Responding to the needs of travelers amid the Covid-19 pandemic, volunteers at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport provided significant assistance in December 2020. The Travelers Aid Activity Report for this month highlights the efforts of dedicated volunteers.

### Customer Assists and Volunteer Hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desk</th>
<th>Terminal A</th>
<th>Info B</th>
<th>Info C</th>
<th>Bag N</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer Assists</td>
<td>1,235</td>
<td>3,236</td>
<td>1,534</td>
<td>1,592</td>
<td>7,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Hours</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>756</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Assistance Stories

**Volunteer Marty Scherr** had a chance to use his fluent Spanish while working Baggage North in early December. A traveler, who only spoke Spanish, came to the desk trying to find her daughter. She was on her cellphone with her daughter who was trying to describe her location and neither could find each other. Marty looked at a picture the daughter sent of a “you are here” map and realized immediately the daughter was at Dulles. The mother/daughter team made arrangements to find each other thanks to our volunteer’s sleuthing and language assistance. Great job, Marty!

**Ed McGee** helped a young military man on crutches who stopped by the information desk. The quiet and respectful young man wore a “Wounded Warriors Project” lapel pin and told Ed how grateful he was that Walter Reed hospital released him early so he could go home for the holidays. The volunteer expressed a teary thank you to the young man when he realized all he had given to our country. As the twenty-something traveler headed toward his gate, he turned and repeated back to Ed, “Thank you, sir.”

This Covid-19 story has a happy ending. On December 22nd, **John and Kathy Farley** were approached at the Info B desk by a woman who was clearly panicked. She had tried to check in at the Delta ticket counter for a flight to JFK which was connecting later that evening to her Air France flight to Paris. The woman was told she could not check in for this codeshare flight unless she had a proof of negativity document for Covid-19. She had not had the test and did not have the necessary paperwork. The time was about 2:10pm when the woman, whose body was visibly shaking, asked John and Kathy if there was an in-airport testing site. Our airport does not provide this service. The volunteers immediately called Staff to get some additional information and further directions. This staff member called another staff person who is an Arlington resident and very familiar with the
nearby testing facilities. She is a part of an Arlington Facebook group and had just learned about a web site [https://www.sameday-testing.com/](https://www.sameday-testing.com/) that identifies the closest location for same-day rapid testing for Covid-19. Virginia is one of the listed states and has two locations: one on South Washington Street in Alexandria and one in Ballston Quarter, Arlington. The time was now 2:20pm and Staff had joined John and Kathy at the information desk. The Farleys live in Alexandria and, since they had just arrived for their 2:00 shift, knew the traffic was light and likely the best location time-wise. They convinced the woman that if she was able to calm down that she had the time to be tested and to make her 5:15pm flight to JFK. She registered on her phone using a credit card to pay the $175 rapid testing fee which has a turnaround time of 15 minutes. Staff race walked with her down to taxi dispatch at Door 5 and joined the volunteers in hoping for the best. Unbelievably the woman returned to the Info B desk at 3:30pm! She had an emailed 50 character code confirming negativity to Covid-19. John entered the code, along with the woman’s birthdate, into the desktop computer and printed the necessary documents. Kathy walked with her back to the Delta ticket counter and one very happy woman with French and American dual citizenship was able to go home for the holidays. This is definitely the feel good story of the season and we, like this woman, offer our profuse thanks to both John and Kathy for their quick thinking and their unflagging help along the way.

In Memoriam

Janet “Betsy” Robson died at her home on November 15th; she was 80 years old. Betsy was a volunteer here at the airport for nearly 11 years and was very active at her church, The Falls Church Anglican. She was described by her friends as sharp, energetic, and always ready for new adventures. Betsy participated in innumerable other community services and mission trips. She drove a truckload of supplies to the city of New Orleans after hurricane Katrina, went to Nepal and Israel on church mission trips, and taught English in Hanoi, Vietnam. Betsy was a sports car enthusiast and mechanic and enjoyed talking with airport manager Paul Malandrino about this shared love. She was also a renowned and skilled skydiver! Betsy will be deeply missed.
Program News

Holiday cards featuring a photo by volunteer and Washington Photo Safari owner E. David Luria went out to all volunteers this month. Enclosed was a personal message from Reagan National Airport manager, Paul Malandrino which is included at the end of this report.
Dear Friends,

I hope you and your families are in good health and in good spirits. Although we cannot be together this holiday season as we have been able to do in prior years, I want to thank you for all you have done and continue to do to help our travelers. As you can well-imagine, our once-busy airport remains essentially a shell of what it was before the Pandemic hit us. The number of passengers screened during the past three months is down by 78% from the same months last year. We have been able to take advantage of the reduced traffic to make many needed repairs to our airfield, our roads and parking lots. Project Journey construction is progressing very well and the New North Concourse should open in the second quarter next year with Secure National Hall opening early in the fourth quarter. Additionally, we have worked relentlessly to ensure the safety of our airport community and travelers during the ongoing Pandemic. We have installed more than 127 hand sanitizers in key locations; designed and installed over 5,000 social distancing decals and signs related to COVID-19 through the airport; fabricated and installed more than 60 face shields to include your information desks; increased cleaning efforts; and continue to install touchless soap and paper towel dispensers in public rest rooms.

That’s a brief look at how things stand today. It’s virtually impossible to predict when our airport will return to pre-COVID-19 levels of activity. Our electricians have lit up the front of the historic terminal and garages for the holidays as you can see in the pictures below.

As the year 2020 comes to a close, I want to thank each one of you for all you have done for us and for our customers and I hope you and your families stay safe and enjoy the coming holidays. We all look forward to the day we can all be together again.

Sincerely,

Paul Malandrino
Airport Manager DCA