



## VOLUNTEERS

January 2004

## volunteer tip:

**Reminiscing:****The key to sharing life experiences**

Reminiscing is a wonderful way to start a new relationship with a senior. Personal life experiences are like precious keepsakes that we store away in our memories and then bring to mind throughout our lives. Reminiscing is a way to recall these memories. Use these reminiscing tips:

- Think of some open-ended questions
- Listen actively
- Respond positively
- Ask follow-up questions
- Keep the conversation focused on the person reminiscing
- Allow silence and emotion

Reminiscing will encourage socialization and allow the reminiscer to reflect on his or her life history and accomplishments. Enjoy getting to know someone better!

## Volunteer Opportunities

Spread the word to friends and family about your volunteering experience and let them know about these current opportunities:

*Respite volunteers needed*

- In the **Apple Valley** area, a family member would like respite once a week for 4 hours. The senior being cared for enjoys visiting, looking at picture albums, and watching TV.
- In the **Hasting** area, a spouse caregiver would like respite once a week from 12 to 4 p.m. to run errands and visit friends.

*Volunteer driver needed*

Driver needed to help a senior living in **Hampton** get to doctor appointments and errands in **Hastings**.

**Director's notes:****What's the Difference?**

Congratulations to our three volunteers of the year for 2003: Dorrine Spatafore, Jim Nelson, and Marcia Peterson (see article on back). Their work epitomizes DARTS' mission in action.

As we start 2004, our database team is running reports, counting numbers, and compiling data about our accomplishments for 2003. We can tell you that last year DARTS used 1,003 volunteers who contributed over 31,450 hours to serve seniors and the Dakota County community at large. If asked, we could tell how many of those hours were contributed to help DARTS with administrative tasks, how many to help a second grader learn to read, and how many hours were spent helping a senior walk the road to recovery from chemical addiction.

In fact, the data seems almost endless, and you may be asking, "What's the Difference?" What does it matter if we have 1,003 or 983 volunteers? What's the difference if there are 86 or 93 volunteers helping seniors get their groceries? The difference is you, and it's me, and it's the community in which we live. DARTS' volunteers serve people, not statistics. Each DARTS volunteer serves a need in our community.

By looking at the work done by our volunteers of the year for 2003, we get an idea of the impact they have on the lives they touch. And through their work, we get

a glimpse of the magnitude of what all those statistics mean

about the work done by all of you. Thanks to your efforts, DARTS met the challenges of 2003 and stands ready to face the coming challenges of 2004.

On behalf of Barb, Megan, and myself, please accept our thanks for all you do and our best wishes for the New Year.

Colleen Fritsch  
Director of Volunteer Resources



*Barb, Megan, and Colleen  
Volunteer Resources staff*

## Our 2003 Volunteers of the Year



*Congratulations to Dorrine, Jim, and Marcia*

**Dorrine Spatafore**, Administrative volunteer, has volunteered for DARTS for over 9 years. Dorrine's specialty is supporting the administrative staff. She helps with bulk mailings, hand-addresses envelopes for special mailings, prepares informational packets, calls clients for surveys, and greets guests at DARTS every Tuesday. Dorrine appreciates the chance to meet interesting people who visit DARTS. She even belongs to the DARTS Staff Book Club – she's truly part of the team here.

When asking any DARTS staff about Dorrine's volunteer skills, the same theme emerges: consistent, quality work and always reliable. **Her cheerful and professional demeanor is such an asset to the DARTS' workplace, and her quiet generous spirit is admired and appreciated by anyone who meets her.** Dorrine is always willing to help, no matter what the task. We're grateful and fortunate that Dorrine is part of the DARTS volunteer team.

**Jim Nelson**, Direct Service volunteer, has been a senior companion volunteer with DARTS' chemical dependency program for 8 years. He spent 10 years before that helping with DARTS' bulk mailings. Jim cares deeply about the well-being of clients assigned him and doesn't hesitate to share his own recovery experience of 28 years. **He goes the extra mile – checking in on someone homebound, advocating for clients at hearings, visiting someone in the hospital, and always reminding clients that their lives have value.** On several occasions, Jim has been with a client and their family through the end-of-life process – his compassion and devotion are always present. Jim has donated his time, skills, and talents to DARTS in so many ways – like donating his paintings for DARTS' fundraisers and silent auctions. When Jim walks into DARTS, he almost always has the “joy of life” on his face and the energy to match. He has a wonderful sense of humor. If you ask, “how are you?” he may reply “as long as I'm on the right side of the turf, I'm great.”

The best part of knowing Jim is learning from him.

**Marcia Peterson**, Intergenerational volunteer, is in her fifth year of the DARTS Reading Buddies program – this year at Hilltop Elementary School. She volunteers once a week for two hours and rarely misses a day. The third-grade teacher Marcia works with says, **“Marcia has this special way of making the students feel like they are the only people in the world. Not only does she listen to them read and help develop their reading comprehension skills, she gives them one-on-one time they might not get from me or at home.** Her generosity seems never ending – she comes to our music programs, gives personalized Christmas cards to the kids, and has donated movies for my classroom.”

Marcia is more than a reading buddy; she invests in the children's lives. She has a genuine charm and quality that is conveyed through her words and actions. The teacher adds, “I let my kids know that she comes because she wants to spend time with them. What she's doing leaves a very deep and lasting impression on the kids.”

Thank you Marcia for bringing time and talent to the classroom and for bringing many smiles to the faces of children.

## What's Happening?

### January

- 26 Reading Buddies Gathering
- 27, 28 Volunteer orientation for new volunteers.  
Call Barb Koenig for more information and to register at [651-455-1560](tel:651-455-1560).

### February

- 24, 25 Volunteer orientation for new volunteers.  
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