



January 2019

# Journeys

A monthly newsletter of Travelers Aid International

## THE VOLUNTEERS EDITION

In this first Volunteers Edition:

- Travelers Aid assists furloughed federal employees
- The new *Impressive* feature
- Volunteer Activities

### About this Newsletter

This new Volunteers Edition of *Journeys* is an effort to keep you, our volunteers at our 43 members and service locations, informed about the larger world of Travelers Aid International. The volunteers edition will feature stand-out volunteer assistance stories from each contributing member. We will select the best example of a volunteer going above and beyond for publication in our monthly members and new donors editions.

If you do not want to receive future newsletters, please let us know by writing to [info@travelersaid.org](mailto:info@travelersaid.org). In the subject line, write: Unsubscribe - Volunteers Edition.

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## The Shutdown and Travelers Aid

Travelers Aid volunteers and staff at several of our network airports are involved in efforts to assist federal employees impacted by the recent partial government shutdown. The impacted include agents for Transportation Security Administration and Customs and Border Protection, air traffic controllers and other Federal Aviation Administration personnel.

Volunteers have been contributing and organizing food donations at Washington Dulles and Reagan, New York JFK, and Ontario International airports. The **Travelers Aid/Dulles** information desks have been tapped by the airport as drop-off locations for the public donating food. The leadership at the **Travelers Aid of the Inland Empire** helped the airport organize a Community Support Barbecue Luncheon. The counseling staff of the **Crisis Center of Tampa Bay** has been at the food banks at Tampa International Airport to offer mental health assistance. Hats off to volunteers and airport communities for supporting their colleagues in a time of need!

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## The Numbers

As the final 2018 service reports are still being reviewed, we are getting a glimpse at the contribution of Travelers Aid in service to our communities. The early tally from a sampling of the membership:

- 5,323,966 passenger and social service client assists.

- 1,075 volunteers
  - 180,740 hours of service
  - 8,713 social service assists in our transportation centers
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## Impressive

### Travelers Aid Going Beyond Expectations

A a new feature illustrating a volunteer going above and beyond

#### **Finding Help Within Hartford's Haitian Community to Help Travelers**

A couple arrived at Hartford's Bradley International Airport on Dec. 26 with the intent to stay 2 weeks with a friend. However, their friend could not be reached when they landed. Plan B was to drive to New Jersey to stay with other friends; however, they lacked the money to make this trip. **Travelers Aid/Bradley Airport** Program Manager Mary Kate Doherty stepped in after a TSA agent acted as the couple's translator. The pair knew nothing about their Hartford friend or how else to contact him. Mary Kate began calling Haitian-American organizations and churches in Hartford to see if anyone could provide assistance. After leaving a voice message, in both English and French, for the pastor at El Shaddai, someone called back and spoke to the pair. A member of the church picked up the couple, drove them into Hartford and was going to help them find their friend.

- *Random 2018 Bradley Factoid: 8,721 volunteer hours*

#### **Chicago's Travelers Aid Team Foils Potential Human Trafficking**

A distraught traveler with autism approached **Travelers Aid/Chicago O'Hare** because she was having problems finding a way a suburban Airbnb. While she had never traveled alone, the woman said she was in Chicago to work for an acting company. A Travelers Aid information desk volunteer referred the individual to the Travelers Aid office staff for assistance with transportation options. While looking at transportation options, the staff discovered that the address for the acting company did not exist. Upon learning this information, the passenger began crying and immediately ran out of the office. A volunteer and staff member then searched the terminal for the passenger. After scouring the airport, the passenger was discovered near an airline customer service desk. She had attempted to change her flight to go back home, but was told this was not possible. After confirming with passenger that she preferred to return home, Travelers Aid spoke to an airline agent and advocated on her behalf. The passenger was then rebooked on the next flight home for the following morning. Travelers Aid helped with her overnight accommodations until she successfully boarded her flight the following morning.

- *Random 2018 Chicago Factoid: 7,232 social service assists*

#### **Making Connections from Dulles to Milan**

A woman and her sister were traveling to Italy to visit a dying family member, and after arriving for their flight at Dulles International Airport, they discovered the flight was delayed for several hours. The delay meant that connections in Casablanca onto Milan would be missed. After seeing **Travelers Aid/Dulles Airport** Volunteer Jamie Larounis helping other passengers deal with missed connections, the pair approached Jamie for assistance. Jamie found other options and assisted them in connecting the airline. The sisters were so grateful for Jamie's help and were impressed how well he worked under pressure assisting so many passengers needing him at one time. The ladies eventually made it to Milan and despite the stress of missing 3 connections and being delayed for 2 days, they were able to say goodbye to their cousin.

- *Random 2018 Dulles Factoid: 2,533,005 passenger assists*

## Arranging for More than Medical Assistance at JFK

At New York's JFK Airport, a 15-year-old girl flying back to Australia became ill in the terminal while waiting on her flight. **Travelers Aid/JFK Airport** Volunteer Helga Brush contacted a local medical facility for a family. Helga then facilitated the pick-up and coordinated a separate car for their luggage so that the young teen could receive prompt medical attention. Helga also provided hotel information so that the distressed family would have a place to stay.

- *Random 2018 JFK Factoid: 16,017 volunteer hours*

## A Helping Hand in Oklahoma City

A volunteer with **Travelers Aid at Will Rogers World Airport** in Oklahoma City assisted a Southwest passenger to the ticket counter when no Skycap was available. The passenger explained that because of recent surgery she was unable to make it from the curb to the ticket counter without assistance. The volunteer helped her with luggage and obtaining her boarding pass.

- *Random 2018 Oklahoma City Factoid: 1,066 military assists*

## Volunteers Help Find Mom at Reagan

On Dec. 19, **Travelers Aid/Reagan Airport** Volunteer Maria Spottswood at Washington Reagan National Airport was approached by a Spanish-speaking woman who could not find her mother, Rosa. Traveling alone from Peru via a Houston flight, Rosa should have landed 2 hours before. Maria asked Volunteer Jorge Cuadros-Riera to page for the woman in Spanish. When there was no response, Maria went to the United Airlines ticketing desk, where it was confirmed that Rosa was on the flight. With the assistance of Airport Police Officer Eric Rosaria, Maria and the daughter searched the arrivals area without success. The police then issued an alert for Rosa. The word came back that an elderly woman was sitting outside for long time. Staff went out to the curb with the daughter and with much relief found Rosa.

- *Random 2018 Reagan Factoid: 28,902 volunteer hours*

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# Volunteer Activities

## Honors

**Travelers Aid/JFK** – New York State Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo honored *Helga Wertheimer* for her 25 years of volunteer service with Travelers Aid. JFK's General Manager Charles Everett also presented a certificate of achievement.

**Travellers Aid/Toronto** – Ontario provincial government honored: *Deby Boyd*, 10 years; *Elizabeth Petko*, 10 years; *Nik Mlatchkov*, 10 years; *Jack Lockerby*, 15 years; *Beppina Bottega*, 20 years.

**Travelers Aid/Milwaukee** – General Mitchell International Airport honored *Joyce Loppnow* and *Thomas Schimelfenyg* with the November Customer Service awards and *Anita Lytle* and *Peter Lee* with the December Customer Service awards.

**Travelers Aid/Dulles** – Dulles presented GEM Awards to *Eve Wallin*, *Frank Crummer*, *Martin O'Brien*, and *Jamie Larounis*.

## Training

**Travelers Aid/Dulles** – Volunteers will participate in AirPrepared, a Dulles program designed to empower badged employees with the information to provide assistance in an airport emergency.

**Travelers Aid of the Inland Empire** – The program is doubling its volunteer training sessions to 4 this year. One of the 2018 training sessions was a Stop the Bleed course with the training provided by the Ontario Fire Department.

## Tours

**Travelers Aid/Dulles** - The program had 2 tour groups visit the Dulles Airport Operations Command center and the Ramp Tower.

## Appreciation Events

**Travelers Aid/Dulles** – Volunteers will be treated to coffee and donuts in February. And, a week of special events is now being planned for National Volunteer Week April 7-13th.

**Travelers Aid/JFK** – Volunteers were treated to lunch last week at Manor Oktoberfest, a local favorite restaurant.

## Recruiting

**Travelers Aid/Chicago O’Hare** – New volunteers will be sought on Feb. 24 as the agency participates in 7th Annual Chicago Volunteer Expo.

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# Kathleen Baldwin Starts on Feb. 11

Our next president, Kathleen Baldwin, will assume the responsibilities of the position on Feb. 11 at our suburban Washington office. Kathleen will be joining us after 18 years at the helm of **Travelers Aid Society of San Diego**.

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