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Neighbors InDeed Needs YOU !

BY BARRY MACKINTOSH

Neighbors InDeed is an all-volunteer organization--a labor of love. It welcomes Lincoln Hills residents not only to take advantage of its services but also to join its volunteers in providing those services.

You probably know about HANDY HELPERS, the majority of Neighbors InDeed's volunteers. They're the ones who will come to your house at no charge to perform a variety of maintenance tasks and minor repairs, like changing smoke alarm batteries and HVAC filters, lubricating garage doors, replacing sprinkler heads, and unclogging drains.

More Handy Helpers are always needed. But if you're not into climbing a ladder or getting down and dirty, Neighbors InDeed has other opportunities for volunteer service.

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL (I&R) VOLUNTEERS are its first resident contacts. When you call Neighbors InDeed at 223-2763 and leave a message requesting Handy Helper assistance, referral to a recommended outside service provider, or advice on some related issue, an I&R volunteer will get back to you promptly.

I&R volunteers serve one or two days a month, at which time they get a Neighbors InDeed cell phone. They need their own computers with Internet access to enter call information and research recommended service providers on Neighbors InDeed's database. They pick up and answer messages from 9 to 5 Monday through Friday. (Messages left on weekends or holidays are answered the next business day.)

I&R Coordinator Cindy Atkinson trains I&R volunteers to provide informed and helpful responses to resident requests promptly and efficiently. It's a busy job but a rewarding one, because while they're helping others they're learning a lot themselves.

DISPATCHERS are the next volunteers handling requests for Handy Helper services. As I&R volunteers enter these service requests in the online database, dispatchers regularly check for them and call Handy Helpers to assign the tasks.

Dispatchers work two or three days a month. They too must have their own computers with Internet access to identify the service requests and those Handy Helpers who are available and able to handle them. Handy Helpers are responsible for entering beforehand the days when they're available and the tasks they can do.

Dispatchers learn all they need to know from Dispatcher Coordinator Vic Albertazzi, who has served as a dispatcher and Handy Helper himself. Although they don't deal directly with residents, dispatchers are a vital link in Neighbors InDeed's service chain.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT VOLUNTEERS are Handy Helpers who specialize in transporting medical equipment borrowed by residents from Neighbors InDeed's storage facility to homes and back. They deliver and retrieve wheelchairs, transport chairs, walkers, crutches, canes, and ramps—most of them donated by residents. Equipment is loaned without charge for up to four weeks.

Arnie Sondergard, the Medical Equipment Loan/Donation Coordinator, trains those volunteering for this program to ensure smooth operation. Arnie also works as a dispatcher and multi-tasking Handy Helper, exemplifying the commitment of Neighbors InDeed's volunteers.

Interested in any of these opportunities?

Call 223-2763 to request a volunteer application package. Volunteer Coordinator Natalie Bradford will invite you to an orientation session that will provide more information and help you decide what you'd like to do.

Depending on your choice, you'll be contacted by one of the program coordinators mentioned above--or one of the Handy Helper Coordinators, Larry Schurr or Herman Tijsseling—to arrange specific training.

Whatever program you choose, you'll find yourself playing an important role in serving our community. You won't get paid in dollars, but you'll receive plenty of appreciation—payment enough for Neighbors InDeed's many dedicated volunteers.