

April 20, 2015- VVCC honors volunteers for record number of services

by Amanda Skonhvd

In honor of National Volunteer Appreciation Month, Verde Valley Caregivers held its annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, April 9, at Oakcreek Country Club in Sedona. Nearly 100 guests attended, including 85 VVCC volunteers.

"The Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon is one of the best days of the year for VVCC," Executive Director Kent Ellsworth said. "It's great to see all our volunteers together in one place. The difference they make is phenomenal for hundreds of older adults. This event is a celebration of the difference they make."

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

Ault also recognized long-time volunteer, Mary Eichman, who passed away on March 31. VVCC estimates that Mary dedicated 8,000 hours of volunteering over her 15 years of service. "She set a very high standard for volunteerism," Ellsworth said. "She rolled up her sleeves and got work done. She not only provided a service to older adults, but she inspired everyone around her." Mary's daughter, Julie Reed, attended the event in her mother's honor.

Sedona City Council Member Angela Lefevre served as the event's guest speaker. She spoke about her own experiences with volunteerism, and her recent efforts to serve the community as VVCC's newest volunteer. Lefevre thanked all volunteers for their inspiring service to the community. "Volunteerism is who we are as people and how we can help others," she said. "I thank you for all that you do."

Ellsworth and staff thanked volunteers for providing record services to 2,200 older adults in 2014. About 350 volunteers delivered a combined 45,000 hours of service. They also provided 28,000 individual services, ranging from friendly phone calls, assistance with grocery shopping, and help with minor household repairs. Most notably, volunteers provided 14,000 rides for older adults, and nearly 2,000 home visits.

Special recognition was given to volunteers who drove the most miles and served the most hours. Fran Stowell of Camp Verde received honors for driving 7,000 miles and providing 245 hours of service. Elaine Boyer of Rimrock also received honors for driving 6,000 miles and providing 252 hours of service. Also recognized for driving the most miles were: Hubert Ballesteros, Cottonwood, 5,900 miles; Jim Stowell, Camp Verde, 4,700 miles; Bill Macuri, Cottonwood,

5,300 miles; and Torrey Barcanic, Cottonwood, 3,400 miles. Also recognized for most hours were: Sherry Young, Camp Verde, 476 hours; Lee Weller, Rimrock, 248 hours; and Leonard Filner, Cottonwood, 180 hours.

VVCC volunteer Cindy Walker won a gift certificate for dinner for two for recruiting three new volunteers prior to the Appreciation Luncheon.

VVCC thanks the following businesses for donating gift certificates and prizes given to volunteers during the event: Avon, Chocolate Tree, Curves, Desert Dancer, Domino's Pizza, Java Love, Jay's Bird Barn, Jazz Bouquet & Tea Room, Kachina House, Namti Massage, Massage Matters, My Dobro, Nancy's Hair, Nick's West Side, Olde Sedona Inn, OLLI, Randall's Restaurant, Sedona Fudge, Sedona Lavendar, and Szechuan Restaurant. VVCC also thanks Ron and Dee Barber for the donation of table centerpieces and "cups of kindness."

With 900 older adults expected to become neighbors in the next year, VVCC faces the challenge of recruiting more volunteers than ever. Ellsworth noted, "We hope that in 2016 we have over 120 new volunteers in attendance for this event. The Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon is a time to celebrate, and we'd love to have that many new volunteers join us."



Cindy Walker, winner of a gift certificate for recruiting three new volunteers, with Executive Director Kent Ellsworth.