VIP Services’ volunteers, generously give of their time, talents and enthusiasm and 2015 was no exception. Last year, volunteers completed more than 4,200 hours; hundreds of more volunteer hours than last year! They helped with everything from our special events and outings to our computer lab and dances.

At the recent Recognition Reception, Ruth Jones, was celebrated as the Volunteer of the Year for 2015! Ruth was the first Coach to sign on for the Ambassador Program and helped launch the Kiwanis Aktion Club. VIP Ambassador and Aktion Club member, Lynne McIntyre shared heartfelt remarks about Ruth’s impact at VIP. Congratulations to Ruth along with a special thanks to Brad Wales of The Elk Restaurant for donating food for the recognition event!

VIP Volunteers Recognized

Over 100 Hours of Service
Laura Baron
Taylor Brown
Alexa Fitzgerald
Marie Gornick
Britany Hrncliar
Cliff Johnson

Up to 100 Hours of Service
Mary Bertschinger
Melissa Lee
Melissa Lopardo
Kathy Peterson
Doris Sprague

Up to 50 Hours of Service
Miranda Durbin
Pat Eames
EAHS Honor Society
Karen Ehlen
Donna Goralski
Tori Hand
Isaac Hart
Al Johnson
Ruth Jones
Jon Kasnick
Janet Kelly
Elkhorn Kiwanis Club
Phil Knobel
Sharon Knobel
Paul Kremer
Brittney Lundgren
Dianne Matteson
Colton Messinger
Rose Mohr
Ginger Nelson
Ken Nelson
Xavier Ortiz
Alyssa Osborne
Bryce Osborne
Barb Pajor
Carrie Pawinski
Kelsey Price
Missy Putnam
Joanie Quick

2015 Board of Directors
Donna Neshke (President)
Bob Putnam (Vice President)
Ellen Weber (Secretary)
Jim Homan (Treasurer)
Cherie Ackman
Cheri Brost
Don Buchert
Rosemary Crandall
Kathy Garske
Tom Oehler
Carol Prchal
Ed Scaro
Mark Stinebrink
JoAnne Tully

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Client Volunteer Spotlight—Sheri Baker

Sheri began at VIP Services in February 2011 in Pre-Vocational Training Services. She has demonstrated numerous positive personal improvements and is now a consistent support for her co-workers in the workshop. Sheri has shown her desire to move to a higher level by her willingness and enthusiasm to take on jobs with an inspiring diligence.

One of her personal goals was to volunteer in the community. For more than a year, Sheri has been volunteering at Lakeland Healthcare Center along with other clients. She helps to support the nursing staff for two hours on Monday mornings by assisting with Bingo. Sheri’s volunteer responsibilities include helping residents get from their rooms to the Bingo room, distributing items needed to play and assisting the elderly residents during the games. Most importantly, she spends time talking and interacting with the residents. She enjoys learning their stories and also talking about her interests, football and movies (she’s a fan of the Chicago Bears and Star Wars). Sheri realized through her volunteer work that it’s a mutually beneficial experience and she looks forward to continuing that volunteer work at Lakeland.

Volunteer Spotlight—Melissa Lee

Melissa Lee retired from her job as a registered nurse due to medical reasons. With both of her teenage sons in school, she needed something to fill her time. She learned of VIP’s volunteer program and now volunteers in the Day Services Program. She helps people reach their individualized goals as well as “lightens the load” for the staff.

Melissa plays cards and board games, goes for walks, or spends time talking with people. These activities help individuals to socialize, improve fine and gross motor skills, work together as a group, improve time management, exercise, and boost word and number skills. She finds everyone warm and friendly and knows she is “surrounded by those who care and appreciate her unconditionally.” Everyone at VIP is always excited to see her, letting her know she has been missed on her days off.

What Melissa loves most about volunteering at VIP is that she has “a positive impact on people.” As a mother, she knows how important it is to learn life skills that will allow individuals to be more independent. Plus people take pride in their accomplishments, sharing those milestones with family and friends.

Melissa often educates others in the community about VIP Services and how to get involved. She shares what VIP does for individuals and in turn what they can do for the community. Melissa believes, “we all have so much to offer no matter our abilities.” Melissa embodies how volunteers make a difference in a people’s lives and conversely how individuals at VIP make a difference in the lives of the volunteers.

Volunteers Needed

This past year, VIP Services saw a tremendous increase in overall numbers of volunteers and volunteer hours. Volunteers share their time and talents with cooking, fitness, gardening, travel, music and computers as well as accompany people on community outings. Volunteers help in multiple ways. Sometimes the outcome is visible and immediate, but often the impact builds slowly as volunteers help individuals meet goals of their own design. These goals can range from socializing to learning soft skills that can’t be learned from books but rather through consistent interaction.

A great example of volunteering is Gateway Nursing students in the Service Learning program, teaching people about nutrition and cooking skills. Others learn computer skills as volunteers help them create a “My Life” story in Power Point or in Word. Making a task imaginative and fun allows for deeper engagement. A musical example is volunteer, Janet Atwell, she plays the piano is soon joined by a plethora of people playing other instruments. Playing an instrument allows individuals to work on their motor skills and make music together as a group.

We would be delighted if you could join us in the computer lab or help create beautiful music! You don’t have to be a musician or a computer aficionado, just have a love of music or basic knowledge of computers. Even if you have an hour a week or just an hour a month, volunteering is an ideal way to make a difference in the lives of the individuals at VIP. If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, please contact Volunteer Coordinator, Lynne Dempsey, CVA at 262-723-4043 x106 or lynnedempsey@vipservices-inc.org.

Winter Weather Information—With the potential for bad weather in the State of Wisconsin, we find it important to remind you of our inclement weather policy. The Management team at VIP Services determines if the weather is treacherous and we need to be closed or close early. The safety of people transported on our vehicles is the primary factor of the decision process. If VIP closed for the day, a decision will be made before 6:00 a.m. The closing will be announced on the following TV and radio stations:

- WTMJ Channel 4 TV News
- WISN Channel 12 TV News
- WLWK—94.5 FM
- WTMJ—620 AM
- WRIT—95.7 FM
- WLTQ—97.3
- WMIL—106.1 FM
- WSJY—107.3 FM
- WSLD—104.5
- WISN—1130 AM