



March-April, 2011
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“Celebrating People in Action” National Volunteer Week April 10-16, 2011

Spring is in the air, hope abounds for sunny skies and National Volunteer Week celebrates and honors Probate and Family Court Volunteers, who dedicate themselves to taking action and solving problems - accomplishing extraordinary things through service.

Written on this page (and continued on page 4) are some of the successes and highlights of what volunteers have shared and what we've heard from others.

We thank you for your efforts in your continued support of children, seniors and families in our community. You are truly making a difference.



Exit interviews from Citizen Panel participants:

- What would you change: “In your program, nothing! Very impressed with the professional expertise and respect of your panel”.
- How you were treated: Very well. It serves a young person to meet with people that have the experience projected by those on the panel”.
- Useful experience?: “yes, yes, the panel was not judgmental or condescending and that was a big plus in my daughter’s eyes. They had her attention”.
- “Very thought out. It made her take ownership of what she’d done”.
- “Great. I loved the fact that the panel took time out of their lives to help shape the lives of others. You have my respect”.



From Learning Partners - Tutor mentors to at-risk elementary school age children, hopeful thoughts, making progress, volunteers making a difference:

- "She appears more confident with her attempts to read and do math - laughs and is more relaxed".
- "I'm encouraging her to talk because speech is one of her problem areas".
- "Friends seem to be important to her. She has a card that a friend made and wanted help reading it".
- "She is always ready to learn. I look forward to continuing work with her".
- "We have made a bracelet with her name on it. She wore it for several weeks".
- "She enthusiastically read several stories she had written: one about her basketball game and the other about her baby brother".

Continued on page 4.

Happy Birthday



March

| | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| Harold Adler | Carol Valko |
| Wanda Anstine | Margaret Scott |
| Jim Warner | Ellen Briggs |
| Beverly Saur | Pam Petajan |
| April Putman | Christina Beaudrie |
| Kim Nanni | |

April

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Arla Woodcock | Vern Kinner |
| Parker Field | Wilma Birdsall |
| Victor Rioux | Bonnie Lahde |
| Barbara Wilkins | Dick Deskovitz |
| Carlyn Mann | Reva Reed |
| Susan Kraus | Judine Leavitt |
| Kathy Blunck | John Campbell |
| Robert Raetz | Duane Straubel |
| Marco Pazienza | Rand Leach |
| Mary Jo Zazueta | Ronda Franklin |
| Maryanna Hathaway | Rachel Goodman |

Congratulations Wes and Arlene Nelson

Wes and Arlene Nelson received the Distinguished Service Award from the Traverse City Chamber of Commerce. The Nelsons were

honored for their many years of involvement with the National Cherry Festival, Rotary and Zonta Clubs, and many other activities where they have lent their expertise, time and support. Wes and Arlene have volunteered their time with our court since 1993 and have served as exit interviewers, transporters, and mentor/monitors for youth on probation. Wes was an integral member of our WOW—"World of Work" program in the past and currently volunteers his time as a mentor/monitor for Citizens Panel, our diversion program.

Congratulations!



New Vision Academy - A program which provides our juvenile offenders an opportunity for personal growth and development while keeping them busy and engaged during the summer, needs your help.

Over the past 3 summers, volunteers have introduced youth to life skills, art, drama, community service, health, recreation, cooking, film making and more by sharing their talents, experience and interests. This year we would also like to add to our "career opportunities" and "job preparation" segment.. Please consider joining our NVA Team.

It's not too early to think about taking part in this exciting program. Let us know how you can help by facilitating one morning class. Call us at 231-922-4827 or email at pcv@grandtraverse.org.

Thanks Amanda Steele, Assistant Prosecutor, for passing on videos for volunteers to view entitled Kids in Court, Investigating Child Exploitation and Kids In Court. She has also provided us with several websites from Department of Human Services, Corrections and more. Website information is available at our Volunteer Services Office, 231-922-4827 or email us at pcv@grandtraverse.org.



Welcome Interns

Volunteer Services has 4 interns this semester. We are pleased to have them with us. We have Kate Howard, a Ferris State University student, Katie Dockery, also a Ferris student, Ron Chrivia, a Northwestern Michigan College student and Haley Morris, a TBA Career Tech Center student.

Welcome interns, we're glad you're here!

Learning Partners

Grand Traverse County
Probate Court
Volunteers

Our outing to Interlochen to see a performance of "Sleeping Beauty" was well attended and enjoyed. The costumes and dancing were particularly well liked.

Learning Partners will be enjoying ice skating at Howe Arena again this year. We will skate on Friday, March 11, a "no school day" for Traverse City Area Public School students. Ice skating begins with skate rentals at 10:45 am, open skating until 12:20 pm followed by a pizza lunch. Parents, brothers and sisters are welcome to skate, but everyone must wear a helmet.

We have lots of new volunteers at this time, and the schools have been very helpful with new referrals.

See the front page of this newsletter for Learning Partner success comments.



Coming Attractions

April is National Child Abuse Prevention month. Probate & Family Court Volunteers are encouraged to join the Traverse Bay Advocacy Center and other community partners to raise awareness of child abuse in our region.

Look for announcements of this event from local media and we will keep you posted on how you may take part.

Free Online Training from the National Children's Advocacy Center

When you register (free), you will have access to 36 online courses including information on intimate partner violence, child abuse, trafficking, burns, shaken baby, sibling abuse, a long list all worth exploring for child advocacy.

To learn more about these free online courses go to www.nationalcac.org. Click on "Professionals" on the left side of the screen. Follow down to the free online training courses.



Grand Traverse County CASA has demonstrated quality program management by successfully completing the National CASA Standards Self Assessment.

This rigorous self-assessment required every 4 years "reflects National CASA's commitment to ensure every child we serve has the most powerful volunteer advocate working on their behalf".

National CASA certification recognizes that Grand Traverse County CASA meets the high standard for program operations and management.

Many thanks to Diana Zapalski, for her unwavering commitment to assist our office in compiling documents, identifying issues and whose expertise helped us to successfully complete this process.



**March is
"Parenting Awareness Month"**



CASA

On Tuesday, March 1, 2011, at 4:00 pm, Michigan CASA director Christie Lypka will be present to meet CASA volunteers and discuss her role and vision for Michigan CASA. All active and trained past and present CASA volunteers are invited to attend. Immediately following this one hour meeting, Ms. Lypka will join the new CASA training group by facilitating Chapter 2 - "The Law".

Note: CASA volunteers may attend this session as a refresh and all sessions of this CASA training session. Please call the office at 922-4827 or email, for topics and dates.

On Tuesday, March 15, from 4:00—5:00 pm, we will meet for case studies of current assignments. Bring your questions.

Details for our April activities/meeting will be announced through email or mail.



Grand Traverse County
Probate Court
Volunteers

Learning Partners
Nature Hike 2010



Learning Partners
Fishing at Kid's Creek 2010

Words from a CASA Volunteer

“Being a CASA is both the most heart-breaking and the most rewarding position I have ever experienced. The huge feeling of satisfaction knowing that you have changed an innocent child’s life will last a lifetime. I have always looked at this task with eyes of love for kids in need, never for any recognition. However, I have foster parents thank me for changing the course of a child’s life, how it would not have been possible without a CASA involved to speak up and stick with your gut that something needs to change. In a case I had 2 years ago, new parents were asked by a little girl, “can Miss Sue come over to visit?”

When their faces light up when they see me, that is the biggest thanks of all.



2010 Light of Hope
Child Abuse Awareness



Guardians are very special people. Excerpts below, from an email of thanks.....

“I have been a guardian for my sister since 2007 and just recently have had the privilege to work with her newly appointed conservator. I cannot speak highly enough about her and all that she has done for my sister and myself. She has been such a blessing in a very difficult time. She has gone out of her way to create a personal relationship with my sister to help her still feel a part of her own life and to ease her fears by knowing she has a support system behind her. If it was not for her positive attitude and willingness to keep communication open with me and her unbelievable commitment to help someone she did not even know, I don’t think the situation for my sister would be as positive as it is right now.

I honestly don’t know how I would have made it without her. One volunteer really can make a difference and affect the life of someone in such a positive way.

I have always believed God works in great ways and puts the right people in the right places.”



Guardian Beth Rideout



Guardians Barbara Winburne and
Carla Lamphere

Attention Volunteers!

Please watch for the insert in the
Traverse Record-Eagle during National
Volunteer Week, April 10—16, 2011.



GRAND TRAVERSE AREA LITERACY COUNCIL



Well, all of us at GTALC managed to survive the holidays and are back at the business of the Council-developing awareness on the part of the general public of the impact of illiteracy on the individual, the economy and society, the training of tutors and teaching adult learners to read.

GTALC just completed it's first tutor support workshop this January. It was an opportunity to share techniques, experiences and to learn new approaches. The tutors particularly appreciated the opportunity to share their successes with tutor colleagues.

Feedback from those in attendance was positive and a large number are looking forward to additional sessions in the future.

While on the topic of tutor training, I would like to remind you that the next tutor training session is scheduled for April, so pencil in these dates: April 6, 8, and 9. If you are interested in training as a tutor, please call our office at 231-922-4574 or email us at gtalc22@gmail.com. It will be a decision you will never regret.

Another upcoming event of special interest is GTALC's annual Book Sale which is held at Grand Traverse Mall in April. Each year the Mall sponsors a competition for area schools and provides cash grants to the schools which bring in the most books. GTALC then holds a sale of all books collected by the students.

The number of books collected is impressive, typically filling two stores in the Mall. The selection is equally impressive and every genre of literature is covered from religion/self help, to popular fiction, to text books, to a wide range of non-fiction. Typically there is a huge selection of children's material covering all ages.

Be sure to mark April 15 and 16 down so you won't miss the sale. The hours are 1:00 pm to 9:00 pm both Friday and Saturday and the prices are low.

Dick Thompson, President, Grand Traverse Area Literacy Council



The Laundry Project Cooking For A Cause

The Laundry Project enables people to do their personal laundry at no cost to them. It is funded and sustained entirely by donations and is designed to help low income families, senior citizens and indigent individuals with disabilities.

The Laundry Project has published a cookbook as a fundraiser. It contains recipes from DHS staff, family and friends. It also has a "surprise" recipe from a famous award-winning chef! Please call 231-929-0153.



Free Preschool

Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency and Traverse City Area Public Schools are now taking applications for the Head Start and Ready "Four" preschool programs.

Please call 231-947-3780 or 800-632-7334 for more information about Head Start and Ready "Four".





GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT
DAVID L. STOWE, PROBATE & FAMILY COURT JUDGE
280 Washington St, Suite B 150, Traverse City, MI 49684
922-4827

PRE-SORT STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49684
PERMIT NO. 229

Return Service Requested

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME
BEGINS
SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2011**

ALL MEETINGS TAKE PLACE AT VOLUNTEER SERVICES
UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

LEARNING PARTNERS

1st Tuesday—4:00—5:00 pm

Tuesday, March 1
Tuesday, April 5



CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)

3rd Tuesday – 4:00 – 6:00 pm

Tuesday, March 1
Please see page 3.

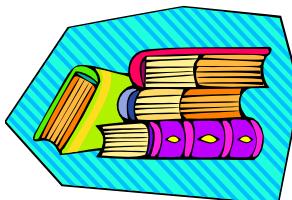
Tuesday, March 15
Tuesday, April 19



LITERACY COUNCIL
3RD Wednesday – 6:00 pm

Traverse Area District Library

Wednesday, March 16
Wednesday, April 20



Volunteers Sow “Seeds of Hope”

Please pick up your packet of seeds during National Volunteer Week at the Volunteer Services Office, April 10-15.

It's our “Bouquet of Thanks” to you.



Traverse City Chocolate Festival

2011

April 10, 2011



Call 231-941-8082 for details

MOOMERS

Presents the 5th annual
“A Taste of Summer”

Benefiting Munson Hospice
Saturday, March 12, 2011
Noon—9:00 pm
Please call 231-935-8485 for more
information