



## VOLUNTEERS

June 2006

**volunteer tip:****Guidelines for working with senior clients**

If you're a direct service volunteer, it's good to get a refresher from time to time on guidelines for working with your senior client. Some tips to remember:

- Changes in your schedule are bound to happen now and then. Notify the senior you volunteer with whenever you can't keep an appointment. Let them know when you can reschedule. If you can no longer volunteer, let the senior know and notify Volunteer Resources at DARTS.
- Please keep your assigned DARTS Service Coordinator or Volunteer Resources up to date by reporting any concerns you have about the senior's well being (such as illness or hospitalization) or changes in their environment, such as moving.
- Remember not to do "hands-on care," such as lifting and transferring a person, loading wheelchairs into cars, or assisting someone in the bathroom. If a senior needs assistance, please notify the Service Coordinator.
- Always refrain from making suggestions to the senior that could be interpreted as medical, financial, or legal advice.

**Learning Buddies Volunteers Needed!**

Volunteer in a Dakota County elementary school once a week throughout the school year and work with children on reading, math, or science skills. If this sounds like the right volunteer opportunity for you, contact Sherry Patterson at 651-455-1560 or [sherry.patterson@darts1.org](mailto:sherry.patterson@darts1.org).

**Volunteer Profile: Can you match a love of numbers with a love of children?**

Georga Field remembers sitting with her father on Saturday afternoons listening to baseball games on the radio. They would talk about the game and, more importantly, the stats. Perhaps this is where Georga began her love of numbers, and ultimately, brought her to the DARTS Learning Buddies program.

Georga, originally from Memphis, TN, moved to Minnesota in 1998 after a short detour in Colorado Springs, where she learned to sky dive! She raised two sons and coached them in Little League baseball. Her love of working with children took root.



After health problems forced an early retirement, Georga suddenly found herself with a lot of free time on her hands, and she didn't know which direction to turn. Her son and daughter-in-law passed along anything that had "volunteer" written on it. She made phone calls and visits to many places and had a "whole notebook on DARTS." But it wasn't until she saw the words "children and schools" on the DARTS website that everything clicked into place. "I couldn't sign up quickly enough!"

She now volunteers in an elementary school in Burnsville, 4 hours a week. She is working with first and third graders on math skills. When working with the children, Georga praises "Wonderful!" "Trust yourself!" and "Give me a high five!" Her biggest reward as a Learning Buddy is working with kids struggling with math skills and "helping them have the confidence to give an answer – right or wrong."

Georga has found her niche and hopes to continue with the program for years to come. "When God made me, He made me with lots of empty spaces to be filled with people I meet. The kids I work with fill up those spaces!"

Recently, Georga was nominated for the John Coskran Community Service Award from the Burnsville-Eagan-Savage school district for her volunteer work at Gideon Pond Elementary. Thank you for your dedication, Georga!

## Director's Notes:

### Let me introduce Barb, Sherry, and Chris:

Many of you know **Barb Koenig**, our Manager of Volunteer Development, but many don't. For 8 years, she has been the person matching volunteers with seniors who need a grocery shopper, a visitor, or some respite from caregiving. Her special talent is not just in matching a volunteer's skill with a senior's need, but rather in matching people – a relationship develops that enhances the life of the client and the volunteer. It's Barb who has spearheaded our new volunteer ambassador program, and she also coordinates and oversees the work of administrative volunteers who help keep things flowing smoothly here at DARTS. Her passion and her expertise are recognized and respected by volunteer coordinators throughout the Minnesota Association of Volunteer Administrators, and by DARTS too.

**Sherry Patterson** is our Learning Buddies Coordinator. Since the beginning of this school year, Sherry has used her love of children and seniors to help broaden the reading program to include math and science. She has deepened DARTS' connection with 24 schools, visited each volunteer in their



*Chris Brennan (top left), Sherry Patterson (top right), Colleen Fritsch (bottom left) and Barb Koenig (bottom right)*

school, and seen firsthand the magic that happens when children receive one-on-one encouragement from a caring adult. Program evaluations are coming in from the schools, and we are beginning to see statistical confirmation of this program's impact on children.

**Chris Brennan** is our newest team member. He is our Outdoor Chore Coordinator and has been at DARTS only a month. But with spring clean-up and summer lawn mowing happening at the same time this year, he is getting his feet wet in a hurry. Originally from Yakima, Washington, Chris worked as the project coordinator for the Youth Farm and Market Program in Hennepin County the past 4 years, so he has plenty of experience working outdoors with youth and volunteer groups. As DARTS Outdoor Chore Coordinator, he gets to use that knowledge to help meet the needs of seniors wanting assistance with yard work or other projects.

So that's our team; you and me and Barb and Sherry and Chris. Together, we are doing some great things, and I can't wait to see what we do next! I'll keep you posted.

*Colleen Fritsch*

Director of Volunteer Resources

## What's Happening?

### Volunteer Orientation

Orientation for new direct service volunteers will be held June 27, June 28, July 25, and July 26. For more information, contact Barb Koenig at 651-455-1560 or [barb.koenig@darts1.org](mailto:barb.koenig@darts1.org). Postcard reminders will be sent out.

### 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?"
- Have fun mingling with other volunteers

We're holding a session at DARTS on **Tuesday, July 18**, from **1:00 PM to 3:30 PM**. Call Barb Koenig at 651-455-1560 for more details.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Let a friend, family member, or co-worker know about the following volunteer opportunities available:

### Administrative Support

Be an official "greeter" at DARTS by providing a warm welcome to visitors. Wednesday morning or afternoon is available.

### Caregiver Respite Support

Get instant rewards helping a caregiver once a week by giving them a 4-hour break from caring for their loved one. You'll supervise and socialize with the senior needing care.

If you or someone you know is interested in any of these volunteer opportunities, contact Barb Koenig at 651-455-1560 or [barb.koenig@darts1.org](mailto:barb.koenig@darts1.org) or fill out a volunteer application online at [www.darts1.org](http://www.darts1.org).