

April 26, 2017 — VVCC honors volunteers for outstanding services

In honor of National Volunteer Appreciation Month, Verde Valley Caregivers held its annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, April 20, at Sedona Rouge Resort and Spa. About 80 guests and volunteers attended.

"The Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon is one of the best days of the year for VVCC," said Executive Director Kent Ellsworth. "It's great to see our volunteers together in one place to celebrate the difference they make for the neighbors we serve."

Guests received a big surprise upon arrival at the luncheon. VVCC volunteer Lisa Simpson and two of her children, Everette and Linnea, presented hand-made paper medals to thank volunteers for their service. The medals were all inscribed "Volunteers are Super Heroes."

VVCC Board President George Ault welcomed volunteers and thanked them, on behalf of the board, for their great work in helping older adults stay living independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

Ault also introduced special guest Darla DeVille, Community Affairs manager, Northwest Division of Arizona Public Service, a luncheon sponsor, who said APS has committed for a second year to help support VVCC's Guardian Angel medical alert program.

Guest speaker Anne Snowden Crosman talked about her book "Young at Heart – 61 extraordinary Americans tell how to defy age with zest, work and healthy lifestyles." Crosman said happiness was the common theme. She and the audience identified eight ways to keep us happy: laughing, loving, spirituality, friends and socializing, stretching your mind and body, eating healthy, and being helpful and productive.

Crosman was the first woman hired by CBS Radio Network in 1973 to do regular hourly news broadcast from New York City. She then reported for NBC and Mutual Radio Networks, in the US and Europe. In Arizona, She was afternoon host for "All Things Considered" on KNAU, Arizona Public Radio in Flagstaff, AZ. Anne currently lives in Sedona where she writes non-fiction books, edits manuscripts, teaches writing, and researches Arizona issues, including the environment, the legislature, and the judiciary. She also teaches for Yavapai College's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

Ellsworth and staff thanked volunteers for providing record services to 2,400 older adults in 2016. Addressing volunteers, Ellsworth said, "We are doing amazing work for the seniors we serve and it's all due to your efforts. Thank you so much for the help you provide." About 374 volunteers delivered a combined 81,210 hours of service. They also provided 31,121 individual services, ranging from friendly phone calls, assistance with grocery shopping, and help with minor household repairs. Most notably last year, volunteers provided 22,560 trips for older adults.

Special recognition was given to volunteers who drove the most miles and served the most hours. Hubert Ballesteros received honors for driving over 24,000 miles and for providing 2,647 hours of service. Bill Macuri also received honors for driving 22,400 miles and providing 2,552 hours of service. Fran and Jim Stowell received honors for providing 19,000 miles and 1,861 hours of service.

VVCC also honored volunteers for five, ten, and fifteen years of service. The following volunteers were awarded five-year pins: Leonard Filner, Steve Schliebs, and Lee Thomas. Ten-year pins were awarded to: Sai Chang, Ed Lewis, Gloria Lewis, Sherry Young, Mike Splendore, Barb Splendore, Jan Anderson, Patrick Murphy, Joe Scully, Marianne Scully Ellen Simon, Cindy Walker, Brian Makoff, and Rita Harding. Volunteers with fifteen and more years of service are: Lorraine Plaunt, Jan Tanis, Mary Lajala, Ed Lajala, Dave Draves, Isabell Blanton, Aida Popp, Ruth Kiessel, Liz Sweeney, and Loretta Engelhardt.

This year, VVCC celebrates 25 years of helping older adults in need. Volunteers Dave Draves, Chuck Lougheed, and Dee Markle were recognized as founding volunteers, serving over 20 years.

VVCC thanks following businesses for donating gift certificates and prizes given to volunteers during the event: Cowboys & Angels, Desert Flour Bakery & Bistro, Dominos Pizza, Famous Pizza, Gifts Galore, Jay's Bird Barn, Java Love, Jazz Bouquet & Tea Room, Judi's Restaurant, Kachina House, Kealyn's Klostet, Massage Matters, Namti Massage, Nancy's Hair, Nick's Westside, Olde Sedona Bar & Grill, Picazzo's Organic Italian Kitchen, Randall's Restaurant, Sedona International Film Festival, Snap Fitness, Steak & Stuff Restaurant, and Szechuan Restaurant.

With 500 more seniors expected to need our help by the end of the year, VVCC will need additional volunteers. Operations & Mobility Manager Kim Meller said "Volunteering with us is very flexible. You decide when and how often you can help." For more information call (928) 204-1238 or email: kimmeller@vvcaregivers.org. You may also visit our website at: www.vvcaregivers.org for a full list of volunteer opportunities.



(left to right) Chuck Burkitt, George Ault, Bill Macuri, Hubert Claunts, and Kent Ellsworth



(left to right) Kent Ellsworth, Loretta Engelhart, Dave Draves, Ed Lajala, Mary Lajala, Claudia Ault, and George Ault



(left to right) George Ault, Chuck Lougheed, Dave Draves, Kent Ellsworth, and Dee Markle.



Everette and handmade medals for the volunteers