

### How Does Neighbors InDeed “Work”?

That’s one of the questions many of our new, and some of our not-so-new, volunteers seem to have. Well, here is how it does work. (And, pretty well we think, thank you very much.)

When an SCLH resident needs one of our services or would like some of the information we offer, he or she calls our main number at 223-2763 which gets him or her to our **Information & Referral Service**, the “Gateway” to Neighbors InDeed.



Sandy Melnick heads up our Information & Referral Service (I&R) along with her Co-Coordinator, Betty Chiang. Basically, I&R takes all of our incoming calls (over 1100 calls already this year) and responds to residents’ inquiries by providing needed information or forwarding requests for NID services through the appropriate channels. Due to the generosity of the Kiwanis Club of Lincoln which provides the funding, we have a dedicated cell phone (223-2763) that the I&R volunteers use and pass from one to another at each shift change. The I&R volunteers take 3-day shifts; Monday thru Wednesday or Thursday thru Saturday, 9:00 AM until 6:00 PM. NID Board Members are responsible for answering the incoming calls on Sundays.

This sounds like a big commitment and it is. However, the I&R volunteers can leave home for short periods of time during their shifts and pick up messages when they return. Since we’re not an emergency service this works out just fine for our volunteers and for our residents. Given the number of calls we receive, we must be doing things right!

### What kinds of calls do we get?

Many will tell you, “All *kinds* of calls.” And, that’s the truth. However, last year a little under 60% of the calls were for Handy Helper Service, 23% of the calls were for information and referrals, 5% were for our new Medical Equipment Loan program, 3% were for our Help @ Hand Service and the rest were classified as “other.”

Most folks know about Handy Helpers but some might wonder about what kind of “information” or “referral” calls we get. Believe me, that is a long list!

When the cell phone is handed off by a member of Sandy’s team, it is accompanied by a “Resources” binder as well as the I&R Instructions binder. The Resources list, which is also online in our SecureSheet database, covers a wide range of local services including health care (in-home medical and non-medical, equipment, nursing, adult day care), home maintenance (plumbers, electricians, garden services, etc., etc.), support groups and a very large category of “Other.” Residents can be, and are, referred to just about anything from assistance for an ailing spouse to handymen to snake removal.

### Where did we get this list of resources?

*Way back when...* even before our name became Neighbors InDeed, the early group of volunteers started accumulating the names of local vendors that had been satisfactorily used by local residents so that referrals could be made to newcomers and other residents who expressed a need.

At one time, the vendors' names were kept on index cards but eventually the stack grew so large and unwieldy that it was decided to make the list of resources part of our SecureSheet database system. For one, Marlene Bennett spent countless hours entering data on vendors into the database and as she was doing so it was realized that there was a definite need to review, evaluate and update all of the data we had on hand.

Last year Janet Roberts undertook this mind-boggling task and has this to say about the project which just recently resulted in a thoroughly updated and improved Resources List of over 380 entries.

"Starting in July 2007, a group of dedicated volunteers worked diligently to update all the entries on the Information & Referral Resources List, resulting in vendors being deleted and new ones added and information being updated on phone numbers, contact hours, licenses and many other items. Additional information was added to the List of services provided by public agencies and non-profit organizations providing in-home help, emergency response systems, telephone reassurance services, home modification and support groups. The project is now completed, although the List will continue to be updated as we find new vendors and eliminate those that do not meet our residents' needs. Congratulations and thanks to all the volunteers who participated in the project."

Janet wants to thank those Handy Helpers who each made about 10 to 15 calls to vendors, but she especially wants to thank NID volunteer, Doris White. "I bet that Doris did a couple of hundred calls, not counting call backs."

The I&R Team and all of us owe a lot to Janet and her crew of volunteers. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!

In our next issue we'll talk more about how requests for Handy Helpers and other services get routed and the invaluable role our "behind the scenes" team of Dispatchers plays.

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### **Handy Helper Program**

From Larry Schurr, Handy Helper Program Coordinator

*Reminders to Handy Helpers...*

1. Service Requests- Please make sure you print your name at the bottom of the form. Also check off the work being done. Some service requests are missing this information.

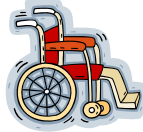
2. The Electrical Workshop is closed for new students. We have a little over 20 people signed up and a larger class would be too hard to teach. Class will be held in the early afternoon of June 17th. More to come later.

3. We have decided to **not** purchase a large ladder to reach the 14' and higher ceilings. Please make note if a request involves a 14' or higher ceiling the resident should be told to contact our main number and request a referral to a local handyman service.

4. We have purchased some Light Bulb Ceiling Tools. The people who have them are listed in the volunteer window of Secure Sheet. This should make it easier and safer to reach those bulbs in the high ceilings. We may be able to use these tools for the 14 and 16 foot ceilings. We will need feedback from those with the tools.

5. The next "How To" Home Maintenance Workshop is June 19th.

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### **Medical Equipment Loan Program**

From Jean Ebenholtz, Medical Equipment Loan Program Coordinator

We now have a new item to offer - a reacher/grabber - which is used to retrieve items out of reach in cabinets or on the floor. This tool is especially useful to those who have had hip surgery.

A complete inventory is currently being taken of all medical equipment. We're also developing a new spreadsheet so that we can determine the frequency of use of special items like wheelchairs and transport chairs. This will help us to even better plan for and schedule appropriate maintenance.

I'm also excited to report that since the Medical Equipment Program has been so successful and continues to expand we are in the process of adding several volunteers to our group.

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### **Volunteer Coordination**

Calls are often received from residents interested in joining NID as volunteers. Ginny Sato, NID's Volunteer Coordinator, responds to those inquiries by sending out a volunteer packet containing an application and information about our organization. Ginny's also responsible for setting up our monthly prospective volunteer orientations. At those meetings prospects are presented with a slide show about NID and have the opportunity to ask questions about our various programs and history.

If you know someone who would like to join us as a volunteer, just tell them to call us at 223-2763 and request our volunteer packet. At present, we don't need any more volunteers for Help@Hand but all of our other programs have openings and we especially need folks for the Information & Referral and Dispatcher teams.

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### **New Project**

*NID believes it's time to survey our volunteers to determine their level of satisfaction with their volunteer experience and gather input they have to offer. To that end, Natalie Bradford has taken on this new project and is looking for a few volunteers to help get this done. Natalie's message follows...*

"Neighbors InDeed needs your help...

Spring is in the air and we are updating our files.

Like everything else, change happens. We are reaching out to our volunteers to see if change has increased or decreased their ability to continue in the wonderful work they provide.

We are looking for six (6) people or more, who would feel comfortable asking our volunteers a few questions. We want our volunteers' needs met, as well as them meeting the needs of others.

We feel that it would take each person about six hours to complete the survey over the course of two weeks. Each person would have approximately 24 contacts to make over the two week time period...a total of about 6 hours. This is less than an hour a day (excluding weekends).

If you enjoy talking on the phone, and believe in this wonderful organization as I do, please consider this as an opportunity. We need to work together to assure that Neighbors InDeed is as successful tomorrow as it is today!"

*If you are interested in helping out with this project, you can email Natalie at [nataliebradford@msn.com](mailto:nataliebradford@msn.com) or call her at 408-5835.*

**Last, but not least....**



**Be sure to RSVP to your Program Coordinator if you can join us for the first-ever NID Volunteer Potluck at the Sports Pavilion on June 1. Hope to see you there!**