

Volunteer for the health of it

BY ANNA WILSON
BLUE RIDGE HEALTHCARE

Blue Ridge HealthCare facilities would be dull and spiritless without our many wonderful, smiling, cheerful volunteers.

"Volunteers are invaluable to our organization," said Kim Murrow, System Director of Volunteer Services. "I don't know what we'd do without them and the services they provide."

Not only are volunteers important to any organization, a recent study has shown that volunteering can be good for your health.

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munity service and published the report.

This seems especially true in an American culture in which older people often find themselves feeling isolated and alone - proven risk factors for depression and other health problems, Grimm said. Two of the studies indicate that there is a threshold of about 100 hours per year of volunteer activity, or about two hours per week, required to achieve a health benefit.

"We'll take any hours we can get," Murrow said. "You can work as little or as many hours as you want."

Volunteers play a vital role at Grace and Valdese Hospitals. They help out in almost every department, but have become indispensable in Administration, the Foundation, Medical Records and Emergency Department.

The gift shops are run entirely by volunteers who take care of the buying, inventory and restocking.

Other volunteers help with clerical work, staff the information desks, distribute mail to patients, and escort visitors. The volunteers help out with employee and physician celebrations, and regularly sponsor sales at each facility.

The profits from the gift shops and these sales are used to address the needs of patients, purchase equipment and establish scholarships for healthcare students. Since Blue Ridge HealthCare also encompasses Grace Heights and College Pines Health Rehabilitation Centers, volunteers can help out there too, where duties might include helping organize bingo games and seasonal celebrations.

"Our volunteers do a variety of things," Murrow said.



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Volunteer Phyllis Buchanan shows some jewelry stocked in the Valdese gift shop. Proceeds from the gift shops at both hospitals go toward special hospital projects and scholarships for students wanting to enter the healthcare field.



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Volunteer Margaret McGee dishes up ice cream for Valdese employees during an ice cream social sponsored by the volunteers.

According to a story in U.S. News & World Report, older people who volunteer enjoy longer lives, higher functional ability, and lower rates of depression and heart disease.

"Volunteering can give you a new sense of purpose and keep you active. If people volunteer regularly it helps contribute to the maintenance of a strong social network," the magazine quote Robert Grimm, director of the research and policy development office at the Corporation for National & Community Service, a government organization that promotes com-



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Blue Ridge HealthCare volunteers Doris Bentley and Jean McDaniel work on Lights of Love letters that were sent to employees and the public last November. There are many volunteer opportunities awaiting you at Blue Ridge.

Currently, Volunteer Services is working on a project in the Women's and Children's Department on the third floor of Grace where they will be

helping with visitor admission and handing out identification badges. They also have agreed to take on the making of blankets for medical oncology patients, who sometimes

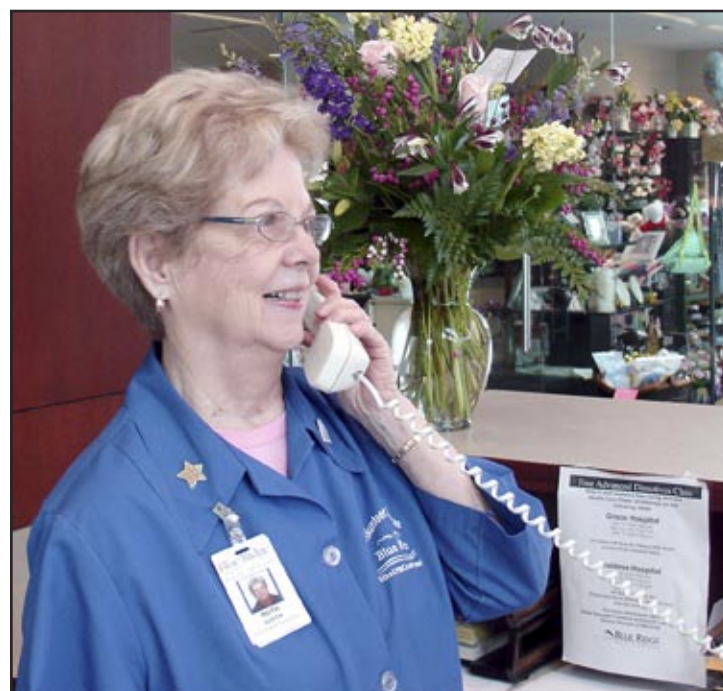


BLUE RIDGE HEALTHCARE

The new officers for the Blue Ridge HealthCare Volunteers, front row, from left, are: Margaret Franklin, President; Naomi Duckworth, Vice President; back row, Vivian Bakowski, Secretary; and Sue Barrier, Treasurer.



Volunteer Vivan Bakowski helped out at Lady Fair along with Brenda Kersey, BRHC Human Resources Director.



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Volunteer Ruth Austin answer the information line at Grace.



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Volunteer Marj Powell checks the cash drawer in the Grace gift shop.

get chilled when getting their treatments. BRHC currently has 98 volunteers, not counting students.

Last year, volunteers at the two hospitals voted to join the chapters and become Blue Ridge HealthCare Volunteers under the direction of one Volunteer Board of Directors.

Volunteer Howy Copenhaver chaired a committee with representatives from both Valdese and Grace chapters that worked diligently to propose changes to the bylaws as well as the policies and procedures in order to make this happen.

"The volunteers are working as one which will certainly make it easier to be

involved with healthcare services on both campuses," Murrow said.

"BRHC can always use more volunteers," Murrow said. Volunteers must be 18 years old or older, and complete an application/orientation process. Most volunteers are scheduled to work Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., with some volunteers needed until 8 p.m. Gift shop scheduling runs Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, call Kim Murrow at 580-5483.

BE A HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER

Volunteers play a vital role at Blue Ridge HealthCare.

- Gift Shop
- Hospital Events
- Clerical Work
- Special Sales
- Lady Fair
- Knitting, Crocheting Blankets

Volunteer as much or as little as you want. Find out how you can benefit our two hospitals by calling Kim Murrow at 580-5483.

