



Idella Bender, activities director at the Goodwill Mennonite Home, Grantsville, Maryland, knows the value of a volunteer. With their help, the Goodwill activities department has a very successful crafts program which generates revenues for residents to do and have fun things.

Salute To Volunteers

GRANTSVILLE (Md.) - As far as Idella Bender is concerned, you need look only for the nearest volunteer to see beauty being magnified.

In the activities department at the Goodwill Mennonite Home where she holds the position of director, Bender cites a long list of good things done for residents by volunteers.

"The biggest thing for volunteers is the social interaction," she says.

Elsie Schrock lives near enough to the facility that on the days she goes there to volunteer, Schrock can walk from her home.

"I've been volunteering for 10 years," she said, smiling broadly. I enjoy visiting with older people. It's a real blessing."

Mary Alice Skidmore who spruces up and makes a charming picture behind a small hill of foam rubber she has snipped for animal and doll stuffings, seems to be likeminded.

Four years ago, when Skidmore moved into the Goodwill Retirement Village, she too, joined the volunteer ranks at the nursing facility.

"I'm a walker," she reports. "I enjoy it (volunteering) and feel it is useful. I enjoy being with patients and working with them."

Selfless individuals like Schrock, Skidmore and numerous others are people who instill value to the word "Volunteer." During April 9-15 - National Volunteer Week - the Points of Light Foundation puts volunteers across the country in the spotlight.

Recently, Bender's poem entitled "Volunteers Magnify Beauty" was published in "Creative Forecasting," a national magazine for volunteers. Shirley Teets, Bender's assistant director, submitted the piece which rhythmically recounts by name, the volunteers and what they do at Goodwill Home.

What makes the volunteer so special is the choice to serve. The high schoolers coming to fulfill community service requirements may be an exception, however, they deserve credit for the significant contributions to boost the residents' morale.

Their natural vitality is stimulating to the residents when young people and babies are around them. So once a year

there is Baby Day. Mothers bring their preschool children to play at the home and the residents lap it up.

"Sometimes," Bender says, "We get 'grumped' at because there weren't enough babies to go around."

The craft activities at Goodwill are tremendously successful, thanks to volunteer helpers and home sewers.

When finished, the sale outlets for Goodwill Home crafts are area festivals, local craft shops and shopping malls. Two outlets, however are in Pennsylvania at East Earl and Smicksburg.

The crafts include ceramics, stuffed geese, chicken and cat doorstops; yo-yo clowns that attract college kids; teddy bears and dolls, sock monkeys, and Amish dolls.

"The Amish dolls we cannot make fast enough," Bender said.

The sales generate revenues invested for extracurricular activities for the residents. Trips to the mall, for instance, parties, and other surprises. They do, however, remember to give something back.

"At Christmas we buy gifts and wrap them for the Union Rescue Mission in Cumberland (Md.)," Bender reported.

To an observer on a Friday afternoon, Elsie Schrock might be holding court at an oblong table where she leads the ladies in her charge to make the individual yo-yos.

The residents, chattering happily, are eager to sew. First, however, Schrock takes one from a stack of precut 6-inch rounds of fabric, joins it and a smaller liner, makes a few stitches with the threaded needle and turns under the edge as she goes.

It is ready for the resident to continue the process. When finished Schrock securely knots the thread.

Some 70 yo-yos are needed for a clown. Fourteen for each arm, leg, and body.

Surrounded by chunks of foam rubber, Skidmore works at another table. On the floor a large cardboard box is overflowing with plastic bags holding the cut up foam bits

Hers is tedious work and the snipped pieces not easily controlled. They are the stuffings for the sassy goose, the chubby chicken, the cat and cuddly animals.

"We don't go anywhere that we don't look for a pattern," Bender said, amused. "The goose we found in North Carolina."

It was a volunteer who inaugurated Current Event Day by resourcing the local newspapers. His foresight found the more alert residents paying closer attention to televised newcasts.

They, moreover, brought what they remembered to the next discussion about the happenings of the day. The rising gasoline, in fact, was a topic they understood.

Another volunteer negotiated the bird watching project that collects data for studies at Cornell University, according to Elaine Yoder, another staff member.

Volunteers help residents accomplish the seed growing project in spring.

Add balloon tennis, bingo, physical exercises, evening programs, and entertainment. Most importantly, there is Chapel for the residents' spiritual food and edification.

We can't forget those who, once a year, make homemade ice cream for the home and those in summer who tackle the outer premises. These are skilled in maintenance, gardening, and landscaping. They prefer the fresh air and sunshine.

So it seems when it comes to the volunteer's contribution to society, only his or her imagination and the sky itself, are the limits of what they might do for others.

Following is Bender's poem:



Mary Alice Skidmore



Here volunteer Elsie Schrock joyfully tackles the making of yo-yos for the popular yo-yo clowns. Around Schrock are residents waiting for her to give them a threaded needle so they, too, can begin sewing.

VOLUNTEERS MAGNIFY BEAUTY

There is beauty in reflection
Much beauty does abound
The volunteers among us
Do magnify it all around.

The sewers work behind the scenes
Cats, teddy bears and geese they do produce
It's Elsie Green, Mary Alice and Barbara
That put the machines to use.

Stitch by stitch, machine a buzz
The dolls, dresses, cushions and hats to make
Are Vera, Freda, Mary and Thelma
They trust the stitch won't break.

From slip to bisque the project forms
And Dimples brings ceramics
Mary Alice Helps with caring hand
We learn of its dynamics.

Monday afternoon there is Bingo
A game that's played for fun
Charles, Maxine, Ruth, Goldie,
Edna, Merrill and Anna
Keep it going on the run.

Miriam Loos' fine tuning leads
That's exercise you see
With moving arms, legs and all
They are busy as bees.

What happens in the world about us
May be lost and miss our ears
But here come Frank and Waynard
With current events to calm those fears.

You want to know what's happening
Within the Goodwill door
As Clara and Miriam print it
The world knows more and more

Catherine does the final touch
Her dedication is a delight
She finishes cushions and dolls
Keeping our world all right.

Balloon tennis brings so much fun.
There's just no time to spare
As Frank, Miriam, Waynard,
Kristine and Ray
Keep balloons flying in the air.

Be it music or a puzzle
Things so numerous he will do
Just tell Jack what is needed
Our projects he will pursue.

Cliff says he's the drafted one
But much to our great pleasure
He arrives with loads of foam
Which we just can't measure.

With foam-snipping for cushions
And yo-yos on a pile
Kathy, Darla, Lena, Elsie, Ella
and Mary Alice
Encourage with many smiles.

To market go our numerous items
We go to malls and shows
There is Esther selling with vigor
Trusting the sales to grow.

Homemade ice cream from a freezer
Oh, what a delight to eat
To the mall or Summerfest
Elvin and vera making life sweet

In rooms they go for visits
And residents they do bring
It's Christy and Theresa
That cause our hearts to sing.

All wrapped in finest blessings
In activities we do know
That our volunteers magnify beauty
And loads of love they show.