



VOLUNTEERS

APRIL 2002

News from Jason:**Working together to better our community**

At DARTS, we are always exploring new ways for our services to better the community and involve all generations. Our volunteer resources department works hard to serve Dakota County seniors and, because of you, we help many by providing grocery shopping, respite, visiting, and so on. DARTS also works with other agencies to involve volunteers in meeting their missions. One obvious collaboration is that of area schools and the DARTS Reading Buddies program. We work together to recruit, train, and supervise volunteers who come to the schools to help children with their reading.

A new collaboration under way is with another local nonprofit, Dodge Nature Center. We want to give our volunteers more recognition and involve more community members in local needs. DARTS' mailing volunteers have already helped Dodge with some bulk mail needs. In February, Lynn Cibuzar, a DARTS Service Coordinator, talked to Dodge staff and volunteers about caregiving challenges and rewards.

Dodge Nature Center will do a **Container Gardening Workshop** for DARTS volunteers on April 24, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., at Dodge Nature Center. This workshop will teach you how to grow your own herbs and vegetables, even without a yard! We will discuss the best containers and soil to get you started and which plants will give you the most success. Bring your creativity, because we'll finish by creating our own container gardens to take home. Materials will be provided. After the workshop, we'll take a tour of the Nature Center's farmstead. If you want to go to this fun workshop, please RSVP to me at 651-455-1560. DARTS will provide transportation if you need it, so let me know when you call.

Jason Sanders
Director of Volunteer Resources

P.S. Don't forget to stop by DARTS on April 22 or 23. We'd like to honor you as we celebrate National Volunteer Week.

From volunteering, you too can "learn the value of every life"

It's easy to visit and spend time with people you know. Imagine the special rewards of spending time with someone you're getting to know. One person who knows it firsthand is Mary Norenberg, a DARTS volunteer visitor. She visits Otto weekly and has many wisdoms to share about the experience.

Visiting with elderly people is something Mary remembers fondly about her mother, who volunteered at the local nursing home when Mary was a child. So, once her own two daughters reached school age, Mary decided she wanted to "give back to my community by volunteering." She had a special desire to develop a relationship with a senior because her own grandparents had died at a young age.

That's where Otto comes into the picture. As Mary says, "Visiting Otto is my positive addiction! I've learned that as we age, the true essence of our soul comes through – Otto's is a very kind and loving one." To Mary, the rewards of spending time with seniors are many: "getting to know a person's life history," "listening to their stories and the richness of their lives," and "hearing about the experiences that have inspired them to be the person they are today."

Just as important is what Mary has learned about herself from volunteering. Besides understanding that you need to slow down and enjoy simple moments, she has "learned the value of every life" and that "I want to be a good, kind, loving senior myself."

Fitting volunteering into a daily routine is no obstacle to Mary because the experience "changes your perspective on life in ways you'd never imagine." She says, "find the time – it's worth it. To befriend someone special during the final chapter of life is truly a blessing and a privilege."

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

April 21-27, 2002

DARTS Volunteers are A Gift to the Community
You're invited to stop by DARTS for coffee and treats
Monday, April 22 and Tuesday, April 23
8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

What's Happening?

April

- 4 DARTS-sponsored caregiver education series, "Caring for an Aging Loved One, Thursdays, April 4 to May 2, 7:00 p.m. Shepherd of the Valley Church, Apple Valley
- 8 Information session at DARTS, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., to learn more about the enclosed flyer on stroke screening. RSVP to Jason at 651/234-2222
- 22 DARTS volunteers invited for refreshments, 8:30 to 4:00 p.m. at DARTS, in celebration of Volunteer Appreciation Week
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- 23 Orientation for new DARTS volunteers serving seniors, 6:30 p.m., Galaxie Library, Apple Valley; RSVP Barb at 651/234-2254
- 24 Orientation for new DARTS volunteers serving seniors, 12 noon at DARTS; RSVP Barb at 651/234-2254
- 24 Dodge Nature Center's workshop for DARTS volunteers on Container Gardening, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., Dodge Nature Center
- 30 Senior Safety Day at DARTS, 8:15 to 3:00 p.m. Registration forms were mailed to DARTS' senior volunteers. If you didn't receive one and want to attend, call Barb at 651/234-2254.

May

- 6 DARTS-sponsored "Dealing with Depression" caregiver education program at Shepherd of the Valley Church, Apple Valley, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
- 22 Volunteer gathering at DARTS, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. Gather to meet other volunteers and to connect with DARTS staff. Share stories on your volunteer experience. RSVP to Barb at 651/234-2254.

Volunteer Opportunities

Visitor

Every senior enjoys a special friend - it could be you! A Mendota Heights area senior in her early 70's would enjoy the company of a visitor on Saturday or Sunday. She would enjoy an outing for shopping or lunch.

Visit/Bag Lunch

Bring a bag lunch and share some time visiting a senior in the South St. Paul area. If you live or work in the area, what better way to spend time over your lunch hour and provide some company to a senior who often eats alone.

Need Help with Spring Clean up Chores?

DARTS can provide limited help to homeowners who need assistance with small projects like yard waste cleanup and bagging. We typically use two to four teenagers who are supervised by a DARTS staff person. The youth are fulfilling a community service commitment through Dakota County Corrections and are screened by the county and DARTS staff before accepted for chore work.

If you would like some help with your cleanup project, call 651/455-1560 and explain that you're calling about our Community Youth Services chore program. Our coordinator will review your request to ensure it's one our youth can complete and will get back to you in a week to 10 days to let you know if your job can be scheduled.

For scheduled jobs, we'll ask that you provide needed supplies (other than rakes), and that you spend a minute with the young people on your crew when they finish your job.

Volunteer Tip:

Have you considered "Family Volunteering"?

When family members volunteer together, the benefits are wonderful for families and the community alike.

- Family members can capture that elusive but desired goal of spending "quality time" together.
- Children are taught the lifelong lesson that by giving to others, one's own problems take on a different perspective.
- Communication between family members takes on new meaning as they share a common goal and see one another in a new light.

Some family volunteer opportunities at DARTS include:

- Visit a senior weekly and become that "special family."
- Help a senior with weekly shopping errands.
- Help keep a senior in their home by assisting with yard work.
- Spend some weekend time serving noon meals at South St. Paul high-rises.
- Help out at a DARTS special event