

ElderBuddy News

ElderBuddy News & Views

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ElderBuddy Volunteers ...making a difference!

Lisa Capodanno
Nancy Devine
Jacqueline Fiore
Susan Frie
Erin Gralley
Narmada Gunawardena
Melissa Heagy
Wanda Hicks
Debbie Huff
Sharon Jayakumar
Charlene Kellum-Jackson
Laura King
Jack Mitchell
Gina Mitchell
Marianne Moeller
Anne Oxenham
Grace Pinder-Starkey
Erast Pohorylo
Tamy Raina
Gabriele Rice
Lou Ryan
Lois Scarborough
Mark Stocksdale
Sharon Tomlinson
Peggy Tsaganos
Robert R. Williams
Tammie Williams
Carol Yost

When ElderBuddy participants talk about their experiences, the depth and richness of the relationships really shine through. **Gabriele Rice** has been visiting her buddy, **Dorothy**, since last summer. Gabriele has introduced Dorothy to digital cameras, cell phone technology and some interesting Internet sites, like Google Earth. Dorothy introduced Gabriele to Sudoku – and got her hooked! Gabriele shares, “I have learned a lot about growing up in West Virginia in another time. What is so interesting about this friendship is that there is no generation gap, rather we have lots of things in common, even though there is an age difference and difference in cultural background. Visiting with Dorothy has enriched my life in many ways.”



Gabriele Rice (left) visits with her friend, Dorothy, at Ingleside Apartments.

Gina Mitchell enjoys her friend, **Tru-Dee** (Ingleside Apartments) so much that she’s creating a scrapbook of memories. She says it’s “a great way to share your ElderBuddy experiences, or a great keepsake.” Tru-Dee says ElderBuddy is “such a unique, valuable interaction of generations at Ingleside Apartments. Each time my buddy, Gina Mitchell and I are together, I feel a sense of oneness, knowing that we are united in the all-providing love and friendship. This oneness fills my heart with peace of the presence that sustains me with under-girding love. In an attitude of gratitude to the organizers of this program, I am most grateful for their foresight, and suggest that more participants avail themselves of the rich experiences that await them.”

Some ElderBuddy volunteers have enriched their relationships by

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The ElderBuddy Program, funded by AstraZeneca, matches employee volunteers with elderly residents living in local nonprofit senior housing and looking for companionship. Volunteers act as “friendly visitors” and develop a one-on-one relationship with the resident. The Family & Workplace Connection coordinates the matches and provides ongoing support and guidance to ElderBuddy participants. For more information, contact Kathy Hyde at 302-479-1696 or elderbuddy@familyandworkplace.org.



The ElderBuddy News is published quarterly, and is a great way for all of us in the ElderBuddy Program to keep in touch and share our ideas. If you have information you'd like us to include, please contact Kathy Hyde at 302-479-1696 or e-mail to elderbuddy@familyandworkplace.org.

including other family members in the visits. **Nancy Devine's** husband often joins her when she visits **Jennie** at Kentmere – and recently they've also included Charlotte, their Corgi. **Tamy Raina** says having her husband join her and **Kirby** (Ingleside) for brunch makes it that much more enjoyable. Tamy also has been watching out for any leftover flower arrangements from AstraZeneca meetings. Over the last several months she's been able to surprise Kirby with three beautiful bouquets. “Kirby was so excited,” Tamy said, “because the last arrangement had the most beautiful yellow roses with a hint of green – very unusual. Kirby gave me a tour of the flower garden (at Ingleside) that she had helped design and plant. She was very proud that I was able to see her handiwork.”

Mary, also an Ingleside resident, not only gets the company of her volunteer, **Mark Stocksdales**, but his wife, Jodie, and daughter, Samantha, as well. They also brought homemade lima bean soup, a favorite of Mary's! And moving outdoors to enjoy the beautiful spring weather, the Stocksdales helped Mary plant flowers in one of Ingleside's lovely gardens. Recently, **Erast Pohorylo**, was matched with his buddy, **John**, a Gilpin Hall resident. So far they've only had a few visits, but one of them included Erast's wife and toddler, and John really seemed to enjoy this.

Although the main focus of the ElderBuddy Program is one-on-one relationships, several volunteers are becoming a part of their elder's social circle at the facility. **Marianne Moeller** has been playing cards with her buddy, **Ethel**, and her friends at Ingleside for quite a while. Even though Ethel doesn't use the computer, Marianne can still keep in touch with her via e-mail through Ethel's friend, Marie, who graciously provides “technical support” so all three of them can share and enjoy jokes, pictures and better communication.

Carol Yost and **Robert Williams** also share great stories of meals, games, card-playing, etc. that they enjoy with their Ingleside friends, **Jean** and **Marie**, and groups of other residents. Robert claims he has about five adopted elder-buddies now, and shares, “My last meeting, Marie gave me a gift for my birthday and a card

signed by her and her card buddies. Then they all sang *Happy Birthday* to me as we started playing cards. Her one friend sang it to me in Polish, which was really cool.” Carol Yost joined her friend, Jean, and her friends for a very long game of Uno one night. “No one could win,” Carol said, “I ended up staying an hour past my normal time to leave until finally someone was able to go out.”

Over at Luther Towers I, one of our new ElderBuddy recruits, **Debbie Huff**, met her new buddy, **Janilene**. They immediately began chatting and laughing, and will definitely enjoy getting to know each other. Another new ElderBuddy relationship began at Gilpin Hall in April when **Erin Gralley** greeted her new friend, **Ruth**, with a beautiful bouquet of pink flowers. And a very warm ElderBuddy welcome goes out to our newest volunteer, **Tammie Williams**, who will soon begin visiting **Ada** at Gilpin Hall.



ElderBuddy volunteer, Debbie Huff, visits with her new friend, Janilene, at Luther Towers I

In April, Gilpin Hall sponsored its annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, and two of our ElderBuddy volunteers were able to attend. **Lois Scarborough** and **Grace Pinder-Starkey** enjoyed the luncheon, and then spent some time chatting with their buddies, **Eva** and **Gennie**.

Charlene Kellum-Jackson, who hadn't been able to see her friend, **Letitia** (Luther Towers I) for some time, excitedly shared the following after a recent visit. “It was a fantastic visit! Her spirits were high, and she had so much to catch me up on, as the first quarter of 2007 has been very busy for her. Letitia is a very special lady, and I am so glad that she is my ElderBuddy. It is so refreshing that we are able to immediately reconnect even when we haven't seen each other in a few weeks.”

Over the last couple of months we've had to say good-bye to two wonderful ElderBuddy volunteers, **Aondowase Anum**, who had been visiting **Leonard** at Gilpin Hall, and **Kristie Freuler**, who had been matched with another Gilpin resident, **Flossie**. We thank them both for their contributions to the program, and wish them well as they move on to new opportunities. Looking on the bright side, **Leonard** has been matched with a new volunteer, **Anne Oxenham**, who began visiting with him in early June. We hope to have a new match for Flossie very soon.



ElderBuddy Expansion Planned

Currently all the senior housing communities participating in the ElderBuddy Program are located in the Wilmington area. Recently one of our volunteers, Sharon Tomlinson, who works at the AZ Newark Site, suggested that we consider adding a facility in the Newark area to better accommodate employees at this site who would like to be involved in the program. This kind of expansion would also be helpful to any interested AZ employee who lives in or near Newark, and would like the convenience of being able to visit their elder in the evenings or on weekends.

After reviewing several older adult communities in Newark, we have invited Main Towers Apartments, located at 330 E. Main Street, to begin participating in the ElderBuddy Program. Janet Gamez, Building Manager, and Pamela Sullivan, Support Services Coordinator at Main Towers say the program will be a wonderful addition to their community. They have many residents who have little or no family nearby, and could really benefit from regular visits and companionship. They also received a very positive response from their residents when ElderBuddy Program information was shared in their last newsletter. We are looking forward to getting the program initiated there over the next couple of months.

Main Towers Apartments provide an affordable, independent housing option for low-income seniors right in the heart of Newark. Their Main Street location provides residents with easy access to shopping, bus service and the Newark Senior Center. The building itself, however, is located in the rear of the property, nicely insulated from the noise and traffic. The Towers has 169 one-bedroom apartments, some adapted to accommodate those with mobility challenges. Additionally, residents have access to a comfortably furnished lobby area, a community room to accommodate large gatherings, an airy screen porch and nicely landscaped outdoor area with

Good-Bye To A Good Friend

In early March, ElderBuddy lost a long-time Gilpin Hall friend, **Anna Demkowicz**, when her battle with cancer finally ended. Anna was always so very happy when her ElderBuddy volunteer, **Narmada Gunawardena**, came by to visit. Narmada had the opportunity to meet several members of Anna's family, and they appreciated the extra attention the ElderBuddy program was able to provide for her. We will miss Anna and her warm, friendly smile, and we are very pleased that Narmada was able to add some extra happiness and friendship to Anna's days at Gilpin Hall.