



Grocery Shoppers Can Help Boost Seniors' Nutrition

DARTS recently received a grant from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation to help seniors get the good nutrition they need. DARTS' grocery shoppers, homemakers, and service coordinators will be key players in this opportunity.

Grocery shopper volunteers can receive training on good nutrition for seniors and food choices that can help them stay healthy. This effort combined with some meal preparation by homemaking staff and nutritional assessments by service coordinators is a team approach to addressing good nutrition for the seniors DARTS serves.

Look for information on upcoming training sessions at DARTS. You'll be able to further help the seniors you shop for and add to your own knowledge of good nutrition too!



Can Volunteering Bring Relaxation?

In today's hectic pace, taking time to relax can be a challenge. Yvonne "Sis" VanPutten, a DARTS homemaker, learned a lesson about relaxing when she combined her homemaking work with volunteering. As a homemaker and friendly visitor to Elizabeth, a senior, for over 2 years, Sis says she has "learned to relax more in my life. I take time for myself and have a relaxing time visiting the new friend I've made." Besides being a DARTS volunteer, Sis also volunteers with the Girl Scouts and her church.

With children in school during the day, Sis decided to use some spare time to volunteer. She says, "I feel I am called to volunteer, and I enjoy visiting. Elizabeth and I have become friends. Sometimes I go visit her just to have a change from my family routine." Often the visiting happens as they eat out at favorite restaurants. But the help from Sis has gone much further. She has taken Elizabeth to doctor appointments, visited her during a hospital stay, and brought her back home upon being discharged. To Elizabeth, "it would be a long, lonesome time without Sis visiting me because most of my friends are homebound and can't get around to visit. Sis has been a bright spot in my life. I don't know what I'd do without her."

For Sis, volunteering brings the reward that comes from making someone happy. And, of course, the chance to slow life down and relax with a friend.

ILP Aides Needed

DARTS' Independent Living Program (ILP) serves a hot noontime meal and a cold or reheatable supper meal for up to 30 residents and assists them with daily tasks such as homemaking, laundry, and occasional escort to medical appointments. DARTS currently needs aides to work 20 hours a week in the ILP program. You may be eligible for stipend earnings as a volunteer through DARTS collaboration with the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Program. Any stipend earnings won't adversely affect your rent if you have subsidized housing. Or, you can receive an hourly wage rather than a stipend as a DARTS employee. If interested, contact Judy Fairbrother, Director of Community Resources, or Barb Koenig, Manager of Volunteers, at 651-455-1560.

2001 is the International Year of the Volunteer. We will be honoring DARTS volunteers in various ways throughout the year. Each *Connecting Volunteers* newsletter this year will profile a DARTS volunteer. Other volunteers will be profiled on the DARTS web site at www.darts1.org. Thanks for all that you do for DARTS!

What's Happening?

January

- 30 New Volunteers Orientation, 6:30 p.m., Galaxie Library, Apple Valley
- 31 New Volunteers Orientation, Noon, DARTS, West St. Paul

February

- 4 Benefit concert for DARTS Intergenerational programs, 2:00 p.m., St. Anne's Episcopal Church, Sunfish Lake
- 8 Volunteer Gathering, 10:30-11:30 a.m., DARTS, West St. Paul
Come join us to share volunteer experiences, meet other volunteers, and connect with DARTS staff. Enjoy refreshments and great stories!
- 27 New Volunteers Orientation, 6:30 p.m., Galaxie Library, Apple Valley
- 28 New Volunteers Orientation, Noon, DARTS, West St. Paul

Volunteer Orientations and Gatherings

All volunteers are invited! It's a chance to share volunteer experiences, support each other, meet other volunteers, and connect with DARTS staff. Please call DARTS (651-455-1560) to register for Orientation or for additional information.

Volunteer Opportunities

Reading Buddies

Independent School District 191 wants the DARTS Reading Buddies Program in Gideon Pond Elementary School, Burnsville. So, we're looking for volunteers who could spend 1.5 hours a week (during school hours) working one on one with 1st - 3rd grade students.

If you're interested please contact Jason Sanders at 651-455-1560 for more details.



Respite Volunteer

An Eagan-area caregiver spouse would like a respite volunteer for 3-4 hours weekly or every other week to give her a break from 24-hour-a-day caregiving. Spouse would like a male volunteer to spend time with her husband, who has Parkinson's disease. He enjoys talking about trains, has an interest in old airplanes, and especially likes to go on outings. If interested in this volunteer opportunity or to learn about others, contact Barb Koenig, 651/455-1560.



Be a DARTS Senior Companion

What do senior companion volunteers do?

Provide family caregivers a break by being a respite senior companion

Or

Provide support to clients in the chemical dependency program by being a chemical dependency senior companion

How do you become a senior companion?

Be 60 years or older

Be willing to volunteer 12 hours a week

As a chemical dependency senior companion, you must be a successfully recovering senior

Senior companion volunteers receive a small tax-free stipend, reimbursement for transportation, and other benefits.

For more information call Barb Koenig at DARTS, 651/455-1560, or Program Supervisor John Bringewatt, Lutheran Social Service, at 612/879-5213.

Mileage Checks in 2001 — As of January 1, volunteers who request mileage reimbursement on their time sheets will receive a check only when total mileage is 75 miles or more. If the total is less than 75 miles, the sheet will be kept until we receive your next time sheet and add the miles together. Once the total is over 75 miles, we will process and send your check. If you have any questions please call Jason at 651-455-1560.