Goodbye Vicky, Hello Terry!

Travelers Assistance (TA) Program Manager Vicky Fodor retired on October 8, 2012, after 5 years leading volunteers and Shift Supervisors through a host of changes, large and small, at the Airport Foundation MSP and the MSP International Airport. Before she left, Vicky took a moment to look back at those years, as well as towards the future. She writes:

“In my desk these past five years has been a name badge dated 5/4/94 identifying me as a volunteer with “Travelers Aid.” In the photo, I have my formerly red hair and my eyeglasses that are three times the size of the ones I wear now. How times have changed!

I started as Program Manager for Travelers Assistance in 2007 because I always wanted to return to MSP. And now that I’m retiring, I’ll cycle back to being a volunteer again, enjoying one of the best unpaid jobs in the Twin Cities. When I’m not here, I plan to sleep late (at least for a while), catch up on projects (if retirement allows), and start my travels right here in Minnesota, where there’s so much to experience.

The environment here at MSP and at TA gets to you. Where else would you find such variety in the people you meet, the questions you receive, and the stories you hear? Where else would you experience such vibrant and varied co-workers?

Thanks for all the memories we’ve created together. See you “out there” at the airport!”

Goodbye and good luck Vicky!

Terry Ferguson has now taken over as the new TA Program Manager. During his 11 years here, Terry has had vast experience dealing with situations and people at the airport and within the TA program. Add his prior background in management and real estate sales to the mix and the result is a friendly guy with a cool head and lots of good, common sense ideas.

Terry commented:

“After October 8th, with Vicky beginning the newest phase (and hopefully, the most exciting) phase of her life, I will be assuming the duties she has performed with Travelers Assistance. Over the past couple of weeks Vicky was gracious enough to share with me and teach me about the myriad of things she has been responsible for over her years here. The thing I immediately came to realize is that I am fortunate already to know the fantastic volunteer staff here. I will be able to step into this position knowing, not only who they are and what they do, but also rely on them to continue to shoulder much responsibility for making Travelers Assistance run so smoothly. Without that, this change would be a daunting task."

Good luck to you too, Terry!
New Checkpoint at Terminal 2-Humphrey Unveiled - On October 10th, this new checkpoint will be unveiled at T2. The unveiling ceremony will also spotlight the vibrant, new floor mosaic by artist Scott Parsons. Once the other checkpoint is reopened after its remodel, the two checkpoints should greatly reduce wait times to enter the T2 secured area.

Diaper Bag Basics Kiosk at T2 - Another Diaper Bag Basics is coming—this one inside the secured area in T2-Humphrey near the Children’s Play Area. Parents love the convenience, availability, and ease of use of the original kiosk by T1-Lindbergh's Children’s Play Area; now there’s twice as much to love!

Aveda Opens - Long awaited, Aveda offers travelers and employee/volunteers the shampoos and other personal care items they love, plus relaxing, luxurious services. Remember that volunteers get a 20% discount so show your badge and save!

Concourse G Permanent Restaurants open - The first four permanent restaurants by OTG are now open for business on Concourse G. Each has iPads that all customers can use for ordering, surfing the web, playing some games, and checking email or the status of a flight. Each also boasts the inspiration of a well-known local chef: MinniBar (Globally-inspired sandwiches), with Andrew Zimmern of Travel Channel’s Bizarre Foods, Mimosa (French Provencal), with Meritage's Russell Klein, Shoyu (Modern Japanese), with Koshiki Yonemura Smith of Tanpopo, and Volante (Italian), with Piccolo’s Doug Flicker. Each also offers a 20% discount to badged Airport Foundation volunteers!

DID YOU KNOW?

- MSP Airport served more than 33 million travelers in 2011–15th in the U.S. and 30th in the world for the number of passengers served annually.

- MSP Airport
  - Passengers: Originating 54%; Connecting 46%
  - Nonstop markets served: 135 (21 international and 114 domestic)

Source: www.mspairport.com/statistics
**Let’s Hear from You!**

*You Should’ve been There...*

When Alan Bode (who has regular volunteer shifts on Thursdays, alternating at Blue and as a Go Guide) escorted bride-to-be Mandy Brenner from Valet parking up to the Armed Forces Service Center (AFSC) for her wedding ceremony with fiancé Captain Jared Kruger.

Alan was in the right place at the right time—the car behind Mandy’s in Valet Parking! Hearing some of her conversation with the valet, he posed a friendly, “Big day?” Mandy admitted to some stress and nervousness whereupon Alan gallantly offered to show her up to the AFSC.

Although Alan then headed off to his volunteer shift immediately, staffers Mary Ann Gaug (Shift Supervisor) and Linda Quammen (Communications/Program Specialist) can confirm that the couple did tie the knot. They and a small group of invited and impromptu guests watched the full ceremony held in the AFSC’s main lounge, including the tossing of the bouquet—white roses donated by AFSC Executive Director Debra Cain!

Mandy Brenner and Captain Jared Kruger’s wedding at the Armed Forces Service Center.

*Have a story or insight about volunteer happenings? Contact Linda Quammen at linda.quammen@mspmac.org or 612-467-0661. Let’s hear from you!*

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**In Memoriam**

Fabio Herrera’s volunteer history with the Travelers Assistance (TA) program began in June, 2000. He had a regular Service Specialist shift on Monday afternoons at the Red booth where many will remember him cheerfully dispensing information.

Fabio passed away on July 23.

Andy Litvany’s volunteer life as a TA Service Specialist began almost 25 years ago, in November, 1987. The Blue booth was where travelers and volunteers found him every Tuesday morning, with candy and sucker pops.

Andy passed away on July 21.

Spring of 1996 was when Nancy Olson started to volunteer for the TA program. She also had a regular shift at Blue for many years, bright and early on Monday mornings.

Nancy passed away on August 20.

Robert Walker first volunteered for TA beginning in June of 2000, along with his wife, Rita. He and Rita helped travelers during their regular shift on Saturday mornings at the Red booth for many years.

Robert passed away on September 6.

*All these valued volunteers will be missed.*

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“A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows.”

-- St. Francis of Assisi
Keeping current is a high priority for Travelers Assistance volunteers, evidenced by strong attendance at the TA Fall Volunteer Meeting on the morning of September 11 and again in the evening of September 13. Held in the Field Maintenance Building of the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC), the meeting updated volunteers about both MSP and the Airport Foundation.

**Highlights:** Guest speaker Steve Gentry of the MAC told volunteers exactly how the new Compliments/Complaints tally sheets were being used to help improve the traveler’s experience at MSP. He also presented the new “MSP Nice” training, which included a video starring volunteers Gin and Dick Hoeschen in one segment! John Greer, also of the MAC, provided the lowdown on new shops and restaurants like Aveda and Volante. He won huge applause by confirming that the MAC was working to bring McDonald’s back in a new, suitable location and that “free” WiFi would soon arrive at MSP!

Be sure to check the TA Volunteer Meeting notebook at Central to see more pictures, PowerPoint presentation slides, and summary notes of the meeting.

Clockwise, from top: Jean Remington and Mike Walsh smile for the camera. Top right: Terry Ferguson watches as Janice Black chooses a snack. Bottom right: L.-R. Jan Rainey and Barb Onstad enjoy the refreshments while Karen Gress and Marilyn From watch from behind. Bottom left: Warren Sonday heads out. Left: Paul Sichko explains the Field Maintenance Building
Did you know that several volunteers do “Double Duty” by volunteering at both Travelers Assistance (TA) and the Armed Forces Service Center (AFSC)? They include Jim Bennett, Tom Dooley, Ilene Grimaldi, Jim McGann, and new TA volunteer, Connie Payette. Several of them talked a bit about their volunteering.

Jim McGann served in the Army (Reserve) for 30 years. Because of his military background, he wants to support service members in any way he can. He finds his experience as a TA volunteer helps him answer questions about the airport, transportation, connections, security and gates.

Jim Bennett has been volunteering at the AFSC since the 1980s. He recalls when it was named the Servicemen’s Center, before it was changed due to the number of women entering the military. Jim could not find facilities for service people at airports when he was traveling during the Korean War and volunteers at the AFSC to make travel for today’s troops better.

Ilene Grimaldi has a soft spot in her heart for the military. She says, “The AFSC gives me the opportunity to give back to servicemen and women a very small act of appreciation for all they sacrifice to keep us safe around the world. I have a daughter in the Air Force, and she is the person who introduced me to the AFSC shortly after September 1, 2001. The volunteers were very kind to her, and I volunteer in her honor as well.”

There are similarities between volunteering at the Armed Forces Service Center and Travelers Assistance. Both volunteer positions require a background check, offer free parking, an orientation class, and would like a commitment of at least two 4-hour shifts a month. Volunteers at each organization also answer a lot of questions and give directions concerning the airport and the surrounding area.

Differences between the AFSC and TA include hours, number of volunteers, and some duties. The AFSC is open 24 hours a day (A great opportunity for any night owls!) and has over 150 volunteers, while TA is open 8am - 8pm and has over 300 volunteers. Also, the AFSC volunteers may find themselves preparing sandwiches and making up the bunks—not duties currently on TA’s list for volunteers!

AFSC History The Armed Forces Service Center is a one-of-a-kind “all free” facility located on the Mezzanine Level above Ticketing. It is not affiliated with the USO. Founded by Maggie Purdum on November 22, 1970, in honor of her son who died in Viet Nam, it is staffed by volunteers around the clock, 365 days a year. It has never closed.

The ASFC has served over 885,000 active-duty military and their dependents. It offers a long list of amenities, including free food and shelter, for active-duty military personnel, their dependents, activated reservists, national guardsmen, Department of Defense and Public Health Service employees, and other members of the uniformed services on active duty.

Salutes to “our” volunteers and all volunteers of the Armed Forces Service Center. Both Travelers Assistance and the AFSC are great examples of “MSP Nice” in action!

Congratulations! The Armed Forces Service Center just won the first White House “Joining Forces Community Challenge” for services provided to active-duty military and their dependents. The AFSC was selected as one of five winners from over 300 nonprofit organizations that entered nationwide.
“Colleen G[etten], a volunteer, is one of your greatest assets. She was so very helpful beyond expectation! She was an angel for me to find my way to complete the task to find the lost & found to retrieve my husband’s cell phone. Thank you for having wonderful people like her.” – A.W., Indianapolis, IN

“Just a short note to thank the assistant [Herb Strozinsky and Maria Sperl] who helped our Dad travel from the US Air flight to a Delta flight to Rapid City on June 20, 2012. He is elderly and can no longer process the information necessary to do such a transfer. Normally, our family would have someone travel with him but that was not possible for this leg of the trip. The assistant who helped him might remember him because he wears wooden shoes!!

Anyway, what an awesome surprise to find out about this wonderful service provided by the Travelers Assistance at the one airport we needed help at!!! The persons answering the phones were very polite, friendly and helpful too!!!” – G.G. and family, Tampa, FL

“I have always enjoyed my trips through MSP! Folks are pleasant and helpful, facility is one of the best and your information staff are top drawer.

When you live in Boise, either SLC or MSP is always your first stop and I vote for MSP!” – Dr. R.S., Meridian, ID

“On June 3rd we were flying from MSP to Denver with our 3 week old daughter. I accidently packed ALL of her pacifiers in the checked luggage. Your very nice information desk people saved today with a new pacifier for our flight! Thank you so much for having wonderful people like her.” – N. & J. B.

“My suitcase zipper broke [at] my gate and stranded me. A volunteer named Kirk [Vogland] helped me. After he finished his immediate responsibilities, he taped my suitcase shut, carted it to central information, helped me safety-pin the suitcase, and carted me to the gate. His demeanor, professionalism, and knowledge were exemplary. Please give him any good things you give volunteers because he was very good to me. He made a difficult situation one that made me happy.” – R.P.

“I flew into MSP on 7/26 for a family reunion. Unfortunately, I left my cell phone at home and realized after I was at the airport in Atlanta, GA.

I had arranged to meet with my Aunt at Terminal 2 (baggage claim), so I thought I would be ok. However, when I arrived at baggage claim at 2:45pm, it was a ghost town. I didn't have my Aunt’s flight information with me and without a cell phone, well I was a “lost puppy”.

I went up to the Terminal 2 Information Desk there and met this very welcoming lady named Marg Thomas. I want to let you know what a great help she was to me. She tried to locate the flight (originally out of Portland, OR) and then when she determined that no flights were arriving or had arrived from Portland, OR into either terminal, she told me that Southwest Airlines, posts just the last airport. I couldn't remember which airport my Aunt’s flight was connecting through. Marg was very kind, patient, and sweet to me. She reassured me that she would help me get to the bottom of it. She suggested that I call on the customer service phone to post a message for my Aunt at Terminal 1, in case she was there. I did that. …About that time, a couple waiting in baggage claim came up to me and asked me if I was the niece “Annette” that was waiting for Shirley D. They saw the message line at the bottom of the TV screen, paging my Aunt Shirley D., and figured that I was looking for her. They told me that Shirley’s flight was flying through Phoenix, AZ and there was a 25 minute delay. I felt so good, to be taken care of so well, while I was feeling "very lost".

Thank-you Marg for all of your warmth and kindness. I hope you are recognized as being a valuable asset there!!” – A.C.
Welcome New Travelers Assistance (TA) Volunteers!

We welcomed Connie Payette as a new volunteer to Travelers Assistance this summer. Asked why she wanted to become a TA volunteer Connie explained, “Meeting people and assisting them at the MSP Airport, plus volunteering as a Travelers Assistant, makes retirement more pleasurable. I’m looking forward to keeping the moving walkways moving ahead.” Welcome to the Airport Foundation!

Accessibility Fair at MSP

According to Vicky Fodor, TA Program Manager, the first Accessibility Fair at MSP seemed to be a great success! She said, “I’m sure we talked with over 100—maybe 200— airport and airline employees who came by.

TA Go Guide volunteers Bob Lucas and Sally Schlosser staffed our booth in the morning, as did Jody Schulz and Vera Wenzel in the afternoon. All were are good ambassadors and, as both Go Guides and Service Specialists, were very able to discuss the many facets of service we provide.

There were a good variety of “outside” vendors, like Can Do Canines, as well as “inside” companies like Delta, ABM, G2, and TSA. Delta’s booth was a huge hit, with two soft-serve ice cream dispensing machines—plus flavored syrups!

Stay tuned next year as this may become an annual event.

Save The Date!

6th Annual Health & Wellness Expo
October 30th: 9 a.m.—4 p.m.
T1-Lindbergh,
Ticketing: Mezzanine Level
DATES TO REMEMBER

- Oct. 15-21: Soaring Savings Sidewalk Sale at MSP
- Wed., Oct. 17: MSP Employee Art Exhibit Registration Deadline
- Thurs., Oct. 18: Go Guide Training, 12:30 p.m.
- Oct. 29-30: MSP Employee Art Exhibit Artwork Delivery
- Tues., Oct. 30: MSP Health and Wellness Expo, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Sat., Nov. 10: New Volunteer Orientation, 8:30 a.m.
- Sat., Nov. 17: New Volunteer Classroom Session, 8:30 a.m.
- Fri., Nov. 30: MSP Employee Art Exhibit - Opening Reception

Everyone’s An Artist!

Bring out your inner artist—enter the National Arts Program’s 3rd Annual Art Exhibit for MSP International Airport Employees, Volunteers and their Families. (Yes, tell your relatives – they’re eligible too!)

Register online at www.airportfoundation.org.

Registration deadline: October 17, 2012