

EVERYDAY MIRACLES

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA—GREATER NEW YORK

Donor Newsletter

Celebrating Individuals and Companies That Make a Difference

Volume 9, Issue 1

HELPING OLDER ADULTS AGE IN PLACE WITH DIGNITY

When Melinda Woolf, Director of Volunteers of America's *Case Management for Older Adults* program, unexpectedly showed up in Mary Maggio's laundry room last December 18th, she carried a delightful surprise: an elegant tote bag stocked with cosmetic goodies, thanks to one of Volunteers of America's generous corporate partners, Avon Products, Inc.

"When I walked in with that gorgeous bag full of toiletries, Mary was so surprised to find out it was for her," said Melinda. "Her face just lit up into a big smile. It was so special!"

Ordinarily, a Case Manager visit to Mary, 80, would be more routine—to make sure she'd completed important paperwork or to meet other daily living needs. The *Case Management for Older Adults* program addresses the challenges our loved ones face as they age and become frail.

Most older adults prefer to "age in place"—continuing to live and participate in the communities where they have lived their entire lives—rather than relocating to a nursing home or other assisted living facility. Providing comprehensive

services that help each client access the support they need, *Case Management for Older Adults* makes it possible for 430 clients on the North Shore of Staten Island to remain safe and cared for in their own homes.

Services are both practical and supportive. They range from making referrals for meal deliveries, arranging transportation and post-hospitalization

check-ins, to obtaining assistive devices, such as a walker, or in-home handrail installation. Clients also receive assistance with accessing critical benefits, including Medicaid, Medicare and food stamps.

Sometimes the greatest service Case Managers offer is a bit of companionship and a sympathetic ear to a senior living alone without the benefit of involved or nearby family members.

Although basic nutritional needs of our older adults are met through delivery of Meals on Wheels, there is always a need for more. Luckily, an enterprising group of Cub Scouts from across Staten Island conducted a massive food drive, collecting food from five different supermarkets, which was then sorted and delivered, in addition to the 150 gift bags, to our clients.

Recent studies show that as many as 50% of all seniors going into the hospital show signs of malnutrition. Further, as many as 12% of older Americans sometimes have to choose between paying the rent, buying their medications and eating. Volunteers of America is committed to eliminating the need to make such difficult choices.



A surprise goody bag brightened Mary's day.

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From Richard P. Motta **PRESIDENT & CEO**

Dear Friends,

During these uncertain economic times, the need for members of our community to help provide for others less fortunate than themselves has become greater than ever. Thankfully, individual and corporate partners like you are reaching deep into their pockets and showing a generosity of spirit and deep commitment to our community. Time and again, you've responded nobly to the call for help.

On behalf of our board and the entire Volunteers of America family of staff, clients and volunteers, I am personally grateful and enormously humbled by the loyalty and trust you have placed in Volunteers of America—Greater New York. With your help, we'll make 2009 a year full of even more "everyday miracles."

Thank you,



Thanks to you, here are just a few of the things we accomplished together in 2008:

- We expanded our **domestic violence** services in New York City.
- We introduced a housing program to help **veterans** reintegrate into their communities.
- We opened an independent-living program for **young people about to age out of foster care**.
- We expanded our Connecticut services, offering an intensive vocational program for **adults with developmental disabilities**.

EARLY LEARNING CENTERS: SERIOUS FUN

Many of the children at our Early Learning Centers in the South Bronx and on Staten Island have significant issues related to autism, Down Syndrome and environmental issues, such as lead poisoning and fetal alcohol syndrome. And yet, 80% of the 300 children served ultimately transition into mainstream schools with all the tools they need to be successful in their next big step...**KINDERGARTEN!**

One of the programs that makes the ELC on Staten Island stand out is its wonderful music, dance and therapeutic horseback riding program, and this program is at risk of being eliminated due to lack of funding. For less than \$20,000, you can keep this year-round program alive—or consider just funding one of the three activities—and we'll name the program in honor of you or in memory of a loved one. **We would love to show you our schools!** Call (212) 496-4305 to arrange a personal tour.



A student in the dance therapy program, working hard and loving it!

DID YOU KNOW?

91 cents

of every dollar contributed goes *directly* to fund program services.



KEEPING THE BOOTHS' LEGACY ALIVE

When social reformers Maud and Ballington Booth announced the birth of Volunteers of America in 1896, they vowed to "go wherever we are needed and do whatever comes to hand." Mobilizing thousands of "volunteers" who chose to dedicate their lives to social service, they cared for the sick, sheltered unwed mothers, fed the hungry and helped ex-offenders reintegrate into society. As society's needs changed, Volunteers of America adapted to meet the new challenges. Today, we have 1,200 professional employees and nearly as



many volunteers, working in 80 programs throughout the Greater New York area. "Myrtle" was Ballington's pet name for his beloved wife and partner, Maud.

The Myrtle Society recognizes those visionary people who have remembered Volunteers of America in their will. Please let us know if your estate planning includes Volunteers of America, so that we may honor your generosity and name you to *The Myrtle Society*. To learn more, please contact Rachel Weinstein, Director of Development & Communications at rweinstein@voa-gny.org or (212) 496-4305.



For over 100 years, passersby have supported Volunteers of America's Sidewalk Santa program by dropping money into "chimneys" that are placed around the city. The money raised provides food vouchers to those in need.

This year, donors were invited to "adopt" a chimney. New board member Eric Gies and his wife, K.C., generously adopted two of them.

We asked Eric to talk about why he gives and why he chose Volunteers of America:

AS A FAMILY, WE HAVE ALWAYS donated a portion of our income to charity and/or the church. Our giving, however, was something we did more as an afterthought, and not with a plan or a purpose.

About four years ago, I won a used Jaguar in a lottery held by an area church. Knowing that someone had donated the car got me thinking differently about giving; I realized that one person's contribution can make a real impact. K.C. and I decided to commit ourselves going forward, to donating the top 10% of our income. It was not easy at first, but now it's so automatic to us that we don't count that money as ours. For me, it's the easiest way in the world to give.

Before moving here from Tampa about a year-and-a-half ago, I had worked with some fine regional charities. After we moved to New York, I did a lot of research to find another place where I could contribute. I discovered that Volunteers of America is a phenomenal organization. The range of different programs they run especially impressed me, as did

the diversity of the populations they serve—youngsters, families, newly released inmates, veterans, the elderly. They are great at what they do. Despite their long history, their philosophy and approach always reflect the latest thinking, the most up-to-date research.

I knew the chimney sponsorship was a new approach to funding the food voucher program and I really wanted it to succeed.

I also loved the multiplier aspect—that they could place the chimneys we'd sponsored in a location where others could drop money in, and our donation grow even further. Spiritually, I thought, "I should just do this." And the experiential benefit of having my family at the stock exchange, where I helped to ring

the closing bell with the Santas? Well that was just priceless.

Giving in good times seems simple, but when times are a little tougher on people like me, it's really, really hard on others. God called me to be generous with what I've been given. I've enjoyed what I've had so much more since I began sharing it.

"I realized that one person's contribution can make a real impact."

MIRACLES HAPPEN EVERY DAY



Last year, through Operation Backpack, Volunteers of America outfitted 7,000 children with new backpacks loaded with brand-new school supplies.



With help from Volunteers of America, victims of domestic violence, like Ann, access emergency services, regardless of income or resources.



Wayne lives in a group home for adults with mental illness. He and his housemates are integrated into the community and live full and productive lives.

DID YOU KNOW?

Volunteers of America helped more than

3,100 formerly

homeless people

find permanent

homes last year.



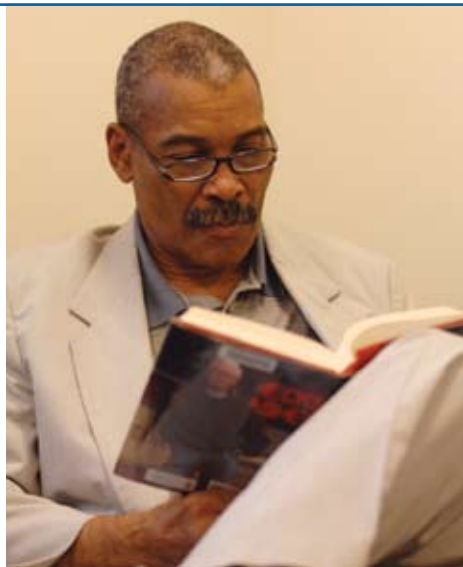
COMPANIES MAKING A DIFFERENCE A GENEROUS DONATION BECOMES A LIBRARY

Last June, HarperCollins employees donated and sorted 1,000 books geared for readers of every age into 80 boxes to be sent to more than a dozen Volunteers of America programs throughout the greater New York area.

Gwendolyn Fields is a resident at Richard F. Salyer House, a facility that provides permanent, supportive housing to families with low incomes, the elderly and people who were formerly homeless. When she spotted some of the boxes in her Case Manager Keisha Mangum's office, a spark was lit.

She was soon cataloguing and shelving the books and now presides over the collection several afternoons per week as acting librarian.

With Keisha's encouragement, Gwen also convened a monthly meeting for book lovers, beginning with two elderly ladies



One gift creates many opportunities to enjoy the quiet pleasure of reading.

who live in the building. "They might need someone to talk to," she observed.

While reading can bring opportunities for social bonding, many residents also relish the opportunity to settle into a quiet corner to enjoy the simple pleasure of getting lost in a good book.

GET INVOLVED

HELP OUR VETS!

Group outings promote a sense of community and facilitate peer support for these men and women as we help them move into permanent housing. You can offer your support by underwriting trips to ball games, concerts and movies. Or consider sponsoring a July 4th celebration to thank them for their service.

Contact Robin Gordon Leavitt rleavitt@voa-gny.org to see how you can help.



KEYS TO THE FUTURE



Donating your used car or other vehicle supports the vital work of Volunteers of America, which helps nearly 40,000 of our neighbors in need on their road to recovery.

Tax deductible if you itemize

Free pick up within 48 hours

For more information call 1-800-407-2600



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