



VOLUNTEERS

February 2006

What's Happening?

DARTS Volunteer Ambassador Training

Volunteers are DARTS' best ambassadors. We'd like to help you learn more about DARTS, so you can:

- Get better acquainted with all of DARTS
- Learn key phrases for answering questions like, "What is DARTS?"
- Help the community get better acquainted with DARTS' services and volunteering
- Have fun mingling with other volunteers

We're holding a session at DARTS on Thursday, February 23, from 3:00 PM to 5:30 PM. Call Barb Koenig at 651-455-1560 for more details.

Matching Funds for Volunteering at DARTS

Throughout the Twin Cities, many groups provide matching funds to organizations where their members volunteer. For instance, if you volunteer at DARTS and you are a Thrivent member, let us know. We can receive matching funds for your volunteer activities. If you belong to other groups with matching fund programs, we'd love to hear from you. Call Colleen Fritsch at 651-455-1560.

Meet DARTS' 2005 Volunteers of the Year*Direct Service Volunteer of the Year: Elmer Donnelly*

As a volunteer driver for DARTS for nearly 7 years, Elmer Donnelly has bragging rights because he has missed so few ride appointments. Elmer's volunteer work is part of DARTS' Personal Ride Service. Volunteers use their own car to give a ride to seniors who, for some reason, can't easily use the DARTS bus to get to their medical appointment. **Elmer definitely shines in giving a personal touch to every ride he provides and each rider he assists.**

On average, Elmer transports four to five seniors each

Director's Notes

I asked our new President, Mark Hoisser, to share his thoughts with us.

-- Colleen Fritsch, Director of Volunteer Resources

Let's Welcome the New Year

Over the past few months, numerous writings on the myriad events from last year have appeared; many good, many so-so, and a number of tragedies we hope not to again encounter in 2006, let alone our lifetime. There have been countless suggestions of what you should be resolved to do or not do. And there has been endless prognosticating from insiders, outsiders, and anyone who cares to make a wager. Yet few, if any, will be able to say, "We are where we are," with the enthusiasm I have.

Together, we experienced a wonderful 2005, full of challenges and successes never before experienced at DARTS. We have a legacy of a founder second to none in the community. We have many new friends who experienced our quality services for the very first time. We have an invigorated Board providing leadership that is the envy of countless agencies. We have a new subsidiary (DARTS VMS) that is leading us to new horizons. And, we have great and committed volunteers and staff that no one could be more proud of than I.

So, as we enter 2006, it is with the utmost respect and trust that each and every staff member, Board member, volunteer, and donor will continue their desire to make a difference in the lives of so many. With your continued commitment, assistance, and support, I welcome all that awaits us. Together, we will do great things.

month to clinics and hospitals in Edina, Minneapolis, and Woodbury, logging some 350 miles in the process. **Often, Elmer is assigned to the same seniors, which helps them feel comfortable and safe and creates a trusting relationship.**

After all these years of dedicated volunteering, Elmer says his reward is just hearing "thank-you" and knowing he has been a real help to someone.

Thank you, Elmer, for many years of getting seniors where they need to be!

— continued on back —

Family Volunteers of the Year:

Kim, Emily, Molly, and Gunner Dancer

Kim Dancer and her three children, Emily, Molly, and Gunner, have been volunteering as a family for over 2 years by visiting and helping DARTS' seniors. After moving to a new community, the Dancer family decided that volunteering together would be one way to meet people and learn more about their new surroundings.

Kim visits regularly with one senior, and the whole family has become close to another senior who they help with grocery shopping, stop by to play cards, and even invite to their home for tea and various celebrations.

The Dancer family has gained a senior friend. More importantly, Kim has watched her children come to appreciate the value of volunteering because she's seen the impact the experience has on them.

Thank you, Kim, for helping your children learn the value of giving to others through volunteering.

Administrative Volunteer of the Year: Beverly Hines

"When I'm available, I can help out," is a sentiment DARTS can count on from administrative volunteer Beverly Hines. Fondly known to DARTS staff as Bev, she has volunteered at DARTS nearly 3 years by relieving DARTS' phone receptionist for lunches, breaks, and the like. *She brings a great skill set to DARTS from having worked in public relations at 3M.*

Once you get to know Bev, you quickly learn that she is very altruistic in nature and loves to give her support to a cause she believes in. We've all been exposed to the common expression, "attitude is everything." Despite personal challenges she might be experiencing, Bev's wonderful attitude comes through when she's volunteering. DARTS is so fortunate to have Bev as a member of our volunteer team!

Intergenerational Volunteers of the Year:

Vern and Rosemary Hildebrandt

When you profile a Learning Buddies volunteer, you list such things as being dependable, relating well to children, and encouraging them to improve. These qualities and more greet you when you meet the Hildebrandts, intergenerational volunteers at DARTS.

Vern Hildebrandt began volunteering at Somerset Heights Elementary in Mendota Heights in 1998. Teacher Kathy Cardinal says, "*Vern is one of the most reliable, wonderful volunteers I've ever had. He spends quality time with the kids, not only around reading skills, but on a personal level*



Congratulations to volunteers of the year (left to right) Bev Hines, Kim Dancer, and Elmer Donnelly. Not shown are Vern and Rosemary Hildebrandt.

too. His jovial personality makes him a popular visitor to our classroom. Vern works particularly well with challenging students and those needing a positive role model in their lives."

Rosemary Hildebrandt also volunteers at Somerset Heights – she's in her fourth year now. Rosemary works in a first grade classroom with students who are struggling with reading. "*She arrives every Monday with a smile on her face and ready to go! The students always want to be the first to work with her,*" says teacher Shari Niemczyk.

Volunteers like the Hildebrandts exemplify the meaning of giving freely of their time to make a difference in the lives of children. DARTS thanks you!

Volunteer Opportunities

Spread the word to friends and family about ways they can help with current volunteer needs:

Grocery Shopper/Errands Help. Help a senior maintain their life at home by shopping for groceries and running errands weekly or occasionally.

Volunteer Driver. Give a ride to a senior who needs transportation assistance to medical appointments and can't easily use the DARTS bus. Flexible schedule.

Many other volunteer opportunities are available! Check them out by visiting www.darts1.org. If you're interested in volunteering, contact Barb Koenig at 651-455-1560 or barb.koenig@darts1.org.