



SPECIAL ISSUE: Generosity & Sharing

The Gift of Caring



Ed. note: Recently Maria Thomas was asked to write a few words about her experience working at St. Matthew Center for Health. After all, she has been here for 31 years, so she must have a lot to say. She has seen many changes and has provided care to countless residents throughout our building. This is what she wrote:

“St. Matthew has been my home away from home for the last 31 years. It is truly a place of excellent care to

residents and employees. St. Matthew became more than just a job where I had job security and good benefits; rather, it became a vineyard for the Lord where I was able to contribute to the helping, healing process of my residents. My dedication grew to my residents and their families as I began to experience the impact I was able to have. It was a great feeling at the end of the day, knowing that I had the privilege to make a difference in my residents’ lives or that I had the ability to encourage family members and friends. I was able to establish long-lasting, wonderful friendships through diverse interactions with residents, families and co-workers. I still learn something new every day to add to the reservoir of knowledge gained working here. Thank you, St. Matthew, for the opportunity to grow professionally and spiritually through my wonderful years of service here.” ♦

— Maria Thomas, R.N.

Community Responds to Raising the Curtains!

Challenge Match Deadline Extended

The St. Matthew Service League Fund-Raising Committee is delighted to report that at press time, \$45,000 has been donated towards the \$50,000 window treatment Challenge Match. An outpouring of gifts from residents, their families and caring community members have added up to start “Raising the Curtains.” Since we are so close to meeting our goal, the generous anonymous donor has agreed to extend the Match to March 31. The new window treatments are being ordered, and installation will begin in the west building. If you want to help raise the remaining \$5,000, your gift will still be matched dollar for dollar. Use the donation form on page 5, or call 847-825-5531 for more information. ♦

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“IF YOU WANT
TO LIFT YOURSELF
UP, LIFT UP
SOMEONE ELSE.”

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

random thoughts on VOLUNTEERING

by Diane Blanks

In church we are told to give our time, treasures and talents. This is how we do Christ's work on earth. Some of us are blessed with money, others with talent, and most of us have idle time on our hands. I know it when I realize I'm watching a rerun on TV!

An hour. It doesn't seem like you could get much done in 60 minutes, but to someone else an hour spent with them is like a precious gift.

Maybe there isn't an hour available every week. There are many times volunteers are needed on a monthly basis. Perhaps to help push a resident in a wheelchair during a trip to Golf Mill Shopping Center, a trip that is awaited with great anticipation. But each wheelchair needs a person to push it. Otherwise, residents are denied the simple pleasure of shopping — something that many of us take for granted.

Perhaps there is a party. Extra people are needed to help residents enjoy the fun, either by encouraging them to sing or just giving an encouraging smile if they are not able to sing.

If you have had a discouraging day, believe me, when you finish your hour of volunteering, you will have a new outlook... you will be rejuvenated!

As far as talents: something you enjoy doing might



be shared weekly, like knitting, poker playing or billiards (yes, we have and need gentlemen volunteers); monthly, as with special parties and events; and occasionally with gardening activities, hobbies and crafts, sewing buttons, or mending residents' clothing. Perhaps with a slide show or video of a vacation or presentation of collections, a performance of magic tricks, piano, guitar, banjo or voice. The possibilities are endless. Whatever you enjoy, others will enjoy also.

Do you belong to a youth group, women's club, men's club or church group that has talent to be shared? Can you arrange for them to come for a special show? The residents enjoy having children perform practice recitals. Nothing has to be perfect; no

one expects that. You will find that you are always received with gratitude and appreciation.

Sometimes I feel selfish when I volunteer... I don't mean selfish. I feel selfish because I get back so much more in return than I give. But try it. It will change your life in a positive way. And for certain you will be blessed far beyond measure. ♦

Diane Blanks is a frequent volunteer at St. Matthew Center for Health.

“LIFE IS
AN ECHO —
WHAT YOU
SEND OUT
COMES
BACK.”

UNKNOWN

Opportunities to Join Others Who Give

The St. Matthew Center Service League Fund-Raising Committee is looking for more members to assist in efforts to help St. Matthew sustain its excellent quality of care. Do you have expertise in fund raising, finance or estate planning, and are you interested in helping seniors in our community? If you have these skills, and want to find out more about participating in a joyful volunteer experience, please call Terri Gens at 847-635-4667.

St. Matthew has been serving the Park Ridge and surrounding communities since 1959 by providing excellent skilled and intermediate long-term care, rehabilitation services, dementia/Alzheimer's services and respite care. More than 16,800 parents, loved ones and neighbors have called St. Matthew 'home' while receiving these critical and enriching services. ♦

GIVING ADVICE

FALLING IN LOVE ♥

With Valentine's Day upon us, residents offered advice on how to entice someone to fall in love with you:

- “Make a wish upon a star.” **Charlotte G.**
- “Make him an apple pie.” **Muriel T.**
- “Raise your skirt hem.” **Norma P.**
- “Get a little closer to him.” **Stella O.**
- “Find the way to his heart through his stomach.” **Ruth B.**
- “Treat her like a lady.” **Zelphia K.**
- “Ask him out to dinner; if he says no, then he is out of luck.” **Florence W.**
- “I would just be myself.” **Stella W.**

“Some people give time, some money, some their skills and connections, some literally give their life's blood. But everyone has something to give.”

BARBARA BUSH

enjoying life

So much happening...

Happy Birthdays!

Each month brings birthday celebrations hosted by groups from area churches. Residents with birthdays that month are celebrated, given gifts, and all in attendance enjoy birthday goodies. November's party was hosted by St. Timothy Lutheran Church, December's by Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, January's by Lutheran Church of the Cross, and February's by Grace Lutheran Church.

Advent Celebrations and Events

Over 500 visitors attended the 6th annual “Room at the Inn,” held the first weekend of December in St. Matthew's chapel. Susan Greeley's large collection of nativity scenes from around the world was on display. The event was opened to schools for field trips on Friday, before the public opening. More than 200 students plus teachers and chaperones from Embers Elementary, Messiah Lutheran Child Care, Christian Heritage Academy and Immaculate Conception attended. After seeing the nativity display, the children from Christian Heritage Academy sang to a large group of residents.

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A GIFT FROM THE YOUNGER GENERATION



Peter Pierucci, with his parents, Angelo and Kathy Pierucci of Park Ridge, at his Eagle Scout ceremony in November. Peter's project provided fencing in St. Matthew's south lawn to give Daisy, St. Matt's resident dog, space to run. Running in the snow is really fun!

So much happening... *continued from page 3*

Residents helped decorate Christmas trees throughout the building. Visitors from St. Paul of the Cross church in Park Ridge brought small decorated trees for the rooms of many residents.

Children from Messiah Lutheran Church Child Care visited and decorated Christmas cookies with residents.

We also had visits from Girl Scout troops, Indian Princesses, and students from Emerson School, Embers Elementary School, Apollo School and Rosemont School. Singers from St. Luke's Lutheran Church of Park Ridge blessed us with their beautiful voices.

Christmas Lights Outing

There were two outings this year to view Christmas lights. Residents sang Christmas songs on the bus as we wound our way through the beautifully decorated homes in Rosemont, Des Plaines and Park Ridge.

New Year's Parties

Rena Impastato, from Recreation Services, impressed residents, family members and staff with a pre-New Year's Eve party. Renae and her husband, Lenny, created a DVD set to music, filled with pictures of fun times and people from 2007. It was dedicated to the residents she works with on a daily basis.

The Dixie Downbeats performed during the annual New Years Eve party, and residents were served "champagne" and hors d'oeuvres. Many said it was the best New Year's party ever!

Winter Ceramics Workshop

Art teacher Laurey Fisher returned in January to lead a ceramics workshop. Residents made ceramic pieces from scratch by flattening balls of clay, which eventually became beautifully decorated plates. This hands-on workshop provided residents opportunities to work on short-term memory and fine motor skills, while enjoying each other's company. ♦



A Trip to the Circus

In November, residents and staff from St. Matthew attended Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus at the United Center in Chicago. Residents ate hotdogs and popcorn while enjoying the show. The United Center staff was a tremendous help in getting our residents to their seats.



Angels

St. Matthew's beautiful annual live nativity chapel service features residents in traditional roles.

Giving Back Through **Comfort Care**

Patient care at Rainbow Hospice is more than supporting the patient; it includes the entire family during and after end of life. Rainbow Hospice, a non-profit organization serving terminally-ill patients in Chicagoland, is always looking for patient and comfort care volunteers to help with their growing referrals of new patients and new inpatient unit, Rainbow Hospice Ark.

All patient care volunteers for Rainbow Hospice are required to do extensive training before working with their first patient. With over 300 volunteers and 1,500 patients served annually through the Chicago area, the volunteer program is one of the most crucial and important for Rainbow Hospice. "We try to go above and beyond what is expected of us with the volunteer programs that we offer," said Pat Ahern, president and executive director of Rainbow Hospice. "We customize the care that we offer to our patients, and that means we need to train our volunteers and staff on a variety of different therapies."

Where can you go if you want to learn more about patient care volunteering in your area?

Rainbow Hospice has served Chicago and the surrounding counties for more than 25 years and is

growing and looking for more patient care volunteers. No matter where you live, your help is needed, and Rainbow Hospice can work with you to find the best and most convenient fit for you and your family.

As Rainbow Hospice extends its reach farther across the expanding Chicagoland area, we have an immediate need for more volunteers from all areas. Rainbow Hospice works very hard to make volunteering as convenient as possible. By matching volunteers with clients in their own communities, they bring together neighbors who already have much in common.

Starting in February, Rainbow Hospice will offer free patient-care training in Chicago at St. Paul's House, 2800 N. California Ave. Interested individuals must complete an application and attend the 15-hour training series. Applications can be found on the Rainbow Hospice Web site at www.RainbowHospice.org.

Volunteers are there to offer comfort and accommodate the needs of the family. That translates to a range of care from friendly visits with patients to provide respite for caregivers and light chores around the house to assistance in feeding nursing home clients or playing a game of cards.

People interested in volunteering at the Rainbow Hospice Ark, our new inpatient unit located on the

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Please use this form to participate in the matching Grant Initiative. (See article on page 1)

Yes! I want to help meet the St. Matthew match.

Enclosed is my gift of:

- \$1000 \$500 \$300 \$100 \$50 Other \$_____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State ZIP: _____

E-mail: _____

Please call 847-635-4638 to charge your contribution of \$25 or more to a credit card.

I am a Thrivent member. *If you are, your gift may be matched even further. Please call 1-847-635-4638 for more information.*

Please make your check payable to **Lutheran Social Services of Illinois** and return it along with this form to the address below. *Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.*

Thank you for your support!

St. Matthew Center for Health/Attn. Service League • 1601 N. Western Avenue • Park Ridge, Illinois 60068

www.StMatthewCenter.org

Valentine's Dance



A great little three-piece band with the unlikely name "Chuck & Friends" entertained residents and staff for Valentine's. Their soft jazz style and vocals had everyone dancing and singing along to the old favorites and love songs. Everyone passed under the Limbo pole during the last dance, a St. Matt's tradition that brings a lot of laughter. *Photos, from left to right: Paula dancing, Lorraine & Katey, the Queen and King of the dance, Marianne and James.*

The St. Matthew Service League

The New Year 2008 has begun, and the Service League is busy putting together its schedule of activities. At this time, we would like to thank all of you who have supported our mission for the residents of St. Matthew Center for Health. We could not continue without your support and look forward to working with you and for you in the coming months.

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of one of our long-time volunteers in the Boutique and worker at special events as well. Rose Mary Zralek came to volunteer at St. Matthew more than 20 years ago, and her dedication and service has never faltered. She resigned from the

Service League Board a few months ago for health reasons, and passed away on December 19, 2007. We will all miss her devoted manner, her delicious brownies and brie cheese delight, and most of all, her quiet and peaceful demeanor. Our sincere sympathies are extended to her husband, Bob, a retired naval officer.

We anticipate a busy year ahead for not only the Service League, but for the staff and residents of St. Matthew Center for Health. ♦

— Norma Rendina
Service League Publicity Chairperson

St. Matthew Service League

BECOME A MEMBER — JOIN TODAY!

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

New Member \$10.00 _____ I would like to volunteer _____ My address has changed _____

Supporting Member \$10.00 _____ I would like to make a donation! \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____

Life Member \$100.00 _____ Other amount \$ _____ **Thank you for your support!**

Mail form and check to: Membership Chairperson • St. Matthew Service League • 1601 North Western Avenue • Park Ridge, IL 60068

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Mission Statement

Responding to the Gospel, St. Matthew Center for Health values people and those who care for them.

Saint Matthew Center for Health is a program of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, and serves seniors of all faiths in need of short-term rehabilitation, skilled nursing care or specialized dementia services.

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

1001 E. Touhy Avenue • Suite 50
Des Plaines, Illinois 60018
847-635-4600 • www.LSSI.org

“IF YOU HAVEN’T GOT ANY CHARITY IN YOUR HEART, YOU HAVE THE WORST KIND OF HEART TROUBLE.”

BOB HOPE

Giving Back Through Comfort Care *continued from page 5*

campus of St. Matthew Center for Health, must also complete a basic training program. For more information and volunteer applications, call Kathy or Sandy at 847-685-9900. ♦

Rainbow Hospice is a nonprofit organization serving terminally ill patients and their families in Chicago and surrounding counties. Rainbow Hospice enables people to live with dignity and hope while coping with loss and the end of life. Rainbow Hospice offers extensive bereavement services, including the Good Mourning program for bereaved children, teens and their families, as well as a Community Speakers Bureau, the Rainbow Hospice LIFE Institute for Learning and Rainbow Hospice Ark, an Inpatient Unit.

Rainbow Hospice is licensed to serve Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties, Rainbow Hospice is Medicare and Medicaid certified and accredited by Community Health Accreditation Program.

Thank You

We give thanks to those who have made contributions to St. Matthew Center for Health.

Our many generous Matching Grant contributors will be acknowledged in the spring newsletter.

In Memory of:

Katherine Bahr

Dennis Smerko
Robert & Gloria
Duckworth

Michael Dunleavy

K. Marcus
Thomas Rochford
Karen & Frederick Adams
Pickens-Kane

J & S Larson

Ronald & Mary
Cunningham
Annie Nyquist
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Other donations:

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Women of ELCA, St. Luke's
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Trinity Lutheran Church
Our Savior's Lutheran
Church
SMCH service league
Micheli family
Dunleavy family
Tammy Smarsh & St. Paul
of the Cross Women's
Guild
John & Diane Bianchini
Home Depot

To be added to or removed from our mailing list, please contact Gina Watford, 847-825-5531
or Gina.Watford@LSSI.org.

Upcoming Events at St. Matt's

- March 5** (2:00 – 5:00 p.m.): **Free blood pressure screening.** Please check in with receptionist.
- March 7:** **Travel Talk** about England, Scotland and Wales, presented by Linda and Bob Allgaier.
- March 13:** **St. Patrick's celebration,** featuring Dan Sullivan singing Irish songs and telling stories.
- April 2** (2:00 – 5:00 p.m.): **Free blood pressure screening.** Please check in with receptionist.
- April 16:** **Annual Spring Plant Sale – Order deadline.** Please pre-order! Order form available online or by calling 847-825-5531.
- May 7** (2:00 – 5:00 p.m.): **Free blood pressure screening.** Please check in with receptionist.
- May 9:** **Annual Spring Plant Sale – Plant Pick-Up.** 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Proceeds support our residents' gardening program.
- May 14-20:** Celebrate **Homes for the Aging Week** at St. Matthew. Always a lot of fun! Theme and event details to be announced at a later date... stay tuned!

**See what's new at St. Matthew Center for Health by visiting
www.StMatthewCenter.org!**