Day of Service Reveals the Smiling Face
At the Caring Heart of Community

Once again, you’ve lead the way. The 2008 National Day of Service in May showcased anew the pride and the powerful presence of chapter members across the country. In fact, preliminary Day of Service participation data shows chapter volunteer engagement at some 14,000 members—a whopping 73 percent of the current overall estimate of 18,900.

“That’s just outstanding,” says Cindy Langley, interim director of the AARP Office of Volunteerism, “and we are most appreciative. It’s of tremendous value to know we can count on chapter support of this magnitude.”

In this issue our focus is volunteer service, and the following is just a taste of all that chapters achieved in celebrating volunteerism on behalf of AARP and the Day of Service. (A good amount of this information was gleaned from chapter entries at the Day of Service online community page at aarp.org!)

In Alabama, Bessemer/West Jefferson Chapter 5418 worked to give hope to young women in crisis at Grace House Ministries. A newer chapter, this was their first engagement in Day of Service. In addition to $1,300 in contributions, the chapter

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Seed Packs a Big Hit!

Talk about planting an idea! You would have to say that the “make your retirement money grow” seed packets campaign, which was covered in our last issue and concluded in July, was very popular indeed.

According to reports, chapters ordered a total of 65,000+ seed packets, a truly amazing amount, for distribution in their communities. The demand was so great that additional supplies had to be reordered twice. Way to go!

MATINEE MAGIC – Altamonte Springs 3578 in Florida celebrated its 25th anniversary with a Day of Service movie matinee for residents of an area nursing home. Sugarless cookies were provided, courtesy of Pepperidge Farms, and each resident received a gift basket with a small stuffed animal and assorted toiletries. Leading the project were, in front, Drs. Rae Wallen, chapter president, and Genevia Gano, legislative chair.
Chapter Begins New Tradition

Florida’s Lakes and Hills Chapter 5199 began a new tradition with a community-wide contest to recognize the valuable contributions made by volunteering seniors.

Nominees were solicited from local groups for the Senior Volunteer of the Year. At a gala luncheon, seven finalists were honored, including a local carpenter, a civic leader, a nurse, and Tax-Aide’s own Patricia Hash.

Nancy Hendrix, an AARP volunteer, a local hospital chaplain, and a retired librarian served as judges. Selecting a winner was difficult, given the varied contributions of the candidates. Ultimately, two co-winners were announced: an 84-year-old school mentor and a 91-year-old nursing home companion and musician. The winners each received a $50 cash prize, and all finalists were awarded gifts of books and certificates for their volunteer services over many years.

“We all feel humbled by the wonderful work these folks contribute,” Hendrix said.

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got hands-on in cleaning up the grounds at the facility. At Mobile 56, members entertained adult day care clients with stories and song, and assisted local senior citizens in shredding their sensitive documents. And Montgomery 528 collected enough goodies to serve several veterans’ hospitals.

In Arkansas, Maumelle 5359 hosted 150 at its community health fair, and Searcy Area 1002 brought reading materials for retirement center residents. Thirty-four chapters participated across the state.

In Delaware, state staff worked with 40 members of South Coastal 5226 and the Center for the Inland Bays, planting a schoolyard habitat at the Indian River High School. Georgetown 5340 members were at the Harrison Senior Living Center, planting a fresh selection of flowers and shrubs and providing a new table and chairs and two umbrellas for the patio. State Director Lucretia Young joined Hockessin Area 4612 at the local veterans’ hospital to offer breakfast and snack items, books to read, and a repertoire of songs.

Seaford Area 1084 held a similar project in their community.

There were 32 chapter projects in Florida, including Gilchrist County 2133, which sent 20 members, including 94-year-old Iris Roberts, to polish the fingernails of ladies at two nursing homes while the men were led in a washer toss game outside. The chapter’s motto is “Volunteering
is a Win-Win Situation,” says President Nancy Padgett, “and we really do enjoy what we do for the community.”

Williston Area 912 built a wheelchair ramp, Merritt Island 756 restocked the shelves and served lunch at a community pantry, Jacksonville-Arlington 1089 shelved books at their local library, and Greater Pensacola 364 visited a nursing home with gifts for the residents.

In Georgia a crew of Pickens County 3752 members cleaned up a local roadway.

Kentucky’s Jenny Wiley 3528 members were on hand at a local market, collecting over 1,200 pounds of food and $345 to benefit a distribution center serving 13 food pantries.

In Kansas, Manhattan 329 celebrated the Day of Service all week, totaling over 120 volunteer hours. Members worked a number of projects, including visiting the sick, doing administrative work at a local clinic, and leading a senior’s group on a field trip. They also collected $274 for their health department’s Send a Kid to Camp program and brought their Barbershop Quartet for a sing-along at a retirement facility.

All 32 Wisconsin chapters participated, including Augusta Area 3768, which held a community forum on ride-sharing opportunities and services available in rural Eau Claire County. Kaukauna 1834 showed what a small chapter can achieve, collecting prizes and hosting a terrific bingo event at a senior living center.

Other chapter projects in the state included planting flowers at a community civic center, collecting pet food for local animal shelters, and cleaning the yards of elderly residents.

To the west, over two dozen members of Huron Heartland 5248 in South Dakota delivered Meals on Wheels to 100 residents every day of Day of Service week. Other members cleaned windows and spruced up the grounds at the senior center while still MASS PLANTINGS – Ed Cvinar of Massachusetts and other members of Greater Peabody Area 4806 worked with parks officials to prepare 1,200 saplings for distribution to and planting at home by 3rd and 4th grade students from every elementary school in the area.

KITCHEN CREW – Milton Soreff, Chapter President Judy Anderson, and 16 other Summerlin 5094 members spent an enjoyable day helping in the kitchen and serving meals at the Catholic Charities in Las Vegas.
others helped at community thrift shops. The chapter’s contributions totaled nearly 150 volunteer hours.

Colorado’s Fremont County 1841 paraded a float at the annual Apple Blossom Festival and had a booth on behalf of Divided We Fail. The parade alone drew a crowd of 50,000 people. Black Forest 1100 was also active in support of DWF and co-hosted a shredding event with the AARP Foundation’s ElderWatch program.

Isleta Chapter 4208 in New Mexico sent 18 members to assist a community church cleanup. Rio Rancho Estates 663 entertained Alzheimer’s patients in Sandia Springs. And Carlsbad 651 delivered meals on wheels.

In Texas, Van Zandt County 1313 spent the day at their new local library. Boxes of donated books had to be opened, sorted, stamped, spine labeled, and fitted with checkout sheets. The contributions of members equaled a full week’s work for one of the library’s regular volunteers. Over at Lewisville 950, members collected Treats for Troops for our servicemen and women in Iraq.

Cypress Fairbanks 4543 in Houston spread their Day of Service over two days and 110 volunteer hours. On May 3rd, 14 members volunteered at a Boys and Girls Country Fundraiser. On May 10th, 16 members made and handed out 93 Mothers Day bouquets at Woodwind Lakes Nursing Home. And Webster Area 199 provided an ice cream social and dance for the Harbourview Care Center. (You’ll find a brief video at youtube.org under AARP Day of Service!)

Over in Louisiana, Metairie 725 coordinated visits to nursing homes, reporting 573 volunteer hours, while St. Tammany 3086 donated books, telephone cards and other items to Operation We Care benefitting the troops in Iraq. And Lafayette 4197 became a “Litter Patrol,” for the area around their meeting place, collecting 18 bags of all sorts of debris, from chunks of concrete to small tree limbs as well as paper and plastics.

South Carolina’s Spartanburg Chapter 223 collaborated with local agencies and partners in support of low-income residents and homebound seniors. Members’ efforts included coordination of a community food drive; installation of smoke detectors at a senior community; distribution of plants and blankets with matching pillows at another seniors’ residence; and the delivery of children’s clothing and books for use by a local foster care caseworker. Then they donated a television at a residential care facility and, later that evening,

BOOK BUNCH – Over a dozen members of Whitehall 3115 in Pennsylvania used their Day of Service to put children’s books in order in advance of their local library’s “Simply Stories” summer reading program. Shown above are Dale and Marge Baker, Ed and Mac Podorsky, and Bill Strauch.

SEWIN’ STUFF – Arkansas’ Fort Smith Day 5099 chapter supported the Jobs for Graduates program in preparing at-risk high school students for gainful employment. Renee Campbell, Jewell Cox, Lavonne Vearrier and other members helped to make blankets and footstools, which were later donated for the homeless at an adult day care center.
presented a community program on identity theft. Anderson 3693 collected 1,000 pounds of canned and dry goods for the Good Neighbor Cupboard.

Lenoir County 4109 in North Carolina again raised funds for the American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life. Last year the chapter raised $1,300, and this year improved the total to over $2,000. As gold level donors, the chapter was recognized in the local paper.

Up in Pennsylvania, the new and recently incorporated Allentown 5415 braved the rain to, suitably enough, work with the Lehigh Valley Municipal Water Suppliers and 1,200 area school children in promoting watershed education. The volunteers helped to staff a host of exhibits and escorted the youngsters to classrooms on the campus of Cedar Crest College where they learned more about water preservation. And the talented folks at Mars 3359 distributed homemade sweaters for children and lap robes for the elderly.

Due east, in New Jersey, Point Pleasant 2920 was on hand to help the staff at their adopted nursing home celebrate Nursing Home Week. Members assisted with decorations, helped serve the residents, and set up a gift auction for the staff. Jersey City 5102 manned a booth at the

**CHAPTERS, INFO CENTERS CONNECT**

Maximizing their resources and impact, chapters in a number of communities joined forces with fellow volunteers from the AARP Information Centers for the Day of Service.

In Texas, Northeast San Antonio 1043, Highland Park 1045, and Summit Oaks 3106 and volunteers from the San Antonio information Center, above, teamed up to assemble boxes, baskets, and bags of goodies for troops receiving treatment at the Brooke Army Medical Center. Similarly, members of El Paso 74, Eastside 1942, Kern Plaza 2477, Lower Valley 2615, Sundowners 4012, and Vista Hills 3994 worked with the El Paso Information Center to do the same for troops at Fort Bliss. In total, some 200 packages were donated.

In a very creative effort with Albuquerque-Bear Canyon 4380 and more than 1,600 Tax-Aide clients, the Albuquerque Information Center collected some 300 lbs of foodstuffs and $200 in cash to benefit the local Meals on Wheels program.

AARP Oklahoma staff, Oklahoma City 230 members, and Oklahoma City Information Center volunteers rode the Heartland Flyer train to the community of Ardmore, where they canvassed a neighborhood distributing Divided We Fail door hangers.

Up in Minnesota, volunteers from the Mall of America Information Center worked with Bloomington 1328 members, calling bingo and providing an ice cream social for two local retirement homes.

And in New Hampshire, Greater Concord Area 257 helped coordinate a fundraising mailing at the Concord Information Center for the Children’s Place, which provides day care, parenting education, and other support for area families.
first-ever Jersey City Festival, providing information for the adults and balloons and a count the jelly beans contest for the kids. The raffle of several baskets of cheer raised $500 for the Boys Scouts summer camp—this on top of the $700 raised by members in April.

Speaking of first-evers, members of brand-new Newark University Area 5398 hit the ground running for Day of Service, conducting a clothing drive for needy hospital patients, assisting staff at an extended care facility, and providing lap robes and a senior citizens awareness program at a nursing home.

New York was a hub of Day of Service activity, particularly in terms of providing food for the hungry. This was true in the Bronx, where 75 percent of the members of Wakefield Umoja 5396 distributed food packages to the parents, families, and community of the NAACP Day Care Center. In addition, over 50 members of Baychester 1395 collected non-perishable food items that they distributed to the needy at a food pantry in their area. Another 60-plus members of Riverdale 1546 collected funds for the area’s hungry as part of a major food and hunger project.

Elsewhere in the Empire State, Southern Rensselaer County 1123 created birthday cake kits complete with cake mix, frosting, and candles that were distributed to single moms from the Doors of Hope food pantry. North Country 3891 baked and delivered homemade cookies to Meals on Wheels recipients. Also, St. Laurence County 2831 knit, crocheted, and distributed 72 tote bags, 50 lap robes, and 170 garment protectors to four nursing homes in their area.

Led by Lorraine Acardi, Arlington 1255 in Massachusetts

PEACH OF A PAIR — Day of Service was a partnership effort for Fayette Chapter 2939 and the Fayette County Retired Educators Association in Georgia. And why not—they both meet at the same senior services center. Above, Janet Windham and Alice South demonstrate the spirit of teamwork that produced 50 beautiful Mother’s Day gift baskets for women receiving services at the community’s division of family and children services.

SERVICE NATION NEEDS YOU!

As part of our growing commitment to volunteerism, AARP is co-sponsoring the ServiceNation Summit—a national meeting to promote more opportunities for people to make a difference. CEO Bill Novelli will co-chair the Summit, which will bring together hundreds of leaders to promote service as a national priority. It will be followed by a September 27th Day of Action and kick off a year-long campaign for legislation to expand opportunities for people to help others in need.

You can learn more about the Summit, and your chapter can sign up for the September 27th Day of Action, at www.servicenation.org.

NRTA ALLIANCE BRINGS PROJECT OPPORTUNITY

Chapter volunteers may be interested to know that NRTA: AARP’s Educator Support Network, in partnership with Junior Achievement (JA), is rolling out a turnkey educational program called Mastering Money Management with YOUTH. Here are the details:

The program launched this spring as a pilot in four sites: Chicago, Columbus, Phoenix, and Washington, D.C. It is now being rolled out nationwide. Volunteers from all walks of life are sought to work with pre-screened schools that already know about the JA-developed curricula.

Typically delivered as six weekly, 45-minute sessions, the program is tailored by the teacher and the individual instructor to maximize volunteer flexibility.

For each program taught, the volunteer instructor will receive a $50 gift card to help at the gas pump! But you’re new to the classroom, you say? No need to worry. Teachers remain in the class with you. You can also enlist a buddy to deliver the program with you. You will receive a easy-to-use program toolkit with every lesson planned out, so no guesswork or outside preparation is necessary.

Why not call or email Julie Uritus at (202) 434-2109 or juritus@aarp.org for more information today.
50-50-50 Great Ideas: Community Service

In honor of AARP’s 50th Anniversary, C2C continues our 50-50-50 celebration of the great ideas submitted in response to our call for chapter best practices last year. We are recognizing 50 chapters and the 50 great ideas that, based on their creativity, innovation and community spirit, have earned those chapters 50 C2C bucks.

Reflecting the general community service theme of this issue, this installment of C2C features chapter ideas reflecting support for AARP’s volunteer engagement goals. We hope you find the thoughts, tools and techniques of others useful in furthering your chapter’s success.

Satellite Beach 1413 (FL)—During the holidays, the chapter gathers its Shoebox Gifts, which contain soap, shampoo, and other toiletries plus a coffee mug, mirror, or other personal item for the area’s homeless. About 110 boxes are gift wrapped each year for distribution by a local Guardians group. Chapter members also provide AARP programs and services exhibits at several fairs during the year, the largest of which attracts over 5,000 people.

Jasonville Area 429 (IN)—A cooks and books fundraising activity that started with a combination bake and yard sale progressed to the publication of a cookbook of members’ recipes and the sale of tasty homemade candy bars. Equally sweet, chapter volunteers also serve as back-up transportation volunteers for those in need of rides to doctor appointments, pharmacies, etc.

Labette County 2313 (KS)—Working with the local Head Start organization, chapter members volunteer as fill-in grandparents, engaging the youngsters in conversation, games, face-painting, and other activities. The project, members say, helps break down the generation gap by teaching kids that older folks are fun and do care.

Melrose 1124 (MA)—To the delight of the entire community, each April chapter members conduct their annual Strawberry Shortcake Festival. Musical entertainment is also provided to get the toes tapping after a plate of the tasty treat.

New Dorp 2712 (NY)—The opportunity for retirees and seniors to ask questions and get answers at a Meet the Candidates forum is something the community looks to New Dorp Chapter to provide, and appreciates.

Paramus Area 3834 (NJ)—In recognition of her leadership and 23 years of volunteer service to the chapter, the chapter held a special picnic to celebrate the 90th birthday of one of its founding members.

Pleasant County 5068 (WV)—The chapter’s popular back-to-school project provides elementary school pupils with backpacks and book bags full of pencils, pens, papers and other much needed supplies.

Warrenton 493 (VA)—Thinking out of the box, this chapter supports two local high schools in staging Post-Prom Parties designed to steer young people away from the use of alcohol.

Washington 1072 (RI)—Recognizing that most folks aged 50-65 are still working during the day, the chapter holds a special evening meeting each month. Program topics have included timely tips from a used car salesman. So far, 10 of the attending baby boomers have joined the chapter.

Woodlawn 1147 (NY)—With donations to their Toys for Needy Tots project reaching $500 annually, the chapter provides holiday gifts for some 100 children at a local hospital and homeless shelter. The result, says Catherine Mehigan, brings euphoria to the membership as well as pleasure for the children.

For additional information on these activities, including local chapter contacts, please contact CNU via rtoye@aarp.org.
delivered homemade cookies, cupcakes, and brownies for two local firehouses. Salem 2454, meanwhile, participated in a city-wide cleanup day.

In New Hampshire, Nashua 622 and Greater Concord Area 257 members participated in AARP-NH’s food sorting at the New Hampshire Food Bank in Manchester.

From Hawaii to Indiana and the Virgin Islands, pedestrian safety was a core AARP concern. St. Thomas 3138, St. Croix 3167, and St. John 4777 chapters were among 18 volunteer teams that conducted pedestrian surveys, assessed traffic patterns in key locations, and charted the lack of sidewalks in critical areas.

Quite a collection—partial in scope as it is—of what the hearts of AARP Chapter members can and do achieve on an any-given-day basis.

And there’s no better place to finish than where it all began. In Arizona, AARP Youngtown Chapter 1 collected and donated $1,000 worth of books to the Veterans Administration Hospital. Members also contributed $100 to a group that prepares calligraphy greeting cards to send to our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Many thanks to all our chapters, on behalf of the Office of Volunteerism, for another outstanding Day of Service!