

# Connecting Volunteers

NEWSLETTER FOR DARTS VOLUNTEERS

## Volunteers Matter

Please join me in congratulating our 2008 volunteers of the year – Jackie Grinde, the Roubinek's, Grace Jacobs, Eileen Lick, and UPS – and learn more about them below. They were chosen because they so wonderfully represent the spirit, commitment, and service of all DARTS volunteers.

*Colleen Fritsch - Director of Volunteer Resources*



**Jackie Grinde** (2008 intergenerational volunteer) has been a Learning Buddies volunteer for just two years, but she has made a huge impact. Jackie travels weekly to Glacier Hills Elementary in Eagan to work on reading and math with 2nd graders. She meets with each of the 22 students in her assigned classroom, and the class teacher calls her "amazing!"

Jackie has a caring one-on-one relationship with each child. She shares experiences and expresses interest in their lives, besides working hard to improve their reading and math skills. Jackie finds teaching moments with each and every child and often relates the lesson to the child's personal experiences. She is truly a "buddy" to these children and a "learning" mentor!



**Amanda and Jacob Roubinek** (2008 family volunteers) were matched with Alice and Dennis, an older couple with several health challenges. Getting some help with buying and unpacking groceries has made a world of difference for them.

Alice and Dennis often wonder how they would manage this task without the help of the caring, young married couple.

Sentiments like "We are really glad they are in our lives" "wonderful, dependable, friendly...we just love them" flow easily from Alice and Dennis as they describe the Roubinek's. Strong family values and interest in community prompted Amanda and Jacob to volunteer, and the experience has been so much more than they expected. The tremendous appreciation they receive for such a simple task is very humbling. The Roubinek's are a great example of how family can share time together and make life a little easier for someone.



**Grace Jacobs** (2008 direct service volunteer) commits herself wholeheartedly to those she serves as a DARTS volunteer. Even before she meets someone, she is thinking about how to help the person and be a good listener.

Recently, Grace was matched with an older man who wanted a volunteer to spend time with him playing scrabble. When Grace was introduced to the gentleman, she gave him a scrabble dictionary.

The empathy and compassion Grace gives as a volunteer is fully evident in the way she talks about the elders she serves, the respect she shows in listening to their struggles, and the way she goes about bringing light to their darkness. She is a volunteer extraordinaire!



**Eileen Lick** (2008 administrative volunteer) is a visitor's first contact at the DARTS office, and she is a very welcoming presence. As a greeter, she directs guests to meeting rooms and to staff. Eileen helps with mailings and often

backs up the receptionist during the lunch hour.

Eileen thinks volunteering "makes you feel better inside." She exemplifies the values of DARTS by making visitors feel welcome and by showing her caring way when meeting the needs of visitors and staff. Eileen often goes the extra mile. She will come extra days to fill in for other greeters and to answer phones for several hours at a time.

Needless to say, Eileen is an administrative asset!



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**UPS** (2008 corporate volunteer) keeps stepping up to participate in DARTS' Outdoor Chore program. David Braun, Supply Chain Solutions Division, has recruited many co-workers to volunteer for yard clean-up stints. Older homeowners get help with their raking and other yard chores in no time! And the UPS employees share time outside the office while making a difference in someone's life. Donny Robinette, St. Paul Package Division of UPS, also organized two large groups of co-workers to rake leaves for older homeowners on two separate dates.

One homeowner helped by UPS volunteers summed it up well. He said, "Every time I have dealings with UPS employees, I am always impressed. There's something about those UPS people—they're a cut above the rest." When it comes to corporate volunteer groups, DARTS couldn't agree more!

## What's Happening?

In concert with our **Living Longer and Stronger in Dakota County** initiative, DARTS is excited to be working with Dakota County Public Health to promote their Simple Steps walking program. We're especially encouraging staff, volunteers, and anyone over 55 to get involved. Consider joining in, no matter what your age.

In 2008, nearly 1,400 people participated in this popular walking program, with most reporting more energy, less stress, and improved fitness. Participating is very easy – find a friend, relative, neighbor, or co-worker to walk with – and the program is free. Register online anytime between March 15 and June 15 at [www.dakotacounty.us](http://www.dakotacounty.us) (search for "Simple Steps") or call 651-554-6100. Start walking and logging your time as of April 1 to be eligible to win some great prizes! You'll receive regular motivational e-mails with walking tips, maps of interesting places to walk in the county, and notices of special events.



## Volunteer Opportunities

### Help with spring yard clean-up.

Volunteer as a family, gather some friends, or get your co-workers involved. Have fun and get some exercise while helping an older homeowner with spring chores such as raking leaves, cleaning out a garden, trimming shrubbery, tidying up a garage, and washing windows. Days and times are flexible.



### Be a lawn mower volunteer.

Looking for an outside volunteer activity and some exercise? Volunteer to mow the lawn for an older neighbor. Time commitment is once a week or every other week throughout the summer.

To find out more about yard clean-up or lawn mowing opportunities, contact Mary Richardson at (651) 455-1560 or [mary.richardson@darts1.org](mailto:mary.richardson@darts1.org)



### Help out at DARTS Golf Classic, June 1st.

Enjoy a day on a beautiful golf course and help make this annual fundraiser a success! Volunteer to assist with registration, setup and takedown, contests, banquet, or silent auction. For more information, contact Colleen Fritsch at (651) 234-2222 or [colleen.fritsch@darts1.org](mailto:colleen.fritsch@darts1.org)