

Companionship Times

Fall 2011

Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota

Volume 22, Issue 2

STATION spotlight

Western: Dakota Center for Independent Living

The Dakota Center for Independent Living (DCIL) in Bismarck is a consumer-controlled, community-based, nonprofit agency assisting people with disabilities live independently in their community. DCIL believes in self-determination for people with disabilities and creates the environment in which it is achieved. DCIL also promotes full inclusion for people with disabilities by advocating for the reduction of architectural, social and attitudinal barriers.



According to Mary Robinson, volunteer station supervisor, the match-up of DCIL and Senior Companions is a great fit and compliments the DCIL mission to help people remain living independently in their homes. Many clients have stated they wouldn't be able to stay independent

without the assistance of the Senior Companions program.

Outreach services are provided in eighteen south central and southwestern North Dakota counties, the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and the southern part of the Fort Berthold Reservation.

The Dakota Center for Independent Living provides the following services and programs: Information and Referral, Peer Support, Independent Living Skills Training, Senior Companions, Assessments and Representative Payee Service. DCIL offices are located at 3111 East Broadway Avenue, Bismarck. Phone (Voice/TDD) is 701-222-3636 or 800-489-5013.

Eastern: Grand Forks Senior Center



Since 1987, the Grand Forks Senior Center has been a volunteer station for Senior Companions, a program of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota. Heidi Nordin, volunteer station supervisor for the site, said the clients really enjoy the socialization,

friendship and companionship offered by the program. She feels the program benefits everyone and she sees what a positive difference the volunteers make in their clients' lives. Heidi said the clients' adult children also appreciate the service and enjoy knowing that someone is going to see their parents each week. Currently, three senior companions serve the Grand Forks area.

The Grand Forks Senior Center was established in 1955 and provides services for adults who are 60 years of age and older. Its mission is to assist seniors with remaining healthy and independent in their homes.

Services available at the Grand Forks Senior Center include recreational activities, Meals on Wheels, information and referral, a library and book club, transportation fare assistance, health maintenance and weekly educational presentations. Seniors are also provided with daily nutritional meals, volunteer activities and a place to gather and network with other seniors in the community.

The Grand Forks Senior Center is located at 620 4th Ave. S., Grand Forks. Phone 701-772-7245.

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Senior Companions

Lutheran
Social Services
of North Dakota

www.lssnd.org



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Social Services
of North Dakota

Senior Companions

www.lssnd.org

Office Locations

Minot—Main Office

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Minot, ND 58701
Phone: (701) 838-7800

Fargo Office

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Fargo, ND 58103
Phone: (701) 271-3247
(800) 450-1510

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Our Mission:

*Guided by God's love and grace
Lutheran Social Services
of North Dakota
brings healing, help and hope.*

Many Thanks!

**YES! I would like to support
Senior Companions.**

*How many times have you said,
"How can I help my community?"*

*By supporting the Senior Companions program, you
ARE helping your community. Because the program
is funded by contributions and through state and
federal grants, if you choose to make a tax-deductible
contribution, your gift will be used to enhance and
expand the services of Senior Companions in North
Dakota and your area. You may use the form on
the back of this newsletter to make a donation.*

*Thank you for your support of the
Senior Companions program!*



**Thanks to these donors for their
support of Senior Companions!**

Financial Supporters:

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Bethel Lutheran Foundation • Nellie Svee • ECOLAB

United Ways across ND:

Missouri Slope United Way—Bismarck
Basin United Way—Williston
Souris Valley United Way—Minot
Cass/Clay United Way—Fargo/Moorhead
Jamestown United Way • Dickinson United Way
Grand Forks United Way
Richland Wilkin United Way—Wahpeton
Barnes County United Way—Valley City

**Donations to the Senior Companions program
during the past six months:**

Albert & Anita Kessel • Andrew & Rose Hager
Mary Beth Olombel • Linda Ydstie
Ruth B. Taylor Estate



Bits from Becky by Senior Companions Director Becky Telin

Minot has had a long summer with fighting the flood and now the disaster recovery. It truly is devastating to see what has become of so many people's homes. I am very fortunate, as I live on South Hill and was not affected.



We have had a slow six months of recruiting new Senior Companions. Please refer your neighbors, friends and relatives and encourage them to give the program a try. In particular we are in need of companions in the New Town, Fort Totten and Trenton areas.

Program Happenings:

911 Day of Service and Remembrance—It has been 10 years since our country experienced the day that changed us forever. We remember all those lost that day and we continue to dedicate our lives to service in honor of those men and women.

We have experienced the kindness of friends, family and neighbors to step up to help many in our communities affected

by flooding this summer. Help will be needed for several months to come.

All Americans are encouraged to voluntarily support charitable causes, perform good deeds and engage in other service activities in observance of the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance. This year, Senior Companions across the state took this opportunity in September to volunteer more of their time to visit veterans who are living in nursing care facilities.

Fighting Hunger—We are very excited to partner with the Great Plains Food Bank, another program of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, to help alleviate hunger across the state. The Outreach Pantry Program is a quick and easy way to get food to people in need. The Great Plains Food Bank packs ready-made food boxes and delivers them to communities in need, which then take on the responsibility of storing and distributing them. Senior Companions will assist in distributing to those in need, particularly clients of the program.

Advisory Councils—The Senior Companions Advisory Councils in eastern and western North Dakota have chosen to combine into one statewide

council. The current members felt that since both councils shared a common mission, a statewide council would make a much wider and diverse area from which to pull fresh ideas and that it would also promote cohesive statewide communication by sharing maintenance and recruiting methods.

Annual Program Survey Results

Of the *clients* surveyed, 84% felt their ability to live independently improved with the help of Senior Companions.

Of the *Senior Companions volunteers* surveyed, 100% felt that participation in the Senior Companions program has had a positive impact on their own lives.

Of the *Senior Companions volunteers* surveyed, 98% felt they made a positive impact on their clients lives.

Of the *volunteer station supervisors* surveyed, 94% felt the Senior Companions program has had a positive impact on the community.

115 Senior Companions volunteers provided 82,000 hours of service to 774 clients this past year. A total of 684 of those 774 clients remained in their homes at least six additional months after having a senior companion visiting them.

Sonja's Stuff by Sonja Mickelson, Western ND Coordinator, Minot



It would be great if I could squeeze a few more days of summer out of September as I travel around the western part of North Dakota to visit our sites and our senior companions. This is handbook review time and that means I will be setting up time with each site, so I hope the cold and snow (Boo!) stay away for a few more months. I look forward to seeing each and every one of you soon!

The arrival of our new Eastern Coordinator Andrea Lang has been a welcome addition to the Senior Companions program. Andrea is thoughtful, intelligent and FUNNY—and has been a great addition to our team! I know she is just as delighted to work with such a great group as our Senior Companions volunteers and supervisors—and just as amazed with the warm and giving attitude of our volunteers as I am. Please make Andrea feel welcome when you get a chance to meet her. We are happy she is here!

I was debating whether to put something about the historic Minot flood of 2011 in here, but I felt I would be remiss if I did not. I don't know too many people who weren't affected in some manner by the flood. Some of our senior companions and clients were affected greatly and our hearts go out to them.

Since there is generally a bright side to everything, that would have to be how the community—and state, and nation—has come together to help out after the devastation. Teams from all over North Dakota and nationwide have converged on Minot and Burlington to assist with cleanup. It is heartening to see. Thank you to all who called and wrote with concern for us and the program. Through everything, you continue to demonstrate your generous spirit.



Statewide events celebrate 30 years of Senior Companions in North Dakota

Volunteer Recognition Events were held in Fargo, Grand Forks, Minot, Williston and Bismarck with the theme *Celebrating 30 years of Senior Companions Volunteers*. Every event was organized to spotlight the outstanding volunteers dedicated to Senior Companions, a program of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota. Over three decades, these amazing volunteers have put in thousands of hours to help make the lives of those in need of companionship more meaningful. You are each extraordinary!

Western Recognitions 2011

MINOT

Zion Lutheran Church hosted the Senior Companions volunteer recognition in Minot on June 16. This was Zion's first year and we look forward to future events at the church. Their beautiful fellowship hall provided the perfect backdrop for our celebration and supper, where they fed us a lovely homemade soup and croissant sandwiches.



Zion youth group serves Minot attendees dinner

Becky Telin, director, and Sonja Mickelson, coordinator for Senior Companions, presented gifts and certificates to all of our wonderful volunteers. Tara Troxel, a young member of Zion Lutheran Church, entertained us with beautiful music on the flute and piano.

Volunteers and program supervisors were invited from the Minot Commission on Aging, Manorcare, Bottineau Senior Center, Pierce County Social Services, McHenry County Social Services, St. Aloisius in Harvey, The Three Affiliated Tribes and Presentation Medical Center.

BISMARCK

Senior Companions enjoyed another fun volunteer recognition event at Lord of Life Lutheran Church on June 21 in Bismarck. We tried something different with a supper event and the comments seemed to be favorable.

Nicholas Hornbacher, a recent graduate who attends Lord of Life, entertained our group. After 12 years of lessons, he played the piano magnificently!

Becky Telin and Sonja Mickelson, Senior Companions staff members, handed out certificates and gifts to the volunteers and program supervisors from Kidder Emmons Senior Services, MedCenter One, South Central Adult Services, Burleigh County Senior Adult Program, Dakota Center for Independent Living, Edgewood Vista, Elder Care of Dickinson, Enable and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.



Bismarck attendees Norma, Maggie and Evie visiting

The Lord of Life fellowship hall is a perfect setting for our event and the staff always makes us feel so welcome!

WILLISTON

The Williston area volunteer recognition was held on June 9 at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. We tried something different with a "Tea for Two" mid-afternoon luncheon.

Peggy Bearce, Williston office coordinator for Lutheran Social Services of ND, was instrumental in preparing for our celebration. It was fun looking at the many different tea pots that she placed on each table.



Marie, Ruby, and Barb from Trenton visiting and enjoying their lunch

Entertainment was provided by a fantastic duo from Williston with Beth Olson on the piano and Miriam Hage on the flute. Miriam Smette, program coordinator for the Foster Grandparents program and RSVP+ and Becky Telin and Sonja Mickelson of Senior Companions awarded certificates and gifts to their respective volunteers.

The Senior Companions program was joined by the Foster Grandparents and RSVP+ programs of the Williston/Trenton/Powers Lake area at this event.

Eastern Recognitions 2011



Senior Companions at the Grand Forks recognition event, pictured from left to right: Marie Paulson, Heidi Nordin, Penny Eberhardt, Director Becky Telin, Mary Ann MacDonald, Coordinator Andrea Lang

GRAND FORKS

The Northeastern recognition event was celebrated on April 28 at the Clarion Inn in Grand Forks.

There were 85 in attendance including senior companions, foster grandparents, work station personnel, advisory council members and program staff. Senior Companions volunteers were commended for their years of service to their communities of Devils Lake, Fort Totten, Lakota and Grand Forks.

Entertainment was provided by the Sweet Adelines. The Senior Companions program celebrated 30 years of service in North Dakota with a special cake.



Fargo attendees visiting and enjoying their lunch

FARGO

The Fargo area volunteer recognition event took place on June 15 at Seasons at Rose Creek and went off without a hitch! The event was extra special as this year marked the 30th anniversary of Senior Companions being adopted by the state of North Dakota.

Senior companions, foster grandparents and volunteer station support staff from Fargo, Wahpeton, Jamestown, Lisbon and Valley City participated. In total, 63 guests were present including Fargo Mayor Dennis Walaker, State Senator Judy Lee, Pam Mohl from US Senator Kent Conrad's office and several members from the advisory council.

Guests enjoyed lunch, cake and live music by the "Rockin' 60s" band. The crowd had a knee-slapping good time and a few even wowed us with their dance moves!

The event concluded with an award ceremony thanking volunteers and station staff for their service and closing thoughts from Program Directors Becky Telin of Senior Companions and Karen Hillman of Foster Grandparents.

Thank you to everyone who attended the recognition event this year! We enjoyed seeing you smile and recognizing you for your hard work and dedication to these two worthwhile programs.

Andrea's Anecdotes

by Andrea Lang, Eastern ND Coordinator, Fargo



Hello, and thank you for taking time to read my very first column in the *Companionship Times* newsletter!

Since starting my position in April 2011, I have spent most of my time settling into my new office, learning from program staff, asking questions, getting acquainted with the senior companions and volunteer station supervisors and recruiting and training new senior companions. It has been a lot to take in, but without a doubt, I have enjoyed myself every step of the way! One thing I know for sure is that the Senior Companions program of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota is helping hundreds of homebound seniors live active, fulfilling lives thanks to wonderful people—like YOU!

To the senior companions: Feel good about the differences you make in the lives of seniors. Whether or not you hear it often, your clients and their families appreciate and value your generosity and service. Keep up the good work!

To the volunteer station supervisors: Thank you for spreading the word about the program and for being an advocate for seniors to live independently in their homes.

To Becky and Sonja: Thank you for being so fun to work with and for making my transition into the program coordinator role so comfortable.

To everyone: Thank you for your kindness, encouragement, and patience as I have gotten to know the ins and outs of the Senior Companions program. Together, we make a strong team and I am very proud to be a part of it!



Senior Companions
Lutheran
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of North Dakota

VOLUNTEER spotlight



Kashi Khatiwoda

was born in the country of Bhutan and then lived in Nepal for 20 years as a refugee before moving to the United States in

September 2010. Kashi has a wife, three daughters and five grandchildren and resides in Fargo.

Kashi became a senior companion in February 2011 and currently sees 10 clients. All of them are new Americans from the Bhutanese culture and have been in the U.S. for less than two years.

Kashi enjoys talking with his clients about their culture and experiences, making them laugh, bringing them out into the community and sharing information with them from the monthly Nepalese newsletter.



Barb Coker

When asked where she grew up, Barb quipped, "I haven't grown up yet!"

The straight answer is Tioga and according to

Barb, hers was one of the first families to move into town when the area struck oil. Barb currently lives in Minot with two sons living nearby and another son and daughter who live in Florida.

Barb has enjoyed her time with Senior Companions since joining in April 2008 though the Minot Commission on Aging. According to Barb, the fit was right for volunteering with Senior Companions, as she loves being around the elderly.

"You always learn so much from them if you listen and they are always so grateful for the assistance—it makes you feel good," she says.



Carol Osmundson

was raised in Breckenridge, MN, along with 16 siblings. She has two sons, one daughter, and five grandchildren and

now resides in Wahpeton.

Carol became a senior companion in April 2011. She said she knew immediately that it was right up her alley because she loves people, especially the elderly, and wanted something special to do for others.

Carol currently has seven clients and enjoys "fulfilling their day." She said she is inspired by her clients' commitment to live independently, one of them even at 101 years of age!



Evie Glasser

St. Anthony, ND, 26 miles south of Mandan, was Evie's "stomping ground" for her growing up years but she has been

in Mandan for the past 58 years.

Evie has been an important part of Senior Companions since she joined in January 1998. It wasn't until her husband was in need of respite services that she got first-hand knowledge of the program. She was so impressed with the senior companion who came to help her husband that she decided to volunteer herself.

"Gosh, but the time goes fast," says one recipient of Evie's visits.

Evie enjoys everyone she visits, commenting, "It makes me feel good to be there for them."

Evie serves through the Dakota Center for Independent Living in Mandan.



Mary Ann MacDonald

grew up on a farm 20 miles northeast of Devils Lake. She has two daughters, four sons, and three grandchildren and

currently resides in Devils Lake.

Mary Ann became a senior companion in June 2007 after a staff member from Senior Meals & Services approached her about the volunteer opportunity. At the time, Mary Ann was newly retired and wanted something to keep her active.

She currently has three clients and enjoys spending time with them. Mary Ann said she enjoys feeling appreciated by her clients and felt good when one told her, "I wish I could have you here with me all of the time!"



Leone Nickelson

"The simple life" is how Leone describes her upbringing in Bowbells. Leone raised her three children in

Bottineau and has been there ever since. She worked for what is now Dakota College for 26 years.

Leone relatively gushes about Senior Companions since joining two years ago. She says it has given her a whole new meaning to her life. She feels it gives her a reason to get up in the morning and helps her more than she helps others.

Leone enjoys fishing, bike riding, GOLF (the card game) and cribbage. She is new to cribbage and says "I'm having an awful time losing." But it's what the people she visits want to play, so she is a good sport, as always.

Welcome!

New Senior Companions January–August 2011

Barbara Mackley
Minot

Betty Gorden
West Fargo

Beverly Kitchen
Fargo

Carol Osmundson
Wahpeton

Eileen Dallmann
Jamestown

Elizabeth Beavers
Powers Lake

Fay Pitzer
Bismarck

Joyce Gerber
Belcourt

Kashi Nath Khatiwoda
Fargo

Leona Wilson
Fargo

Marie Paulson
Grand Forks

Rennay Brown
Fargo

William Grant
Jamestown

Welcome new stations and volunteer station supervisors!
The Bottineau and Harvey Senior Centers have joined the Senior Companions team:
Kathy Fischer, outreach, is the new station supervisor for our great group of volunteers in Harvey. Diane Pearson is the new supervisor for the great group of volunteers in Bottineau. Both groups meet monthly at their respective Senior Centers for a supervisory meeting and lunch.

Retirements

Farewell to these retiring Senior Companions
and thank you for your years of caring, sharing, and service to the Senior Companions program:

Rhoda Huber
16 years

Ruth Braughton
14 years

Irene Hauser
6 years

Mary Tepley
6 years

Carol MacKenzie
5 years

Violet Barton
2 years

Marlene Bruce
2 years

Eva Collins
2 years

Carmen Delvalle
1 year

Farewell Anita, and best wishes on your retirement!

Anita Kessel, long-time station supervisor though Elder Care in Dickinson has retired in order to spend more time with her family and doing those things that need to be done. Anita has always been a great advocate for Senior Companions and will be missed. We wish her well!



A special birthday!!

A little birdie (Gloria Engen) told us that Marie Blumhagen turned 100 on September 13. Marie continues to live in her own home and still gardens and cans jams and jellies. We wish her many blessings!

Scam Alert!!

Grandparent scam (from AARP)

It works like this: You get a frantic email or call from someone identifying himself or herself as your grandchild. The email may say something such as “Help! I’m stuck in a hotel in London [or a hospital in Mexico or a jail in Greece]. My wallet and passport have been stolen, and I can’t leave until I pay the bill. Could you wire me some money? Oh, and by the way, PLEASE don’t tell my parents!”

The email may include some stolen personal information which makes it seem real.

The telephone version of this con usually involves a caller simply saying, “Hi...it’s your grandson.” You’d be amazed how many grandparents take this claim at face value. Don’t fall for it!!

If you get a call or email like this, don’t respond until you check out the story with other relatives who know the whereabouts of your grandchild.

My mother got a call like this and totally believed it. Thank goodness the small town she lives in does not have a Western Union! Stay safe!



Senior Companions

Lutheran
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1325 11th St. S.
Fargo, ND 58107

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Fargo, ND

YES... the Senior Companions program is important to me, my family and my community.

Mail your donation to:
Senior Companions, 1905 2nd St. SE, Suite 1B, Minot, ND 58701

I'd like to give my support in the following ways:

- \$10 to fuel a month of travel for a Senior Companion.
- \$25 to provide ten hours of visits & assistance from a Senior Companion
- \$45 to support three hours of training for Senior Companions volunteers

\$5 a Month Giving Plan is a convenient way to fit support of Senior Companions and Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota into your monthly budget

- Please enroll me in the Monthly Giving Plan with my gift of \$_____ per month
 - I would like you to charge my credit card each month. I have completed the attached credit card information
 - I would like you to make a monthly withdrawal from my checking account. Please send me information.

I authorize this monthly transaction and understand that it will remain in effect until I contact Lutheran Social Services/Senior Companions to cancel or change the amount of my monthly contribution.

Signature _____

Date _____

Payment Information

- My check is enclosed
- Please charge my: Visa Mastercard
- Credit Card Number

Expiration Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail (help us save some money and trees)

- Please send me e-mail news about Senior Companions and Lutheran Social Services.

Signature _____

- I am a Thrivent member. Please send me a matching gift form.