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CHEERS!
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VOLUNTEERS

Three Cheers for Volunteers!

2009
VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR
AWARDS

Presented by
California Association of Health Facilities

In an era when time passes so rapidly, we often lose sight of the unseen individual who quietly makes this country the envy of the globe. These individuals are the volunteers of America, and their dedication to those around them should not go unheralded.

ADULT VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR
Anna Davis, aka 'Grandma Anna'
Subacute Saratoga Children's Hospital, Saratoga



Length of service at nomination facility: 3 years
Frequency of service: 24 hours per week

Grandma Anna cuddles and rocks, hugs and gently strokes to pacify and comfort a crying child, coos to stimulate and even talks to the non-responsive children of Sub-Acute Saratoga Children's Hospital. She makes these children feel the love and warmth of her caring heart and acts as a role model for the staff. She is a loving grandmother to the children and a reinforcer of compassion for the staff.

Grandma Anna is a warm, caring person who makes a difference in the lives of the children with her unconditional love, care, support and friendship, while at the same time addressing community issues and needs and helping to solve community problems.

She has been a member of the Foster Grandparent Program in Santa Clara County for the past 16 years and is a volunteer for the Catholic Charities.

While Grandma Anna has given her love and support to her three children, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, she feels compelled to provide that same love and support to the children of Sub-Acute Saratoga.

*Volunteer
of the Year*

GROUP VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

Mike & Judy Baxter

Lake Forest Nursing Center, Lake Forest

Length of service at nomination facility: 9 years

Frequency of service: 7 hours per month at Lake Forest and 4 times per month at Aliso Viejo

Mike and Judy Baxter are dedicated to serving the residents of Lake Forest Nursing Center, where they perform church services twice per month. They make the service fun and entertaining – telling jokes during the service and doing a “banana dance.” The residents love it and not only come for the religious experience but also the show they know Mike and Judy will deliver. They also get the residents involved in the music portion of the service and hand out tambourines and musical shakers for the residents to play while they sing and play instruments themselves. The couple also assists with outings, and, no matter where they go, Mike always brings his harmonica for the bus ride and entertains the residents and tells funny jokes.

In addition to their service at Lake Forest Nursing Center, Mike and Judy volunteer at Aliso Village in Aliso Viejo four times per month to play music and sing hymns for the Alzheimer’s residents.

*Volunteer
of the Year*

Thank you to all our nominees...

Carole Grant

Marycrest Manor Skilled Nursing Facility, Culver City

Length of service at nomination facility: 1 year

Frequency of service: 5-6 hours per week/20-24 per month

Carole has a unique gift of visiting with each resident – even those who cannot speak well. Her love and kindness are transmitted through her beautiful smile. She loves to celebrate the birthdays of residents and buys them a little gift. She does this very quietly and without fanfare. Each week when Carole comes to the facility, she checks with the administrator or charge nurse to see whether any of the residents need extra TLC that day. Carole encourages each resident and recognizes that each one has much wisdom and experience to share with her, and she is willing to sit and listen to them.

Norma Lum

Nineteenth Avenue Healthcare Center, San Francisco

Length of service at nomination facility: 1 year

Frequency of service: 8-10 hours per month

Norma Lum commits herself to helping the less fortunate. Norma is bilingual and helps translate for the residents who only speak Chinese. The quality of life for these residents is greatly improved by the time Norma spends with them. She helps conduct the bingo games on Thursdays and Sundays and assists in the activity department any time extra help is needed. She makes and shares DVD slide shows of all the events that the residents attend, such as Mother's Day, Chinese New Year and 100th-birthday celebrations. Norma makes the residents part of her family. She engages them with compassion and treats all residents equally.

Sonja Morenerg

Life Care Center of Vista, Vista

Length of service at nomination facility: 7 years

In 2002, Sonja moved to California from New Jersey, where she had been visiting nursing facilities and ministering to residents for 14 years. Soon after arriving, she began volunteering at Life Care Center of Vista. Sonja goes from room to room and prays, reads the Bible, talks with residents and in some cases sings the old hymns with them. Sonja is in her 70s, but she doesn't let it slow her down. She is a blessing to the residents and staff at Life Care Center of Vista.

Thank you to all our nominees...

Martha and Tony Ramirez

Marycrest Manor Skilled Nursing Facility, Culver City

Length of service at nomination facility: 3

Frequency of service: 3 hours per week, plus any additional time to visit with a sick resident or someone who needs special attention.

Martha and Tony embody what volunteering is meant to achieve – giving from the heart without asking anything in return. The residents look forward to their weekly visits with Martha and Tony, who have the ability to make each resident feel special. Because Martha and Tony’s mothers both lived and passed away at Marycrest Manor, they bring an added dimension of kindness to the current family members who may be experiencing hard times at having to place their loved in a facility. All find friends in Martha and Tony — they are easy to speak to, and each person who comes into contact with them goes away feeling comforted.

The Salvation Army

Golden Gate Health Care Center, San Francisco

Length of service at nomination facility: 10 years

Frequency of service: 1 hour per week/4 per month

This group of volunteers provides good old-fashioned singalongs with a guitar and also does quite a bit of storytelling. On one occasion, one of the volunteers brought her mother along and the residents were very honored to have her join the group. They often share personal stories and the events going on in their lives as well. They genuinely care about what’s going on in the lives of the residents too. They foster a wonderful connection, and the residents feel a sense of belonging. The Salvation Army volunteers also give to residents very generously, throughout the year. For example, at Christmas time they gave all 119 residents a blanket and a pair of socks. They give out flowers at Mother’s Day and cards at Easter. Each week they distribute the Salvation Army magazine to residents which provides uplifting stories of hope and inspiration. The Salvation Army volunteers bring the universal message of good cheer, friendship and joyful caring for others to all.