



VOLUNTEERS

February 2003

Volunteer tip:**Visiting someone with dementia**

Visiting a person with dementia can be particularly challenging because of impaired communication skills, memory loss, or personality changes. To help relate to someone with dementia:

- Find a quiet place to visit so you can avoid distractions – over-stimulation can lead to agitation.
- Speak slowly and clearly; use familiar words and simple sentences; and avoid cliches.
- Avoid asking questions that challenge their memory, such as "What did you do today?"
- Shorten the visit if the person becomes irritable or fatigued.

Volunteer Opportunities

- If you have 1 hour a week to share, you could brighten a senior's day by chatting.
- If you have 1.5 hours a week, you could help an elementary student with their reading skills.
- If you have 2 hours a week (or every other week), you could help a senior with their shopping errands.
- If you have 4 hours a week, you could give a family caregiver a break from 24-hour caregiving.
- If you have 4 hours to give on a particular day, you and your family could do spring or fall cleanup at a senior's home.

To learn more about any of these opportunities, call Barb Koenig at 651-455-1560 or visit www.darts1.org.

**Volunteering Brings
“Special People”
Together***Emma*

Wouldn't you love to meet an 80+ woman who acts and feels like she's in her 30's? Then meet Emma Foss, a member of DARTS' volunteer family since the mid-1980's.

Emma grew up with parents who were involved in social services, and she herself is a retired social worker. So, being a volunteer visitor at DARTS is a natural fit. She says, "Volunteering fills my life and is a reason for being on this earth." Emma's late husband was also a DARTS volunteer – she treasures a letter she received describing his wonderful traits as a volunteer.

After these many years, Emma still gets many rewards from volunteering – especially the enjoyment of being with people. She touches the lives of her senior clients. In fact, some are her best friends. One client called DARTS to say [about Emma], "DARTS provided me with the most wonderful friendship in my life."

Emma calls her senior clients "special people." They might be dealing with depression, alcohol addiction, or loneliness. This is where Emma's skill as a "good listener and problem solver" plays an important role. She's always ready to lend an ear or share a story, and has even done so when stopping by DARTS to visit with staff. When recently asked, "How are you feeling?", Emma shared her story of sending out a holiday letter with a picture of her at age 30. Quite the role model for us all!

Burnsville CyberNeighborhood
DARTS ► Connecting Generations



Check out www.darts1.org/burnsville to see how some DARTS volunteers are helping seniors learn to use computers and be involved in their community.

Congrats to Our Volunteers of the Year

Three DARTS volunteers have been named “2002 Volunteer of the Year.” We’re pleased to honor these women for their commitment to helping others.

Nancy Gountanis has volunteered in Human Resources at DARTS since April 2002. As luck would have it, Nancy had spent 12 years working in HR at Unisys before retiring in 1999. In no time, she found her rhythm in DARTS’ HR office. Like a train chugging down the tracks, Nancy forged full steam ahead, tackling new projects and lots of paperwork with a fearless attitude. She’s also in her fourth year as a DARTS Reading Buddies volunteer. Caring, generous, dependable, intelligent, and dedicated – these are just a few of Nancy’s many wonderful qualities.

Millie Newbauer is a longtimer at DARTS – she has been volunteering in the DARTS Reading Buddies program since it began in 1997. Currently, Millie is a buddy to students at Garlough Elementary and Moreland Elementary schools in West St. Paul. But Millie wears many other volunteer hats for DARTS. Since 1994, she’s been visiting the same client and she grocery shops for three others. Millie’s also an on-call volunteer greeter at the DARTS office. Without Millie, DARTS would need at least four other volunteers to do what she does – she’s a one-woman volunteering queen!



Nancy, Millie, and Patti

Every week for the past 5 years, **Patti Nolan** has been shopping for, and spending time with, her senior client. The senior depends on Patti for her grocery needs, but more importantly, she knows Patti cares about her and her well being. They regularly stay in touch by phone and often share dinner after Patti has completed the shopping. Besides keeping her client’s pantry well stocked, Patti also brings along her dog to visit and brighten the day. Patti is respectful and compassionate toward her client – she is truly an “angel on her shoulder.”

What's Happening?

February

- 25, 26 Orientation for new DARTS volunteers serving seniors. Call Barb Koenig for more info, **651-455-1560**.
- 27 Understanding Memory Loss and Dementia, Hosanna Lutheran Church in Lakeville, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Cost is \$10. Register by calling Colleen at DARTS, **651-455-1560**.

March

- 25 Housing Options for Seniors: Where Should I Live?, Burnsville Senior Center, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Cost is \$10. Register by calling Colleen at DARTS, **651-455-1560**.
- 25, 26 Orientation for new DARTS volunteers serving seniors. Call Barb Koenig for more info, **651-455-1560**.



Looking for a fun way to get involved and support services that help seniors right in your neighborhood?

JOIN THE DARTS PHONE-A-THON TEAM!

Besides helping DARTS raise dollars, Phone-A-Thon volunteers learn more about DARTS’ services and how they can help them or someone they know. Volunteers also get the chance to talk directly with many of the thousands of clients and riders who depend on DARTS, as well as the supporters who help us meet our mission everyday. The Phone-a-Thon will take place at DARTS on May 5,6,7,8. Please call Jason Sanders, **651-234-2222**, if you can help as a volunteer at this event.