

Woods Services Volunteer Program

Exceptional needs. Exceptional volunteers.

A Day of Caring



September 11, 2010 marked the annual visit of Vanguard employees to Woods Services to take part the United Way's Day of Caring. Thirty-two people—Vanguard employees, spouses and children—arrived ready to volunteer.

The day started off with a brief orientation in Woods' Food and Nutrition Center. The volunteers were split into four smaller groups, each

lead by a Vanguard employee, based on activity preference. Groups were then sent out to four residential units. Activities included chalk art, volleyball, painting sun-catchers, kickball, coloring, walking, and simply enjoying the gorgeous weather in good company. Tom Cosgrove, a Vanguard regular, shares, "The Woods Day of Caring is always a treat. The clients are always so happy for company and make us feel welcome. We do our best to give the staff a little bit of a break. It is a combination of rewarding and a learning experience in treating those with developmental

disabilities with dignity and respect."

Barb Ruley, one of the Vanguard coordinators, shares, "Several volunteers stated that they felt so much more rewarded with this particular choice, that they 'made a difference and spent valuable time there, rather than paint or landscape.' Many Vanguard volunteers showed an interest in returning to Woods to offer their time and talent. Our people are amazing and we receive so much more from this activity than we give.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who participated in this Day of Caring!



Check out the 'Volunteer Spotlight' on Woods' homepage to see the October Volunteer of the Month at:

www.woods.org

Volunteer Orientation & Training Class

The official launch date of the new Volunteer Orientation & Training Class was August 31st. Development began in May 2010. The idea for the class was a direct result of volunteer feedback—individuals and groups alike shared feelings of unpreparedness in volunteering directly with clients. Therefore, the purpose of this class is two-fold: (1) to give volunteers a brief background of Woods Services and the clients we serve; and (2) to better equip

volunteers to interact with and engage the clients with whom time is spent.

So far, three classes have been held. Attendees have been asked to fill out evaluation forms after completing the class. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive:

- "well-presented and thorough"
- "It was time well-spent"
- "well-organized and moved quickly"
- "fun and lively"

The class lasts two hours and includes a variety of interactive pieces. It is limited to 20 attendees in order to foster group discussion and interaction. While the class is required for all new volunteers, current volunteers are also strongly encouraged to attend.

The NOVEMBER dates are:

Thursday, the 4th 6 – 8pm

Tuesday, the 23rd 6—8pm

Please contact the Volunteer Office to register as space is limited.

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Everyone needs a little variety.



Action Karate Junior Demo Team



Megan Capelli on guitar, assisted by Amanda Rawlins



Left: St. Andrew's Cheerleaders

The 3rd Annual Volunteer Variety Show at Woods was a huge success! Each year, the Show is sponsored by Aktion Club. Organized by Kiwanis International, the Club is a community service group for adult citizens who live with a disability. Twenty-five Woods clients participate in the Club, which meets once a month.

The club members who were in attendance on the night of the Show assisted with handing out programs, welcoming guests and announcing the performers. The audience was filled with over 100 clients and staff from the Mollie Woods program. The Show was comprised of karate demos, cheerleading and musical performances.

Thank you to the following volunteers for making this year's show awesome: Action Karate Junior and Senior Demo Teams, Triple Threat All Star Cheerleading, Sarah Burke, Amelia Arrigo, the St. Andrew's Cheerleaders, Amanda Rawlins, Allison Rawlins and Megan Capelli. A special thanks to the Mollie Woods Recreation staff—without them this event would not have been possible.

Thank you, Aktion Club, for a great Show!



Amelia Arrigo performing Taylor Swift's Love Story



Triple Threat All Star Cheerleading

News & Upcoming Events

*Secret Santa sponsorship slips are due back to the Volunteer Office by November 7th.

*Sunday Circle, hosted by Friendship Circle of Newtown, started up again in September and will meet monthly.

*Volunteers are needed to dress up in costume for a Halloween Party on Friday, October 29th, hosted by Mollie Woods Recreation

*The Jewish Community High School of Gratz College (JCHS) will begin the 2nd annual service-learning class, which meets monthly at Woods. Classes consist of an hour-long activity with Woods' clients, followed by a debrief and discussion amongst the JCHS students.

*The annual Harvest Balls, hosted by the Mollie Woods Recreation Department, will be held October 25th and 26th. Volunteers are needed to help take prom photos.

Why All the Paperwork?

In light of recent events, some of you have expressed concern as to the future of volunteer programming at Woods Services. Volunteers are essential to our organization and we look forward to your continued involvement.

Those who spend time with our clients directly impact our mission by providing them with exposure to new people and a variety of life experiences. Those who volunteer for behind-the-scenes tasks, such as mailings, are invaluable as they enable Woods' staff to focus on other work.

There have also been questions regarding the volunteer process, specifically why the need for all of the background checks and paperwork?

These volunteer requirements are done with the safety and well-being of all of Woods' clients in mind. They are also necessary for Woods to remain in compliance with all of our regulating agencies.

The following is an explanation of Woods' requirements for volunteers:

1. **Physical**—required of all individuals as a way to ensure that you are healthy and physically able to participate in activities.
2. **TB Test**—required of all individuals

as a way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

3. **Drug screen**—required of individuals age fifteen and older as a way to uphold Woods' policy to remain drug, tobacco, alcohol and smoke free.

The following documents are all required of volunteers age fifteen and older due to the fact that Woods is regulated by the State of Pennsylvania and various agencies, for example, The Department of Public Welfare (DPW):

1. **Criminal Background Check**
2. **Child Line Abuse Clearance**
3. **FBI Fingerprints**

Woods has chosen to have these processed for volunteers age fifteen and older to keep the volunteer requirements the same across the board (i.e. drug screens are also required at this age).

According to the *Volunteers for Children Act Program (VCA)*, a volunteer's national criminal history record may be accessed "to determine an individual's fitness to have responsibility for the safety and well-being of children." Further, The Child Protective Services Law of Pennsylvania requires Child Line Abuse Clearance checks to ensure that individuals who will be working with

children "are not a known perpetrator of child abuse or student abuse."

The Criminal Background Check and Child Line Abuse Clearance are both forms that are filled out and processed through Woods' Volunteer Office and Human Resources Department. Woods pays to have these clearances done for each volunteer. As of November 1, 2010, the results of both will be mailed to the volunteer's home address. It will then be the responsibility of the volunteer to submit the documents to the Volunteer Office to be kept on file.

The FBI fingerprints are mandated by DPW for all Woods' volunteers. DPW has chosen to utilize Cogent Systems to process this fingerprint-based FBI check. This means that the Volunteer Office has the ability to register volunteers, but not process them. So, following registration a volunteer will need to bring his or her receipt to a Cogent location to complete processing. Woods does pay for this check as well. The nearest locations to Woods are: (a) Bucks County Intermediate Unit 22, Doylestown, (b) Holy Family University, Philadelphia, and (c) Goin Postal, Hatboro.

Thank you for your understanding and continued commitment to Woods!

Knights of Columbus 5k Walk/Run

Fifty-eight people, including three Woods residents participated in the 2nd Annual Knights of Columbus 5k on Saturday, October 9th. The race began promptly at 10:00 am and went off without a hitch.



Tonya Felix, a volunteer at Woods since March 2010, conveyed, "It was a nice little event, great weather, great volunteers...I'm glad I went. I hope to do it again next year and will hopefully be able to bring friends. It's a nice little race that needs more racers!"

Mike Dolan, a gym teacher in the Mollie Woods Program shared, "The weather cooperated, making it a beautiful day to get some exercise and raise money for a good cause!"

"It was a beautiful day and it was great to see so many familiar faces along the trail. I enjoyed seeing my co-workers outside of work; everyone was able to just have fun and enjoy the day," expressed Alyson Komyanek, a Woodlands Program Specialist.



Right: Knight Ron DeLuca with Tonya Felix, a Woods volunteer who won the \$100 Best Buy gift card.

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Get Involved!



(<http://www.facebook.com/WoodsVolunteers>)

- *Stay updated on upcoming volunteer opportunities
- *Post comments about your volunteer experience
- *Connect with other volunteers at Woods
- *Show your support



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Volunteer Spotlight: Rebecca Sokol



My love of nature began when my family went on a trip to the Grand Canyon when I was 9-years-old. Since then, I have hiked and worked in the back country of Wyoming, Alaska and Vermont. In high school, I decided to combine my love of the outdoors with community service, but could not find a program to participate in; so I contacted Woods Services about developing a program that would allow me to share the wonders of nature with their residents. Setting up a new program required a lot

of planning and many phone conversations with the Woods staff, but it was worth it. About once a month, I meet my Redwood girls and their chaperones at Tyler State Park in Newtown, PA. Together we walk on the trails through Tyler's woods and fields. At first, it took a while for everyone to get comfortable with a new routine. Now, everyone is full of excitement when we meet up and anxious to get out on the path. On the way, we talk, laugh and get to know one another. The girls share things going on in their lives and I tell them what is happening with me. Together we share the beauty of the park and enjoy each others company.

At first, I thought volunteering at Woods would be a nice way to do some community service. Little did I know that I would end up with a new group of friends who share my love of the outdoors. Each month, I look forward to

sharing a few hours with them. I would never have guessed what a rewarding and fun experience my volunteering at Woods has become.

If you would like to nominate a volunteer to be recognized in next quarter's Volunteer Spotlight, please contact the Volunteer Office.