

Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport January 2021 Travelers Aid Activity Report

Desk	Terminal A	Info B	Info C	Bag N	TOTALS
Customer Assists	921	2,855	1,214	1,196	6,186
Volunteer Hours	152	192	189.75	132	665.75

Assistance Stories

Volunteer **Jeff Hayes**, one of our top ten volunteers in 2020, provided shift-long support to an elderly Portuguese speaking couple from Brazil. Their flight to Cleveland on American Airlines was canceled after they had already checked in and checked their bags. Somehow the couple found a Portuguese speaking employee at the shoe shine stand in Terminal C. All three of them exited the gate area and approached Jeff at the Info C desk for help. The shoe shine employee acted as an interpreter and accompanied Jeff along with the couple to the AA Baggage Office to pick up their luggage. The flight was rescheduled for 7:00pm and Jeff advised the travelers that it would be best for them to remain at the airport. The couple returned multiple times to the information desk to thank Jeff for his assistance. The volunteer also briefed his 2:00pm replacement, **Anne Fesmire**, in case they needed anything else prior to their flight. What could have been a very bewildering and stressful situation transitioned into a positive and friendly experience for this elderly couple.

A voicemail was received in the Travelers Aid office from a woman who had left her cell phone in a taxi cab the previous evening. **Staff** called **Mark Hessie**, manager of the airport taxis, and he was immediately onboard to help. Mark took the woman's phone number and planned to reach out to all of his drivers from the day before.

Sometimes our volunteers provide a helping hand for other volunteers. **Mark Moscato** quickly came to the rescue when one of our volunteers was experiencing a medical emergency during her shift. Mark borrowed an airline wheelchair and took the volunteer to her car in the parking garage where she had her medication. He gave her a blanket and checked on the woman a couple of times while she rested and waited for the medication to work. Mark was in contact with **Staff** who was able to continue monitoring the woman's condition until she was safely home that evening.

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Cheryl Robinson, another one of our top ten volunteers in 2020, had an especially busy January at the information desks. When working at Info B a woman with a foreign passport, not Canadian, was headed to Canada and was told she was unable to travel without the proper form. Of course she was very distressed. Cheryl suggested that the woman go upstairs to the First Class desk for American Airlines to see if they could provide her with the proper paperwork. In about 20 minutes the woman returned, wanting to give Cheryl a big hug though knowing due to Covid-19 restrictions that she could definitely not do this. The AA customer service agent reassured the woman that the form was not needed until she arrived in Canada and would be provided on her flight so she was free to travel.

Near closing time that same day, a young woman with a small baby came up to the desk. She was fleeing an abusive situation with her father and was in need of safe shelter for the night. **Cheryl** called **Dr. Willie Ringold**, the Travelers Aid social worker at Union Station, to see if there were any available locations in the District. Willie checked, but because it was almost 6:00pm, was unable to find an opening. After Cheryl called several shelters in Virginia without success, she called the airport police for assistance.

Cheryl also worked at Info B on Friday the 22nd and was available to help a woman who had left her cell phone on the Metro. Cheryl sought help from the manager at the airport Metro station who called the next stop to discover no one had turned it in. Cheryl began calling the woman's phone to see if someone on the train would hear it and pick it up. The woman also instructed Cheryl to send a text to her phone indicating there would be a \$100 reward for its return. After about the tenth call, a man at the Franconia-Springfield station answered the phone. Cheryl put the woman on the phone and the man assured her he would bring the phone to the airport if she could meet him on the platform. To thank Cheryl for her persistent help, the woman rewarded her with a souvenir US flag from the Inauguration! Cheryl later received a text from the woman, who now had in her phone in hand, thanking her once again.

Program News

We are very proud to announce that **Ed McGee** is our *Volunteer of the Year* for 2020. This is the fourth year in a row that Ed has received this distinction with a grand total of 2,010 hours of service for the four years. The airport sign shop has begun keeping an etched nameplate on file for Ed, saving themselves some time the following year! Ed's name was added to our *William Dukstein Service Award* plaque in the Travelers Aid office. Many of you remember this award was created in Memory of volunteer Bill Dukstein who was our volunteer of the year in 2014 and 2015 and who sadly

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passed away from ALS in 2016. Ed received a personal note of congratulations from airport manager, **Paul Malandrino**, and from **Kevin Mallory**, customer service manager at DCA.

In spite of the pandemic, **Ed McGee**, gave 335 hours of service in 2020. We sincerely appreciate the dedication of our other top ten 2020 volunteers which include **Dorene Steadman** with 181.5 hours; **Hayden Bryan**, **Jeanette Clay**, and **Carolyn Myles** all with 178 hours; **Jeffrey Hayes** 174; **Cheryl Robinson** 164; **Greg Snyder** 157; **Lynn Gallagher** 147; and **Mary Ellen Hable** with 145.5 hours. Congratulations and thank you all!