

# VGH Guild News

## Laying the groundwork for changing volunteer roles at The Vic

**Just three months into the job, Volunteer Services Manager Sandra Milotte has embraced the challenge of adapting the volunteer program to the changing needs of the hospital during the pandemic. Following is her report on the current status of volunteering at The Vic and what we can expect in the near future.**



**Sandra Milotte**

Approximately 160 volunteers participated in July and August's survey and the survey continues to prove extremely beneficial in aiding Volunteer Services with the continuous planning of the return of volunteers to VGH. Volunteer Assistant Liz Krawitz is currently reaching out by phone to those who did not complete the survey. Thank-you to all for your time in answering our questions!

The volunteer program needs analysis is an ongoing assignment; priority at the moment has shifted to programs that may possibly support the return of volunteers. Early assessments suggest there is significant reworking of volunteer roles needed to be in line with today's hospital model.

This year 80 volunteers are being awarded service milestone awards. Collectively this group volunteered 53,785 hours during their volunteer career with VGH. Incredible! Pins were mailed out on September 22. If you haven't checked the Victoria General Hospital Facebook page in a while, make sure to look at Thursday, September 24th's throwback post!

I am currently writing a proposal for our next wave of volunteer return based on what other facilities within WRHA are currently doing and/or what has been successful. The proposal will include modified volunteer job descriptions based on the program needs analysis as well as pandemic-specific requirements. We will be 'recruiting' within our own active volunteer population to fill the jobs. It is important to note that at this time we have two major considerations: the pandemic and how that is affecting our ability to bring back volunteers safely and the necessity to modify, change, delete and create volunteer jobs based on program needs. We cannot guarantee that volunteers will be offered the same position as they may have once held, but our goal is to offer meaningful volunteer assignments while bringing much wanted support to VGH programs.

In the month of August we had 51 volunteers contribute hours! With the return of volunteers comes the requirement to limit the number of people in the lounge at one time to 5. It is imperative that we adhere to this at all times. If the numbers exceed this limit, people will be asked to immediately leave. In the past many volunteers simply came and went without scheduling to perform their duties. We now require each volunteer to be 'scheduled' and limit their number of requests to once per week or every other week depending on the role. This is not only for safety reasons, but to also observe strict physical distancing requirements in the hospital. As such to facilitate needed space for volunteer jobs the lounge must now be booked through Volunteer Services; bookings will be prohibited between 12 and 1pm due to shortage of luncheon space hospital-wide. At all times volunteers must wear a face mask or required personal protective equipment as designated to their role and wear it properly (no pulling the mask under the nose or chin, etc.).

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Lastly, we ask that volunteers do not come to the facility unless they are scheduled to work a shift or have made arrangements with Volunteer Services staff (Sandra, Liz or Denise). The limit of persons also pertains to the Volunteer Services office, locker room and Guild room. VGH leadership periodically performs spot checking to ensure current Covid-19 protocol compliance and by a landslide we want to stay on the complying side of audits.

***Sandra Milotte, Volunteer Services Manager***

## **Gift Shop expands operating hours, brings back more volunteers**

Fall is most definitely in the air! Norma and Barb flipped the store and it is full of all the warm colours of autumn. Last week we opened with newly expanded hours; we are now open 11:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Thursday. We are slowly increasing our hours to allow more volunteers the opportunity to return to the shop. I am happy to report we now have approximately 20 volunteers working in the shop regularly. The new hours are also a positive for our bottom line, which in turn supports all the amazing initiatives the Guild provides to our patients. The volunteers are doing a fantastic job of keeping up with our exceptional customer service while being proper examples of physical distancing. I am very proud at how well we have adapted to this new normal.

I look forward to seeing even more blue vests in the coming weeks...having you in the hospital brings joy to the staff and the patients!

***Robyn Jones, Gift Shop Coordinator***



*From left, Irene Schell and Lilian Vinet*



## Volunteers step up to assist VGH during pandemic

We can all agree, I'm sure, that the last 6 months has changed our world immensely. Volunteering at our beloved Vic has not gone unscathed. Not since the 1990 Nurses Strike did we see volunteers impacted. For the whole month of January, 1990, Volunteers were withdrawn from "active duty". Volunteers were soon back "on duty" however and our Guild continued to help enrich patient, staff and visitor experiences here at The Vic.

In 2020, for the health and safety of our Guild Members, we were once again withdrawn from "active duty" due to the risks associated with COVID-19.

We all struggled with this in many ways. We all missed volunteering at the Vic. How do we stay connected? What a delight when our wonderful Publicity and Communications Team – Lesley Iredale and Zdenka Melnyk offered to create a weekly newsletter. Keeping up to date with the happenings at The Vic and the amazing frontline workers – our Healthcare Heroes, and so much more, made a difference. Thank you to Lesley, Zdenka and of course, our amazing Volunteer Services Team – Denise and Liz for sending out this weekly newsletter.

During this time, our Guild continued to meet and often exceed the needs of Victoria General Hospital. With Robyn Jones working tirelessly in the Gift Shop with the many initiatives such as care packages, activity kits and day to day communication with Hospital Administration, Departments, and the Guild Board and other Guild Members.

In early April, the Hospital Administration approached the Guild to help provide non-medical cloth masks for staff to wear after hours. Soon our Mask Task Force Extraordinaire came into being. A talented team of 8 volunteers produced over 500 masks as of July. Visitor restrictions were revised in late July and with that the need for hundreds of more cloth masks. Volunteer Services put out a call to our Volunteers and our Mask Task Force Extraordinaire has grown to over 30, including packaging masks and mask making kits. To date, this team has created over 1,500 masks since April, 2020.

Sandra Milotte, Volunteer Services Manager joined the Vic in June, 2020. Working with Sandra these past few months has been exhilarating. Together, I am confident that the Guild and Victoria General Hospital will continue to make a difference for years to come.

Our Guild Board for 2020-2021 is committed to working diligently to create new initiatives, build on our successes and secure a strong future.

Your opinion, your feedback and suggestions are important to me. Please reach out at any time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Stay safe and may good health and happiness sustain you for the days ahead.

*Louise Horst, Guild President*



*Louise Horst*

## Victoria Lifeline continues to serve clients safely during pandemic

Did you know Victoria Lifeline services 350 communities in Manitoba through our partnerships with local senior resource councils? We also hired a local representative in Steinbach last year and we were nominated for the 2020 Steinbach Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards in the non-profit category in recognition of the work we do enhancing the well-being of seniors living in the community.

Victoria Lifeline continues to be operational, adhering to the safety guidelines established by Shared Health. Many older adults are at risk of isolation during the COVID-19 outbreak, and Victoria Lifeline can help them feel safe and connected during this difficult time. Our volunteers continue to impact the lives of our clients in so many ways, providing them and their families with valuable peace of mind.

If you haven't already, please take a moment to subscribe to our healthy living blog <https://www.victorialifeline.ca/resources/blog>. With lots of great articles on topics like how to get a good night's sleep and staying connected when physical distancing keeps us apart, there is something for everyone!

*Krystal Stokes, Communications & Public Relations Manager, Victoria Lifeline*



## Committee extends fundraising draw

The Guild Fundraising Committee, under the leadership of Nadine Slight, continues to raise money for the hospital despite the restrictions of the pandemic. The traditional September monthly draw has been extended to two months to allow for more tickets sales while the Gift Shop operates under reduced hours.

The Autumn Draw features a luxurious host/hostess gift basket consisting of crystal wine glasses, serving plates, glass pitcher, 3-piece tea set and much more. Beautifully wrapped, the basket would make an ideal Christmas gift. Tickets are available in the Gift Shop until October 30.



## We'll miss you, Grace...keep in touch!



*In 2004, Grace was presented with her Life Membership by Lesley Iredale.*

The Guild bids a fond farewell to long-time volunteer Grace Rose who is moving to Brandon to be near her family. During her time at VGH, Rose made many friends among Guild members, including special friends Lesley Iredale and the late Flora McCallum.

Grace also built an impressive record of service to the hospital from 1985 to 1988, and again from 2001 to 2020. As an Oncology clinic volunteer, she was instrumental in bringing to The Vic the *Look Good Feel Better* program which provides beauty workshops for women facing a cancer diagnosis. She also volunteered in Emergency and participated in various Guild activities. She served as Guild Board president in 1991 and 1992. Grace was active in many fundraising projects including bake sales, book sales, bridge luncheons and various special events. She received her Life Membership in 2004.

## Did you know...

The VGH Volunteer Guild is a registered charity. Anyone who makes a donation of \$10 or more receives a tax receipt. All funds raised are used to improve patient care and services at the Victoria Hospital. Over the past 40+ years, the Guild has donated more than \$4 million toward healthcare services and equipment.