



## VOLUNTEERS

November 2002

DARTS is providing a new service for caregivers of older adults through Eldercare Partners, a collaboration of six Twin Cities nonprofit organizations (including DARTS). The service is free of charge and focuses directly on the needs of family caregivers, so they have the skills, training, and emotional support to stay balanced and confident throughout their caregiving journey. If you or someone you know could benefit from having information, counseling, coaching, and support during the caregiving journey, please call 651-234-2262 and talk to Colleen. Ask about the free Caregiver Kit too!

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

## Family Volunteering

Take advantage of this great chance to spend time together as a family and teach youngsters to get involved in their community at an early age. Some things your family can do to help a senior are:

- Shovel snow from the driveway and sidewalks
- Share a holiday activity with a senior
- Become a visitor or grocery shopper for a senior
- Help with lawn care or raking leaves

## Volunteer Tip:

## Holiday stress relievers

- Take a walk
- Take a few slow, deep breaths
- Hum, whistle, or sing
- Ask for help
- Close your eyes and relax a few minutes
- Find something fun in everything you do
- Relax – enjoy life – be happy!



## Volunteering Can Bring a Special Friendship Bond

Making a new friend is one of the many rewards of volunteering. Mary Quinn, a DARTS volunteer visitor, found that special connection with Imogene. The two women have developed a friendship filled with hours of “talking, pouring over magazines, sharing books, laughing, and eating our favorite soup, French Onion.”



Mary and Imogene

Mary Quinn began volunteering when she was 41 and the mother of two daughters, ages 18 and 14. In looking at volunteer opportunities, she decided that there was “probably a big need for the elderly.” Mary was referred to DARTS and then paired as a visitor for Imogene. It’s now seven years later. Mary says she often forgets to fill out her volunteer time record because her visits with Imogene don’t seem like work – “she is such a good friend.” Mary says that Imogene at 97 “is as open minded as a 20 year [old]. She is such a good listener.”

“What I love most about Imogene is her passion for living,” says Mary. That includes shopping! Mary helped Imogene shop for a new black coat because she always likes to look her best when they go out. Imogene has been known to treat herself to a silky new bathrobe or some fancy coffee cups because it “makes her feel elegant to drink out of them.” Mary says, “she really has taught me how to live.”

Three years ago, Mary was diagnosed with breast cancer. “The person I was most worried about telling was Imogene. She had experienced so many losses over the years and now there was a chance that she could lose her visitor. [When I told her] she was such a trooper – she immediately went to her bedroom and got me two large scarves to wear over my head when I lost all my hair. I wore those scarves over and over again.” Mary survived breast cancer due to “a lot of support from my family and Imogene.”

Imogene has a wonderful sense of humor and “loves to hear funny stories.” The two have laughed a lot over the years. Whether chatting about their families or rearranging living room furniture “just for something different,” the bond between these two is unmistakable.

For Mary, “I have gotten so much out of my visits to Imogene. She has become such an important part of my life.” And to think it all started with the simple decision to do some volunteer work!

Remember to visit [www.darts1.org](http://www.darts1.org) for current volunteer news and opportunities.

## Our Hats Are Off To You!

All of DARTS staff truly appreciate our volunteers. A heartfelt thank-you for the important role you play in completing DARTS' mission of serving seniors, families, and community. We would not be Dakota County's outstanding nonprofit agency without you!

Because of you this year:

- Over 90 seniors had days brightened and gained new friends because of your weekly visits. The few hours you give mean so much – you may be the only person they talk to that week.
- Over 75 seniors remained independent in their home because you helped with shopping and errands.
- Over 35 family caregivers were relieved for a few hours to run errands or visit with friends.
- Hundreds of elementary students were touched by Reading Buddies who shared their love of reading. Soon, volunteers and students will connect through the Internet as Cyber Buddies.
- Over 100 seniors received help and support during their recovery process through DARTS' Chemical Dependency program.
- Over 30 residents in our Independent Living Program got the extra services they need to live in their own apartments – and it happened with your smiles, hugs, and visits.
- Business groups, families, service clubs, and court-referred youth provided lawn care, snow removal, and other services to 72 clients.



*DARTS staff say "Thank You!"*

DARTS is also grateful for the many hours of work given by dedicated volunteers on the DARTS campus. Whether providing clerical support, mailing thank-you notes to donors, greeting visitors, being a bus escort or driver, or helping with fundraising to support our programs, our volunteers matter!

## We Need Coin Box Monitors!

Can you volunteer once a month to monitor DARTS donation coin boxes at area businesses?

Call Jason if interested • 651-234-2222

## What's Happening?

### November

- 11 Community Resources for Caregivers, at DARTS, 7:00 -9:00 p.m. Cost is \$10.00. Register by calling 651-455-1560.
- 14 Recognition for Direct Service Volunteers, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m., at DARTS.
- 26, 27 Orientation for new DARTS volunteers serving seniors. Call Barb Koenig for more info, 651-234-2254.

### December

- 4 Respite Senior Companion meeting, 10:30 a.m., at DARTS.

### January

- 8 Respite Senior Companion meeting, 10:30 a.m., at DARTS
- 28, 29 Orientation for new DARTS volunteers serving seniors. Call Barb Koenig for more info, 651-234-2254.

Senior clients often tell us why volunteers are so valuable:

*"I feel free to leave the house and [feel safe] that nothing will happen."*

*"If I didn't have a volunteer, I would feel lonely and sad."*

*"The day the volunteer is coming, I have something to look forward to."*

*"If I didn't have a grocery shopper, I would have to depend more on family, which I don't like to do."*

*"I have an angel in my life."*