



Volunteer Chore Services

Bringing Community Home

Volunteer Chore Services
Catholic Community Services
2nd Quarter Narrative

July 8th, 2011

Summer Greetings,

Through the first half of 2011, Volunteer Chore Services (VCS) in King County was forced to make several very difficult decisions and changes to our program as the result of funding reductions. Work hours were reduced for all staff and one FTE position was eliminated resulting in a decrease of program staffing by 21%. With our new fiscal year beginning on July 1st, we are pleased that we will be able to return remaining staff to full time hours, however we will not be able to rehire the 1.5 FTE's lost. A new Intake specialist will be hired at .5 FTE instead of 1 FTE as in the past. Intake hours for new requests will be reduced as a result of the part-time hours.

While we struggled to find creative ways to make up for lost hours and employees, requests for services increased dramatically. In South King County for example, referrals for services increased 26% for the first 5 months of 2011 when compared to the same period last year. One explanation of this increase is a trickle down effect as the economy continues to challenge seniors and their families. One senior in Renton contacted VCS looking for housework, laundry and grocery shopping assistance because her family can no longer help. Her daughter used to drive over every two weeks from Eastern WA to help with the chores mentioned, but due to recent unemployment, she can't afford the gas. A volunteer has been matched to visit every two weeks to help with those tasks that the daughter is no longer able to do.

As a result of the influx of service requests and our limited staffing, we made the difficult decision to decline all new client referrals for the month of June. The temporary moratorium allowed us to focus on the backlog of service requests and maintain and provide support for existing clients. We reopened intake of new clients on July 1st, but intakes are accepted on a case-by-case basis based on volunteer and service availability in one's region.

With all the difficult news above, we are proud to share, that even with the increase of demand and the limitation on staffing, we were still able to increase service hours by 10% over this time last year. We continue to help hundreds of clients each month, averaging 3,972 hours of chore assistance and transportation throughout King County.

In Auburn we've taken advantage of the dry weather and took care of a lot of outdoor requests. Gutters have been emptied/repared, weeds pulled, yards mowed, trees cut down and even built a ramp totaling 65 hours outside. Many of the requests were direct referrals from Auburn Minor Housing Repair and we were pleased to partner to provide much needed services.





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In Covington this quarter we provided services to 5 seniors including 2.5 hours for communication, 14 hours of housework, 8 hours shopping and 17.5 hours of medical transportation. A new client served this quarter was Ms D. In her 80's and living alone in her home, she struggled to keep up with her indoor housework. We were able to match her with a young woman who visits regularly helping with vacuuming, floors and some heavier cleaning that Ms D is no longer able to tend to.

A heartbreaking story in Renton is that of Ms F. A new referral to VCS, looking for indoor and shopping assistance, she found herself with the family support or financial support to get the job done. Never having children of her own and out living most of her family, there is no family support to turn to. And although her husband was a wiz with money and they saved their entire lives for retirement, his long illness and years of expensive in-home care ate away their savings leaving Ms F with very minimal financial security to fall back on. She was referred to us through a local church when Ms F reached out for assistance. We have successfully placed a volunteer in her home for three visits a month to help with housework and companionship. We continue to look for a volunteer who is able to drive her to the grocery store and help with errands and am hopeful to have this service in place within the next few weeks.

In May we coordinated a group of volunteers in SeaTac for a day helping residents with various needs, such as pressure washing sidewalks and walkways, cleaning outsides of homes, painting, housework, yard work, and of course visiting and chatting. Volunteers spent an entire morning clearing a walkway of moss and debris to make it safe for one senior to walk into her own back yard. By the end of the day she was able to be outside in the back yard with the volunteers and to tell them stories about her rose bushes and flowering garden. The volunteers loved visiting with her so much, that some of them have asked about coming back to do more volunteer work at her house.

Thank you, as always, for your support.

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