

The Volunteer Times

Volume 2, Issue 2

Johnson County Human Services

Summer 2009

New Volunteer Opportunity Personal Shopper

Do you have a sixth sense about finding bargains? Is the mall your second home? Then we urge you to think about becoming a Personal Shopper! Clients who can't drive, but are still able to leave their homes, need volunteers to take them to grocery stores, pharmacies and shops. Others who are housebound need shopping done for them (purchase a gift, stock up on food, pick up light bulbs, etc). They will give you a list along with a check or cash.

Some brief requirements for personal shoppers:

- Agree to a background check.
- If driving residents, complete a motor vehicle check annually.
- Submit proof of auto insurance annually.
- Agree to a long-term commitment in order to establish a relationship of trust.
- Complete appropriate documentation.
- Be at least 25 years old.
- Enjoy shopping and working with older clients.

For more information, contact Benita at 913-715-8859 or e-mail benita.webber@jocogov.org ☀

Calling All Outdoor Enthusiasts

We need volunteers to help with summer yard work!

- Mow grass, pull weeds, water, pick up fallen branches, plant decorative flowerpots.

This is a terrific opportunity for groups or clubs to earn community service hours and have fun in the sun!

- Services are as-needed or a regular schedule.



Honoring Boundaries: Entering a Client's Home

The older clients we serve may be frail, disabled, or lonely. We know you are compassionate and kind. But for safety's sake, volunteers are *not* allowed to enter a client's home unless authorized for a particular job.

- **Meals on Wheels volunteers** – Hand the meal to a client *at the door*, unless the client is specified as “knock-and enter” on the route sheet.
- **Catch a Ride drivers** – Meet the client *at the door*, but you may reach inside the home to set down packages.
- **Helping Hands volunteers** – You may enter a client's home if the job you will be performing requires it.

Please know that these restrictions exist to protect both you and the client. With the number of volunteers out and about in the County on any given day, it's impossible to track who is where at any one time. We don't want you to go into a dangerous situation – or our patrons to become victims.

Johnson County provides liability insurance for all volunteers. But if you enter someone's home and a few hours later we receive a call that a purse, jewelry, pet, Social Security check is missing – and you were the last person in the home (without a background check or permission by us to enter), our liability ceases.

What should you do if a client asks you for additional services inside? Tell them you will call the office **715-8859** and request a Helping Hands volunteer to come out and assist.

Please feel free to call with questions you may have.

Be smart. Be safe. ☀

Up Close and Personal: Profile of a Volunteer



Jayashree Kumar
Merriam/Shawnee
Meals on Wheels driver

Jayashree Kumar is a volunteer with Meals on Wheels. You pronounce her name “Jay-shree” or you can call her “Jay.”

Originally from India, Jay has lived in the area for 20 years. She is a full-time accountant and a volunteer tutor in English as a Second Language, or ESL, at a Johnson County adult education center. She also volunteers with The Art of Living, an international, non-denominational, educational and humanitarian non-profit organization with programs in more than 140 countries around the world.

Her interests include meditation and yoga every day, cooking and eating balanced meals, exploring alternative medicine and home remedies for minor ailments, and reading about personal and spiritual growth. Her 21-year-old son, of whom she is very proud, is in his fourth-year at medical school.

Jay started delivering for Meals on Wheels the first week of June 2008 and drives her route weekly.

“I started volunteering for Meals on Wheels because I enjoy helping people,” Jay said. I like to give something back to my community. Volunteering is rewarding for me because there are no expectations at the other end. It is my service and time that I offer without expecting anything in return. A smile and a “thank you” from clients makes me feel so happy inside. In the process, I am getting helped, as it makes me be a better person every day.”

While volunteering, Jay has gotten to know some of her clients.

“I am always delighted to see them and vice versa,” she said. “I enjoy meeting people and I miss those who are no longer receiving meals.”

At the Merriam/Shawnee Nutrition Center, she has become friends with Rita Voss, Nutrition

Center Assistant, and Mary Avila, Nutrition Food Assistant.

“Rita is a wonderful person who always welcomes everyone with a big smile,” said Jay. “And Mary diligently has all the coolers ready on time to be picked up and admonishes drivers to be careful! It means a lot.”

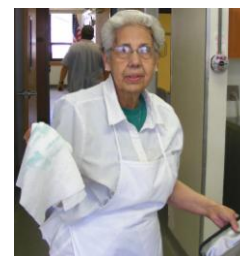
When it comes to volunteering, Jay offers this insight: “Volunteering is the best solution to all our personal problems. When I offer my service and help the community, my troubles seem to vanish.”



Inside the Merriam/Shawnee Nutrition Center



Rita Voss
Nutrition Center Assistant



Mary Avila
Nutrition Food Assistant

Did you know 30 percent of seniors skip at least one meal a day and 16 percent consume fewer than 1000 calories a day?

The Merriam/Shawnee Nutrition Center, in the Irene French Community Center at 5702 Merriam Drive in Merriam, makes the process of eating both nutritious and social! Monday through Friday, 20-25 senior adults and their spouses enjoy a meal designed by a nutritionist.

For a \$2.50 donation, patrons receive a meat, starch, vegetable, bread and butter, milk, and dessert. Often there’s entertainment, such as a recent lecture about training puppies to become seeing-eye or therapy dogs. On holidays, there’s usually dancing and singing around the piano.

The Center is expertly managed by Rita Voss, Nutrition Center Assistant for more than four years, and Mary Avila, Nutrition Food Assistant for five years. The site was originally an elementary school (a recent diner was a former teacher here) and then a part of Johnson County Community College. (continued on page 3)

Orientation Dates

Do you have friends or neighbors who are interested in volunteering but not sure what to do? Suggest they attend an orientation, at which we'll present the history and mission of Johnson County Human Services and answer all their questions. For orientation dates, visit <http://hsa.jocogov.org> or call Benita at 913-715-8859 or e-mail benita.webber@jocogov.org.



Rockin' The House

Volunteer Appreciation Event

The Town Hall in Shawnee's Old Town was abuzz April 22 as we honored you and your fellow volunteers at our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event! Our volunteer program coordinators provided entertaining skits that highlighted how each program operates, giving attendees some valuable insight into volunteer opportunities. Each volunteer program was represented and volunteers stood for many rounds of applause! Special thanks to US Foods and Driscoll Fruit for their generous food donations!


2009 Volunteer Appreciation Event Photos



Merriam/Shawnee Cont from page 2


The kitchen is the original Meals on Wheels "prep" kitchen; food is now prepared at 11875 S. Sunset Drive in Olathe and distributed to the Centers.

Besides overseeing the dining room, Rita and Mary also supervise the 110 meals delivered every weekday to clients through one of the nine Meals and Wheels routes from this location.

Recommend this dining option or one of our seven other nutrition centers to your senior friends and neighbors. Reservations are requested 24 hours in advance. For more information on the Merriam/Shawnee Nutrition Program, call 913-677-2048. 

We changed our name!

Did you know Johnson County Human Services & Aging is now officially **Johnson County Human Services**?

The new "umbrella" name will help us raise awareness of all the programs and services that the department provides: Accessibility, Area Agency on Aging, Housing Services, Information, and Outreach. A new logo was designed depicting a sunflower, human silhouettes, and the five program names. The new name and the new logo is part of an ongoing marketing and branding initiative, and should help us increase the public knowledge of each program. 



Volunteer & Program Coordinators

- ◆ Benita Webber – Volunteer Services
- ◆ Elvina Kroemer – Meals on Wheels
- ◆ Jane Hurst – Roeland Park Community Center
- ◆ Cherie Asante – Roeland Park Community Center
- ◆ Julie Marshall – Blue Valley Multi-Service Center
- ◆ Stevie Morris – Spring Hill Multi-Service Center
- ◆ Linda Rogers – Gardner Multi-Service Center
- ◆ Cindy Muehlberger – North Central Multi-Service Center
- ◆ Jodi Hitchcock – De Soto Multi-Service Center
- ◆ Barb Gerhard – Catch a Ride
- ◆ Karen Mitscher – SHICK

Nutrition Center Staff

- ◆ De Soto – Maxine Klamm
- ◆ Gardner – Shari Elsen and Frances Hutton
- ◆ Lenexa – Marcia Atkinson and Steve Constance
- ◆ Merriam/Shawnee – Rita Voss and Mary Avila
- ◆ Olathe – Marcia Jennings and Diane Schoenfeldt
- ◆ Overland Park – Rita Halvordson, Evelyn Cline and Susan LaRue
- ◆ Roeland Park – David Wood and Hazel Hoover
- ◆ Spring Hill – Gloria Hicks
- ◆ Blue Valley – Joe Gunter and Don Sears –Meal pick-up only!

Kudos to Candace

A very special thank you to Candace Koehler, a new volunteer, who wrote this newsletter for us. Candace has more than 25 years' experience in marketing and PR and has worked with such prominent clients as ABC's Extreme Makeover: Home Edition/Kansas City, the Kansas City Zoo, TJ Cinnamons Gourmet Bakeries, Kansas City Power & Light, the Harlem Globetrotters and Hallmark Cards, to name a few. Look for her helping in the office of the Roeland Park Community Center. 🌻

