

Volunteers

Volunteer Profile Mary Ann Grant, Greenfield

Planting seeds of change

From gardening duty to transportation help, volunteer has made big difference in small town

By ANNIE CARD

For the Monadnock Ledger-Transcript

Ice cream socials. Used book sales. Flower baskets on lampposts. A ride to the doctor when you can't get there on your own.

The volunteers who make these things happen every day, year in and year out are many, but never enough.

"I don't know why more people don't volunteer," Mary Ann Grant of Greenfield said. "It's so rewarding, what it does for the soul. It makes me feel so good."

Grant, 64, said she's busier now than when she worked as a registered nurse, and wouldn't have it any other way.

She's just come back from The Norris Cotton Cancer Center in Lebanon where she drove a patient for treatment. We're sitting in the Stephenson Memorial Library, just above the room that holds hundreds of used books for the twice-weekly Friends of the Library book sale. So far proceeds from the book sale have helped buy a new digital projector, and the money keeps adding up, a dollar at a time. "We also bought the oak for new bookshelves a local carpenter built for the library for free."

When Mary Ann Grant and her husband, Jim, arrived in Greenfield in 1983, they settled right in the middle of town, across the street from the library. "We loved it here right away."

Their son, Rob, now the chef at the Hancock Inn was only 6, and daughter Deirdre just a baby. Deirdre now lives in Manhattan where she works for the nonprofit Aids Vaccine Advocacy Coalition.

Grant wasn't just bitten by the volunteer bug at retirement. "I guess I learned about it from my father. He was always helping people."

While still working as a nurse, Grant volunteered with the American Cancer Society, coordinating rides and supplies for cancer patients in the Monadnock region for 10 years. She also delivered Meals on Wheels for six years and helped out wherever she could.

"We can all help. Everyone can do something. Maybe some people don't volunteer because they're afraid they're going to be asked to do too much. If you can give just a couple of hours a month, that would help. More volunteers means we won't burn out the ones already doing so much."

After Grant retired as Director of Nursing at Good Shepherd Nursing Home in Jaffrey in 1999, she started an adult daycare business with a friend. But two years later, insurance and state regulations discouraged



PHOTO BY ANNIE CARD

Mary Ann Grant arrived in Greenfield in 1983, moving to a home across from the Stephenson Memorial Library. The sign advertises the sale hosted by the Friends of the Library in the library basement each Wednesday from 6 to 8 p.m. through August. In September it will also be on Fridays.

the two women from their mission of getting the elderly still living at home, out into the world.

In 2002, Grant brought her enthusiasm to the GIVERS. The Greenfield Independent Volunteers (GIVERS) was the brainchild of Lee LeBlanc and David Lloyd, two Greenfield residents who wanted to give back to their town. This group of about 15 members has helped make an already tight-knit small town even tighter. They host the ice cream social that follows the Memorial Day Parade and serve lunch at the Blue-

berry Jamboree in August. They sold 300 Christmas wreaths last year and delivered welcome baskets to every new resident they could find. They run a wood bank that provides wood to those who need it, and sell the rest to buy fuel for others through Southern New Hampshire Services. So far, the GIVERS have raised \$2,000 for fuel assistance this year.

The GIVERS took shifts as bell ringers at the Salvation Army kettle outside Roy's last year, and MaryAnn insists they could collect more money if "people would just be

willing to ring the bell and say hello to people for two hours."

GIVERS funds bought Christmas gifts for nearly a dozen families. "When our kids were small we taught them to put aside money so they could buy gifts at Christmas for kids who weren't going to have a Christmas like they do. You know, they both still do that."

Grant confessed, "I had more fun shopping last year for the GIVERS families than I did for my kids when they were small. I knew we were giving kids a Christmas they otherwise wouldn't have."

The flowers around town are there because Grant thought there should be flowers. "There wasn't a single flower on town property until three years ago when I planted them." Grant was originally paid to plant the town gardens, "but it became too much. That first summer was so hot and dry, I was watering sometimes twice a day. I could never leave."

After two years as a paid town gardener, Grant insisted this year that she not be paid any more. She scaled back the many gardens she first planted to four: the library, the cemetery entrance and the flowers around the two town signs — plus the hanging baskets downtown.

Grant loved her years of nursing, which started with the Navy Nurse Corps. After graduating from Catholic University of America in Washington DC, she worked in the ICU and recovery units at the Naval Hospital in Bethesda. "We were caring for soldiers who had been wounded just days before in Vietnam. I saw some awful things there, but also some miracles."

Retirement could have cut Grant off from the action, and it would have she said if she didn't volunteer. "The friendships I've developed are so important to me. If I didn't volunteer, I never would have known all these people. You can really isolate yourself if you don't get up, get out and do things with other people."

Grant and her husband will be celebrating 37 years of marriage in October. When they first met in Connecticut, "He was buying turkeys and dropping them off at people's doors. He left a 'Happy Thanksgiving' note on them, rang the door and left before they could see him. That's one reason I really liked him. I think that's his Nova Scotia upbringing. They're so generous, welcoming strangers, helping any time they can."

For more information, visit www.thegivers.org. Call Neal Brown, President, at 547-2023, or Mary Ann Grant at 547-8856.

Help Out

WHAT'S NEEDED

Assisted Living Assistance, Peterborough
Volunteers wanted for gardening, reading, crafts, entertainment, play cards or boardgames, bridge. The Scott-Farrar Home. 924-3691.

FixIt Program
Volunteers to do minor repairs for elderly persons, and elderly persons needing assistance. 1-800-322-1073, ext. 6168.

Kitty Rescue, Jaffrey
Volunteers needed to help care for cats/kittens; also clerical, transportation, fostering, fundraising, publicity help needed. 532-9444.

Sharon Arts Center, Sharon
924-4256, ext. 310. Volunteer for 4 hours/week for reception and computer tasks. Volunteer for two hours/week to write press releases.

Tutors/students needed
For Project LIFT. Adult Ed. program assisting with study for GED exam, math, English, etc. Judy Fournier: 464-5285.

Children's Fair, New Ipswich
Saturday, Aug. 15. Sponsors/volunteers needed for game area, booths. Marcy Levesque: 878-2378 or brats3414@yahoo.com.

More volunteer listings on Page 17

HOW TO SUBMIT

Send us an e-mail with your organization's needs and upcoming volunteer opportunities at volunteers@ledgertranscript.com

LOOKING TO HELP?

If you want to volunteer, but are unsure where you fit in, you can call the Monadnock Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and the Monadnock Volunteer Center at 924-7350.

Hard at Work Portraits of volunteer work in the Monadnock region



STAFF PHOTO BY JOSH BOND

Volunteer Nancy Hicks gathers groceries for a waiting customer at the Peterborough Food Pantry on Friday in the Townhouse basement.

Friendly faces at the food pantry

Peterborough volunteer sees uptick in need and 'more new faces'

By JOSH BOND

Monadnock Ledger-Transcript

PETERBOROUGH — According to volunteer Nancy Hicks, every day at the Peterborough Food Pantry is filled with kindness and warm thanks.

Hicks said she has been volunteering at the food pantry, located in the lower level of the Townhouse, for nearly five years.

"It's just part of my life," said Hicks on Friday. "I must say I enjoy it because everyone who comes in is so nice."

And lately, plenty of folks have been coming in. "This is as bare as our shelves have been," said Hicks, who has noticed an uptick in applicants in recent months. "There are definitely more new faces."

As many a 70 people per week swing by to collect both government-supplied and donated food and toi-

letries, said Hicks, but it comes and goes. On Thursday, not one person visited her, but on Friday she had more than a dozen visitors.

"Fortunately, we have a lot of wonderful people who donate food frequently," said Hicks.

Even some of the recipients are sometime donors. One gentleman said he comes to the food pantry to help Hicks when he can.

"I don't have many friends," he said. "It's not much social contact, but it's some."

"If this wasn't here, we'd probably be eating cereal forever, or something," said another guest. "When you get short at the end of the month, it's handy."

One recipient said she tries to toss a few canned goods in the bin when times are better.

"I'm appreciative," she said. "It helps me to have food."

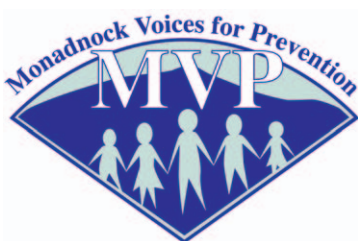
If you're serious about eliminating underage binge drinking...

NOW IS THE TIME TO GET INVOLVED!

With the summer social season upon us, the coalitions and members of Monadnock Voices for Prevention are asking people to think about hosting safe summer events. No single step will take away all the risks, but with planning, common sense and basic care you can help make sure that your guests have a safe and fun time.

Before you plan an event this summer, get the facts on host liability.

For more information, or to volunteer, contact:



MONADNOCK VOICES FOR PREVENTION
105 Castle Street, Keene, NH
kmcmillan@mc-ph.org
(603) 357-1922 x125
www.monadnockvoices.org



CREATING POSITIVE CHANGE
40 Grove Street, Peterborough, NH
(603) 924-4981
Sam@cpcnh.org