

Profile of the volunteer is changing

Metropolitan Detroit's need for volunteers grows every year and the trend is expected to continue through the decade, according to a recent survey by Center for Volunteerism, a community service program of United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit.

A total of 192 health and human service agencies in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties responded to the survey, which was designed to identify the growing needs of organizations that depend on volunteers.

While volunteers of all ages and with all kinds of skills are needed, the survey indicates that people with communications, management assistance and social work skills are in greatest demand.

Volunteer clerical staff are always needed and valued, but these

new findings point to the higher skill and knowledge level now required by agencies.

"To attract skilled people to fill the new needs, we must shatter the longstanding stereotype that volunteers are envelope-stuffers and candy-stippers," said Nathan Borofsky, chairman of the center's advisory committee. "Potential volunteers should be aware that we need skills in all of the technical and professional disciplines."

"The volunteer profile has changed as our society changes, and this shift is reflected in the survey results," Borofsky said. "In the past, most volunteers were women who didn't work outside the home. Today, while women still predominate as volunteers, the ratio between men and women has narrowed."

"In addition, with more corporations encouraging their employees and retirees to volunteer, another dramatic change will be infusion of new talents, advanced skills and experience into the volunteer sector," he said.

ACCORDING TO Lonnie Ross, chair of the center's public information subcommittee, "Corporations that in the past had supported community programs primarily with financial contributions are now encouraging their current and retired employees to participate by donating their skills."

"Companies are supporting the employee efforts in different ways, too, such as paid time off for charitable duties, cash contributions to the charities, and peer recognition through employee publications."

National Volunteer Week, celebrated April 26 to May 2 this year, will recognize the thousands of people in the tri-county area who give their time and expertise to helping others.

The center staff asks residents to watch for the red, white and blue lapel ribbons around town during National Volunteer Week and say "thank you" to the people wearing them for helping make the Detroit area a little nicer.

A Volunteer Opportunities Guide is published annually by the center to help area residents identify those organizations best suited to their skills and interests. The guide lists more than 600 agencies and briefly describes the volunteer services needed. For a free copy of the Volunteer Opportunities Guide, call Center for Volunteerism at 833-0622.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Elegant simplicity

Linda Stencel's wooden miniatures are as simple as a paper cut-out, yet finished with delicate and exquisite detail. Her lamp bases are antique sugar bowls topped with shades painted to match the design on the Bavarian and English china. The artist's work will go on display and up for sale from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, May 9, with the works of about 80 who join for Farmington Community Center's Arts and Crafts Show.

Specialist warns against improper sunglasses

Sporting the latest in sunglass fashion may be a great way to attract attention at the beach, but you're also attracting the harmful rays of the sun and run a higher risk of developing premature cataracts, according to Henry J. Spiro, a cataract specialist.

"Most of us believe sunglasses protect our eyes, but because the majority of sunglasses today don't have ultraviolet (UV) filters I'm seeing an increased number of cataracts in younger people," said Spiro. Typically, cataracts are found in senior citizens because they are the natural aging process of the eye.

This causes the lens of the eye to become cloudy interfering with the passage of light to the retina.

Studies done on the effects of the sun's radiation indicate ultraviolet light can damage the retina, the delicate inner lining of the eye which contains nerve fibers essential for seeing. Normal sunglasses filter out visual light, causing the pupil to dilate. This allows more UV light to be absorbed by the lens causing cataracts and retinal damage.

THE AMOUNT of ultraviolet light in the atmosphere increases with the degree of sunlight, altitude and

ground reflectivity. Therefore, outdoor sports enthusiasts and people who work in direct sunlight are in a high risk category for early cataract formation.

Dr. Spiro has urged legislators to pass a bill requiring all sunglasses manufacturers to label sunglasses with information on the amount of ultraviolet filtration provided by their products.

In the meantime he recommends consumers look for sunglasses that offer ultraviolet protection. Prescription sunglasses consumers should ask their optometrists or opticians to recommend glasses with UV protection.

tion. Spiro was one of the first ophthalmic surgeons in Michigan to use UV filtered intraocular lenses during implant surgery performed on cataract patients.

"Unfortunately, a large number of surgeons are still not using the UV filtered implants," he said.

"For those patients who are not sure if they have this protection, or for those who had their implants done before September 1982, when the UV filter was introduced, I recommend you obtain UV filtered sunglasses from your optometrist," said Spiro.

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