

## **KARSP Volunteers Are Everywhere!**

**Kansas Association of Retired School Personnel** units have some of the best people in Kansas as members. Certainly the best volunteers. Our members are crucial to the greater good of Kansas citizens. We are found in churches, at church camps, libraries, hospitals, schools, assisted living and care homes, senior centers, food pantries, historical societies, museums, art councils, colleges, fine arts activities, service organizations, lobbying and taking political action, helping in prisons, at domestic violence centers, soup kitchens & food banks, in foreign and domestic mission fields, animal shelters, assistance & service leagues, and the zoos, donating huge amounts of energy and time.

Our people volunteer in a wide range of civic and humanitarian organizations. Examples cited in this year's reports are: Youth for Christ, Gideon International, Daughter of the American Revolution, Salvation Army, Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, 4-H, Red Cross, Relay for Life, Cancer Society, Heartland Kidney Network, Heart of America Hospice, Lions Club, AARP/NRTA, Big Brothers & Big Sisters, Pioneer Camp, VanGoArts, RSVP, Peace Connection, Kanza Prairie and other nature stewardship sites, Amelia Earhardt Museum, Negro League Baseball Museum, Governor's One Shot Turkey Shoot, and Angel Food Ministries.

Some of the things KARSP and unit members were involved in this year are: Our units collected thousands of dollars in scholarship money for students, worked to help people rebuild after natural disasters, worked with seniors on tax preparation, looked after the spiritual needs of our young people, had fund-raising musical benefits and golf tournaments, rang bells at Christmas, crocheted "toastie toes" for our troops. We collected and donated aluminum can tabs for Ronald McDonald House, box-tops and soup labels for schools, hats and mittens for school children, provided animal shelters with supplies, and stuffed animals for children at crisis center. We gave blood, helped with funeral arrangement, knitted afghans for cancer patients, lobbied legislators for healthcare and a COLA for KPERS, provided gifts, clothing, and food to needy families, mentored and tutored foreign students in English, took treats and gifts to teachers still in the field, helped with living history lessons.

**Space prohibits naming everything that units and individuals do. But a few examples** of our members continued dedication are seen in **Ark City's Shirley Morrison** and her long-term association with Big Brothers & Big Sisters, **Janet Duncan's** work with Hand to Hand tutoring in Manhattan, Brown County's **Larry Weast** and the work he does with young people in hunter safety classes, **Carol Musick's** dedication to helping grow Butler County membership and her tireless advocacy for the American Kidney Foundation. **Marilyn Flanders** of the Coffeyville unit put a dream into action and runs a clothing room for the needy in her area. Another dream into action is retired Army officer **Gary LaGrange**, from Manhattan, who began an initiative called "Help Us Learn: Give Us Hope" that has filled thousands of backpacks with school supplies to send to children in Afghanistan (children who heretofore had not even had pencils). **Gary Haworth** of Douglas County went on a mission with his church to Honduras this year. **Judy Jones** spearheads her unit's support to The Teacher Hall of Fame in Dodge. **Ted Roberts** in Salina plays the piano for the residents of a retirement facility EVERY morning for an hour. We would be remiss if we didn't recognize those of us whose efforts never flag even in the midst of our own needs. One particular person I know about is **Betty Hight** in Southeast Kansas. Her concern and caring for others has been present even as she herself endured chemotherapy, radiation, and fought cancer.

**Johnson County and Wyandotte County** units have had a long-term commitment and relationship with Crosslines, a shelter for needy folks. **Allen County** helps with the Trolley Tours and the Angel Food Ministries. **Chanute** reports over 48,000 hours of volunteer work so it would be hard to name all they do. However, one on-going project that the community is especially thankful for is their monetary support to low income students at the Cherry Street Youth Centers. Toothbrushes and toothpaste are collected and given to these young people. Chanute members also provide them with monetary help for the purchase of glasses, wheelchairs, and dental care. Dickinson County, Salina Area, Junction City, Manhattan Area, Johnson County, Wyandotte County, Arkansas City, Butler County, Harvey County, Valley Center, Wichita, Cherokee County, all reported collecting money for student scholarships.

As you can see. We **are** always there. We truly **are** lifelong learners and teachers. We **do** touch lives! We **do** make a difference! We **still** lead the way!