

Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport February 2021 Travelers Aid Activity Report

Desk	Terminal A	Info B	Info C	Bag N	TOTALS
Customer Assists	563	2,280	944	1,346	5,133
Volunteer Hours	144	180	176	140	640

*There are approximately **50 volunteers** who have returned and are actively working at the information desks during the pandemic. Travelers Aid DCA has been physically present at the airport since June 29, 2020 after taking a hiatus beginning March 17, 2020. We are very appreciative of the loyalty and commitment demonstrated by our volunteers.*

Assistance Stories

Volunteers **Ed McGee** and **Mark Moscato**, who were working at the Info B and Info C desks respectively, helped an adult daughter find her mother on February 4th. The daughter came to the Info B desk and told Ed about her missing mom who is a non-English speaker. Ed made an airport-wide page and shortly thereafter a woman came up to the Info C desk and communicated to Mark that she did not speak English but was able to say the word *daughter*. Mark had heard Ed's page and knew this was the missing person. He called Ed but by this time the daughter had gone up to the American Airlines ticket counter hoping they would give her information about her mom who should have arrived on her flight an hour and a half earlier. Mark took the mother upstairs but the daughter now could not be found. He made a page from Info C and the third attempt at a reunion was the charm!

A man came up to the Terminal A desk while volunteer **Mike Miller** was on duty. The man's fiancée had flown out of Terminal A earlier in the day and had left her wallet at the gate. Somehow the man got word of the loss and that the "pilot" had called to say the wallet was at the airport. The man told Mike that he and the fiancée were getting married this weekend and *really* needed to find the wallet! With Mike's help, the man checked with the airline baggage office and with the police who went to the Lost & Found office. The officer stopped back at the desk to say the wallet was not found and suggested that the wallet could still be out at the gate. And happily that was true! The officer found the wallet and returned it to the man who profusely thanked Mike for all he had done to help smooth the way for their wedding day.

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A wallet, found by a passenger on the 10th near bag claim 8, was handed over to both **Dick White** and **Ted Edwards** at the Bag North desk. They made a page that an American Airlines employee was very relieved to hear! He had used the nearby AA Credit Union ATM machine and had accidentally left his wallet in the seating area near the bag claim.

Janis Anderson was working at Info C when a man approached her and said he needed a printed copy of a visa. Janis called the Travelers Aid office and **Staff** talked with the passenger. The necessary documentation was approval for travel to Tanzania. Staff asked the man to email the document to the all-staff MWAA email but it did not successfully arrive. Staff then advised the man to email her cell phone which, once received, was forwarded to the MWAA address for printing. Staff quickly walked to the Delta ticket counter with the document to find the traveler. As a sign of our times, she was able to locate the man by the description of the design on his face mask!

A mother desperate to find her adult daughter called the Terminal A desk from Cleveland on the 15th. Her 41 year old daughter, Sheryl, was supposed to connect on an American Airlines flight to Cleveland the night before but there had been no word from her all day. **Robin Richard** took the call, collected a description and all the travel details, and then called the Info C desk. **Jeannette Clay** had been approached by a woman fitting the description earlier in her shift. Due to several underlying medical and mental conditions it was difficult to discern the woman's needs. Robin enlisted the help of the airport police and **Staff** who walked throughout National Hall, the ticketing area for AA and out to gate 35. Robin learned from the police that they had the woman with them as well as the contact information for her mother.

Volunteer **Anmarie Emmet**, who is 90 years young, was working at Bag North when she spied a young mother struggling with both luggage and children. Anmarie asked the woman how she could be of best assistance. The woman was being picked up by her husband and she understood that she needed to get to the third floor but was overwhelmed with the task. Anmarie took her to the elevator, rode with her to Floor 3, and then walked with the entire entourage out to the roadway curb where Dad was waiting. The grateful and weary mom turned to Anmarie and sighed, *"I wish there was one of you in every airport."*

This month volunteer **Mike Miller** was able to type his assist story directly into the touchscreen kiosks located at each information desk. Mike wrote: "A female Frontier passenger left her Apple AirPods in the women's restroom near Page restaurant. I was able to ask a cleaning staff supervisor to go out to the Terminal A gate area, retrieve the AirPods, and return them directly to the passenger." *Kudos to the COA (Cleaners of America) group who are consistently very helpful and responsive.*

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Jeff Hayes is an exceptional volunteer among many in the Travelers Aid DCA program. He has volunteered for a little over 3 years including a faithful presence throughout the pandemic. Here are a few instances of his awesome customer service at Information B in February 2021:

- ❖ A gentleman, knowing that Brooks Brothers in National Hall was still closed, asked if there was another men's clothing store at the airport that sold collar stays. He was attending a funeral the next day and forgot to pack this item. Jeff replied that there were no other stores currently open and though he was very willing to hand over his own shirt stays, he was wearing a button-down. Jeff immediately thought about the card stock in his personal information notebook that he carries with him to each shift. He quickly cut out two collar stays for the traveler who seemed quite happy with the temporary DIY fix.

- ❖ A distressed businessman stopped by the desk with his rental car keys in hand. He had forgotten to turn in the extra set when returning his National rental car. His flight was boarding in 20 minutes so he didn't have time to walk back to the National desk. Jeff offered to return the keys after his shift so the man provided all of the necessary personal information. He asked Jeff to send him a quick text when the keys were safely returned. Jeff received this very nice text back from the traveler:
"Thank you so much. You often hear of extreme kindness. It's wonderful to be the recipient. Grateful!"

- ❖ Four men with roller bags stopped by the desk and Jeff could not easily ascertain if they were arriving or departing passengers. One man asked if there was a *subway* here. Jeff provided the very simple directions to the Metro station from Info B. The man replied, "Oh, so it's far." Jeff said, "No, only a couple of minutes". The men looked at the large "what's open" concessions poster and then asked about restaurants in Terminal B. They continued to discuss other food options while Jeff helped some other passengers. After weighing their options, the men agreed they should just walk to the *subway* and get some sandwiches for the plane. Jeff said, "Oh no, you won't have time to take Metro and go somewhere to get sandwiches". Then it dawned on Jeff that the folks headed to LAX were using a different lingo! "Oh, you were talking about the *Subway* sandwich shop ... I was referring to the Metrorail subway system!" They all had a good laugh behind their facial coverings.

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Special Feature



Ken Lane has volunteered for 8.5 years. His pre-pandemic shift was Tuesday evenings with longtime desk partner **Alan Davis**, who is currently out on medical leave. Ken returned to the airport at the beginning of July to work Wednesday afternoons, 2-6 pm. He splits his time between his Arlington residence and a beach home in Rehoboth, Delaware. During the presidential campaign Ken was flying a Biden banner in front of the Rehoboth Beach home. On December 14, 2020, when the electoral college formally elected Joe Biden as the next president, Ken had an idea. He grabbed the banner and biked the short distance to the North Shores area of Rehoboth where the Bidens' have a summer home. Surprisingly there were no secret service agents yet present and Ken was able to stand in the driveway and take a "selfie" waving the banner. This was an opportunity that will likely not present itself again since the roadways were soon blocked by the secret service and Delaware state police. A friend of Ken's teased that this "shadowy" image (left) was likely captured by the cameras surrounding the property and will be forever on file in the secret service computers!