.

Visiting with your senior client can become more enjoyable and meaningful by reminiscing. The in-service training will help you:

- Learn how to help someone reminisce
- Learn hands-on skills you can use
- Gain needed information and learn the value of reminiscing

This session is highly recommended for all grocery shoppers, visitors, and respite volunteers. Please register by February 25 by calling Colleen, 651/234-2286. (An evening class will be offered upon request.)