

Volunteer of the Month

2005

January 2005 Mary Sullivan

“ ..I saw your ad in the Spotlight early last year, and called your organization to explain our situation. My wife has Huntington’s disease...and I have basically become a single parent due to the neurological problems she has. She...cannot complete tasks, do housework or other things a mother would do. Your organization paired us with Mary Sullivan. Mary is a terrific lady. Since coming to our house she has organized almost every closet and room. She put together a garage sale for us right down to pricing the items. She can get more done in a few hours than I could do in a month given the things I have on my plate. She enjoys what she does and makes a big difference for us.”

We are happy to name **Mary Sullivan** of Feura Bush as our **Volunteer of the Month for January 2005**. It’s obvious that she practices the volunteer role with skill and compassion. And, as the dad said who wrote to us, “It is people like her that make your organization successful in helping people who need it.”

Thank you, Mary; we appreciate what you do for others and how well you represent Community Caregivers.

February 2005 Helen Kinnally

For this month, we’d like to shift back to our Altamont roots, where we have almost 150 volunteers, about a third of the number who are currently Caregivers. Back in the early days of Caregivers, the people of the churches of Altamont played a vital role in forming this organization, contributing many hours of time in planning discussions and then in answering requests for assistance.

Now we’d like to introduce you to someone who has come to us from one of those churches, St. Lucy’s Roman Catholic Church. She’s an active member of the Altamont Seniors, and has been helping neighbors through Caregivers since 1998.

It’s always nice to call **Helen Kinnally** with a service request; she almost always says Yes. Helen is willing to drive if she has the time in her schedule. She helps her neighbors with shopping and with transportation to medical and other appointments. She helped one young neighbor with transportation to a new job, and made a meal for another. Now she’s visiting with a home-bound neighbor, and sharing stories as well as caring. She has done respite visits, too. She says she’d “really rather not drive to Schenectady”, but there’s plenty for her to do just staying closer to home! Helen is a versatile volunteer, one of those who practices the volunteer role with skill and compassion, helping in whatever way she can; we and her neighbors are grateful.

We are happy to recognize **Helen Kinnally** of Altamont as our **Volunteer of the Month for February 2005**. We appreciate you, Helen! Thanks so much.

March 2005 John Fredericks

We do a lot of transportation for our Omni clients and others in the “Schenectady” part of Guilderland. That area is one of the most consistently busy parts of our service area. We’d like to introduce to you one of our transportation volunteers, who lives in the Carman Road area

and helps many neighbors there. **John Fredericks** is often on our transportation schedule, driving several times a week, taking clients to the Washington Avenue Medical Offices, or to St. Clare's Hospital, or even to the local home improvement store, when someone needed help in selecting a new kitchen counter!

And now John is joining the financial team for Caregivers. This organization is blessed with many wonderful people who keep the financial side of things going. There are people who help with fundraising, with grant applications and with the everyday finances. For regular day in and day out activities, Bev Harrington is our bookkeeper and Jerry Chilandese is the CC treasurer. Bev tracks the organization's expenditures and prepares the checks that go to pay the bills. Jerry prepares the deposit of donations and other receipts, and also signs the out-going checks that Bev prepares. They accomplish a huge job, and do it all as volunteers. And John Fredericks has stepped-up to help with the complexities of bookkeeping for our growing organization. Here's what Bev had to say about this new helper:

"John has been invaluable in keeping the bookkeeping aspect of Caregivers on target for timely expenditures and reports. He has willingly accepted additional responsibility with respect to Grant expenditure tracking, statement preparation and reporting, and Finance Committee reports."

Because of his commitment to the mission and purpose of Community Caregivers, his growing role as a key member of the Caregivers team, and the kindness with which he responds to our neighbors in need, we are happy to name **John Fredericks of Schenectady as our Volunteer of the Month for March 2005.**

Thanks, John; we appreciate your willingness to help in such a diversity of ways, and we appreciate the good cheer with which you do it all.

May 2005 Yvette and Steve Terplak

We work at a pretty fast clip, on an average day, here at Community Caregivers. There are many conversations, tasks, meetings, and deliberations that go into keeping such a large organization moving along in the right direction. But once in a while I hope we take the time to do what really matters most, to send a heartfelt THANK YOU to our volunteers for their commitment, caring, and for being the best examples of all that is good and right with the world. The last two months have seen tremendous efforts on the part of some very special individuals who have taken on the additional responsibility of coordinating our fund raising initiatives. The leadership position in any special event is time and labor intensive and much of the work happens unrecognized and behind the scenes. I want to take this public opportunity on behalf of the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers of Community Caregivers to express our gratitude to **Yvette and Steve Terplak** for their SUPER effort in organizing the Caregiver Team that participated in the Friehofer Walk. Your talents are appreciated and your dedication to the Caregiver mission is inspirational! That's why we are naming the **Terplaks , Steve and Yvette May's Volunteers of the Month for May 2005.**

June 2005 Midge McGraw-Bulgaro

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July 2005 George Johnsen

We appreciate a special computer-wise volunteer, too. **George Johnsen** joined Caregivers after retiring from a busy career at GE, bringing many PC skills with him. He's been donating many hours each month, working both at home and in the office, making our database system produce far more than its original developers ever designed! He's been helping in the analysis of our computer needs and creating reports that make the office more efficient in carrying out our volunteer / client matching program.

George brings not only his computer knowledge, but also a willingness and creativity that makes him a big help to the Caregivers staff. The time he donates demonstrates his commitment to the mission and purpose of Caregivers.

We are happy to name **George Johnsen** of Altamont as our Volunteer of the **Month for July 2005**. Thanks so much!

August 2005 Bettye Goodnow and Mel Katz

We send our very special thanks this month to two of our volunteers who were brought to our attention by the family of a lovely lady who had been a Caregivers' client. Here's their letter:

"Had she lived, today would have been Frances' 89th birthday. I have planned for some time to celebrate her memory on this occasion by expressing the truly heartfelt gratitude for Caregivers that I know she felt as did we who loved her.

"During the 2 ½ years between her husband's death and her own, the nature of the assistance provided by the Caregivers to Frances cannot be overstated. All of you made a singular difference in her quality of life.

"For Frances, it was **Bettye Goodnow** and **Mel Katz** who personified Caregivers. Their care and concern for her exceeded any definition of even the most dedicated volunteer commitment. Both were her friends who evidenced how much they cared for her in many thoughtful and loving ways. I had many occasions to tell Bettye that she is truly an angel, and she was one of Frances' last visitors. Literally within moments of her leaving her home for the last time, Milt paid her an impromptu visit to deliver a beautiful box of Christmas cookies made by his friend for whom Frances also had the highest regard.

“I hope that all who make Caregivers the extraordinarily valuable organization it is enjoy the gratification received from making such an enormous difference both to those they assist and also to those who love those who need your assistance. May all of you be rewarded with blessings equal to what you give to others.”

Caregivers is proud and pleased to name **Bettye Goodnow** of Schenectady and **Mel Katz** of Glenmont as our **Volunteers of the Month for August, 2005**, for so well representing what this organization is all about. Mel and Bettye, we appreciate you both. Thanks so much.

September 2005 Ruth Dickenson

We mentioned last week that we owed our thanks to **Ruth Dickinson** for her work in organizing the Altamont Quilters in the Park event. We've decided that we need to do more than that. Ruth has been an active volunteer since 1997! She has served as a coordinator, matching clients with volunteers for services. She is a member of the Volunteer Recruitment, Education and Recognition Committee, cheerfully getting to 8:00 a.m. meetings to plan for volunteer activities and programs. And she provides transportation to medical appointments. That's enough to make us very grateful. But Ruth has gone several steps beyond that.

Two years ago, Ruth was the one who conceived the idea for a Caregivers' Quilt, which was stitched over the course of eleven months by the wonderful quilters of Altamont as a fundraiser for Community Caregivers. Ruth was one of those who carefully took the quilt-in-progress to a many locations as we sold raffle tickets all summer and fall. Then, at the 2004 Fall Gala, one lucky winner walked away with a marvelous quilt, and the Caregivers organization benefited from about \$6000 in ticket sales.

In the spring of 2005, Ruth again had a quilt-oriented fund-raising idea. This time she rallied her quilting friends, (now called Kirk's Quilters, named after their mentor and teacher Doris Kirk, to whom the show was dedicated). Through her network of quilt guilds, the word went out. On September 10, over 400 people came to Altamont to see this outdoor exhibit of quilts.

In addition, Ruth and Kirk's Quilters are restoring an antique quilt, generously donated by Lucette Scholer, which is the 2005 raffle; the winning ticket will be drawn at the November 18th Gala. The proceeds will again benefit Community Caregivers.

Ruth is one creative and organized lady! She uses her interest in her craft to demonstrate her commitment to the mission of Caregivers, and with her enthusiasm brings others along with her.

We are happy to name **Ruth Dickinson** of Altamont as our **September Volunteer of the Month**. Ruth, thanks so much for all you do. We appreciate you.

October 2005 Janette Teetsel

Volunteers do so many helpful things for neighbors in our area, making a difference that sometimes can't be measured. One of our clients, Mike, is a recently retired resident of one of the Hilltowns. He didn't get to enjoy too much of his retirement before running into major medical problems, including a stroke that left him with mobility, concentration and memory issues. He needed to seek help at Sunnyview for rehab. He called on Caregivers for help with transportation.

Several volunteers responded, each driving for one or more of his forty-some appointments. Since many of his appointments were lengthy (often two or more hours for various types of therapy), we were prepared to try to find two drivers for each appointment, one to drive from home to hospital, and another to drive the return trip. Finding that many drivers in the Hiltowns is not easy, either. (We're always looking for more Hilltown volunteers, in case YOU might be interested.)

One of the drivers who stepped up to meet the need was **Janette Teetsel**. Whenever we had an appointment for Mike, Janette was the first driver we would call, for two reasons. First, she lived not too far from Mike and we try always to call on volunteers to drive for neighbors in their own area. Second, when Janette said she'd drive, it was most often for both halves of the trip. She'd pick Mike up, take him to Sunnyview, keep herself busy in the Schenectady area until time for the return pickup, and then drive home. The 44 miles she logged for each of these trips may well have included 3 or more hours of her time as well.

Here's what Janette wrote on her data sheet, the application form for Caregivers' volunteers: "Please check with me, I might be available at the last minute", and, in answer to "How far are you willing to drive?" Janette wrote "does not matter." And she checked off each day, Monday through Friday, morning and afternoon, as her times of availability. Are you surprised that we are grateful to her?

By her actions, Janette demonstrates a commitment to her neighbors and to the mission of Caregivers. We are happy to name **Janette Teetsel** of Delanson as our **October Volunteer of the Month**. Thank you, Janette; we appreciate you!

December 2005 Jessica and Melissa Faustel

A college student, Jessica Faustel, came to us in November looking for community service time for coursework credit. We found the necessary hours – lots of hours - worth of volunteering for her to do through November and December. She had to fit them in between classes and her job at Sears. These hours included housekeeping, shopping for and transporting clients, helping with office tasks, and taking charge of our Christmas tree for the Altamont Tree Festival. She says she'd like to set up her own not-for-profit organization some day. Jessica's sister, Melissa, (also a college student) had been working as our Thursday morning office volunteer since signing on in August. Melissa also assists with transportation, and helped with the Tree Festival. She was the one who crocheted that cute little hat that served as our tree topper! And she's been ready to do extra office work as well.

These busy young women can serve as an example to many. Their interest in helping their neighbors is wonderful, as is the way they fit their volunteering in around all their other activities. They may not fit the same profile as many of our retired volunteers, but their concern and desire to help is what keeps all of our Caregivers going.

Thanks, **Jessica and Melissa Faustel** of Voorheesville, for your enthusiasm and for the actions that show your commitment to the purpose of Caregivers and to your neighbors. We are happy to name you both as our **Volunteers of the Month for December 2005**. We appreciate you!