MSP Navigators: Charting A Course

Could the Airport Foundation MSP recruit, train, and administer a group of volunteers who would manage the security checkpoint queues in MSP’s Ticketing area? That was the question from the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) this summer. Oh, and could it be done quickly because federal budget cuts meant the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) would no longer staff it?

That request fit right in with the Airport Foundation’s mission to enhance the experience of MSP travelers. Several hundred volunteers were already helping travelers in Terminals 1 and 2 as part of the Foundation’s long running Travelers Assistance program. So, Executive Director Jana Vaughn and Travelers Assistance (TA) Program Director Terry Ferguson brainstormed what a successful program would look like, hurdles and unknowns to factor in, minimum training required to get the first group of volunteers on the floor, etc. They asked MAC for assistance with a marketing blitz to recruit lots of volunteers fast. Then, they made their decision, answering the MAC’s request with a “Yes we can!”

After a whirlwind of recruiting and training, the MSP Navigators became flesh and blood on August 13, 2013. That morning, three green-smocked Navigators from the group 86 volunteers strong, launched the 5 - 9 a.m. shift—the first of three daily shifts running from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. Their number one priority was to keep the lines passing through the various security checkpoints flowing smoothly, conferring with each other via walkie-talkie as needed, and advising incoming travelers of the fastest checkpoint line. Additionally, MSP Navigators would begin to serve as the friendly face of MSP in other pre-security areas such as Baggage Claim and the Tram area, answering traveler’s questions as they went along.

Now fast forward a month and a half to October. A short time but the MSP Navigator initiative has definitely found its stride. Compliments from travelers and TSA personnel are many, such as, “We love your volunteers, they are so helpful!”; “We love this program—wish other airports had it.”; “Just Awesome.”

What’s next? Well, first and foremost is integrating the MSP Navigator group into the rest of the Travelers Assistance volunteer program with training that includes the post-security areas of Terminal 1 and all of Terminal 2.

Keep watching as all of our Foundation volunteers help MSP deliver the best airport experience in the country!
Farewell Diane and Jackie!

Two familiar faces for Airport Foundation volunteers said goodbye to us recently—off to conquer fresh challenges and complete bucket list items.

Both Program Director Diane Dombrock and Volunteer Director Jackie Lind will be remembered for their great influence on Foundation programs and volunteers during their tenures (15 and 9 years, respectively).

Diane was a program staff of one at the inception of the Travelers Assistance (TA) program. Starting with a small number of volunteers at one location, she developed Travelers Assistance into a robust program of several hundred volunteers who help MSP travelers at 9 Information Booths, throughout both terminals’ concourses, and inside the Federal Inspection Service (FIS) area. Her vision, capacity to see a situation from many angles, and willingness to put in the hard work (physical and mental) sometimes needed, has resulted in a strong TA (and also Arts and Culture) program ready to grow with the Foundation.

Jackie inherited a thriving volunteer program in 2004. Her detailed eye and prior training and management work soon made a good program great. She created the Moving Walkway volunteer handbook, which, along with detailed Orientation and Classroom training, helped new volunteers master the ins and outs of their complex assignment. And, her detailed work plans always ensured everything was ready and on hand at the annual Awards event and other meetings.

Programmatic accomplishments aside, most volunteers will remember how Diane and Jackie made them feel—appreciated, acknowledged, part of a select group doing important work. Thank you Diane and Jackie!

Now we welcome two new Foundation staff to assist the Foundation and its volunteers. Elizabeth Beck, as Program Assistant, is sure to make life easier for everyone in a myriad of ways. Jane Zaspel takes over Lynn Klonowski’s Shift Supervisor position to free up Lynn for Volunteer Coordinator duties. Good luck to you all!

Around the Airport

Now Open? Surdyk’s Flights at T2-Humphrey and Farmers Market on Baggage Claim near Door 1 at T1- Lindbergh should be open for business in early October.

Employee Lounge and Eating Spot above Creative Kidstuff: The revamped area for all MSP employees has new tables and chairs, plus vending machines.

Construction at Terminal 2: That forest of timber framing you may have noticed as you drive up to T2 will soon enclose an advanced new baggage handling system.

Electric Vehicle Charging Powers Up at MSP:

Designed to encourage the use of electric vehicles, no extra fee above the regular parking rate is charged when plugging in. Terminal 1 Red and Blue Parking Ramps on Level 8 each have five charging stations while four charging stations are at the Terminal 2 Orange (Value) Parking Ramp on Level 7.

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Travelers Assistance (TA) is a program of the Airport Foundation MSP. Articles in Flying Pages are written for volunteers by program staff and volunteers.

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Improving MSP Customer Experience

By Steve Gentry, Metropolitan Airports Commission Business Analyst

One of the challenges facing the Metropolitan Airports Commission is understanding what our customers are experiencing when traveling through Minneapolis - St. Paul International Airport. To help develop strategies and long term improvements Travelers Assistance plays a key role in collecting feedback from the traveling public. What appears to be simple tallies on the Travelers Compliments & Complaints form turns into something quite powerful. Every month this information is converted into digital maps showing where important issues impact our customers, and is shared with airport managers and tenants through the Customer Service Action Council (CSAC).

For the first time MAC not only better understands which issues are concerns, such as restaurants/retail or smoking, but now better defines the locations by each Travelers Assistance booth. The MAC greatly appreciates all the work every volunteer provides in helping make MSP the best airport experience in North America.

Let’s Hear from You!

Joyce Tritschler has volunteered for many years as a Travelers Assistance Service Specialist and, more recently, as a Go Guide on Monday afternoons. She has also trained to be a CBP Guide.

“Recently, I was Go Guiding near the International area. A lady from Japan asked me where she would find ‘Snoopy.’ Because of her accent I replied, ‘Snoopy’? Yes. She said she had routed her way to South Dakota through our airport just to see Snoopy. Her family was with her as I escorted her to the Snoopy dressed as a pilot. She was so excited to see it she was shaking!

It often surprises me to learn what people want and it is always nice to be able to help them.” — Joyce

Have a good story about volunteer happenings at the airport? Let’s hear from you! Contact Linda Quammen @ linda.quammen@mspmac.org.

MSP has 3 Snoopy statues! Do you know where each is located?

Answer: “Aviator” Snoopy in the Airport Mall; “Traveler” Snoopy at Concourse C’s Childrens Play Area; “Doghouse” Snoopy at Baggage Claim’s Childrens Play Area. All are in Terminal 1- Lindbergh.
Travelers Assistance regularly receives letters and notes of appreciation from thankful travelers. Here is a sampling:

“Main Travelers Assistance Desk Terminal 1: Since 1991, our brother Rahn Klein has made over 30 airline trips from the MSP airport to visit family in Seattle, California and other areas of the country. Travelers Assistance has made these trips possible. If it weren't for Travelers Assistance, we don't know how Rahn could make these trips to see us. He is a challenged man and needs help checking in, getting to his gate, getting baggage, etc. We are so fortunate to have you. A million thanks.” – L.K.

“Kudos to the 60-something gentleman [Garyld Harms] manning the information booth by your tram system at 3 pm today (July 6, 2013.)

After experiencing multiple delays on the departure of my Delta flight into MSP, I had less than 15 minutes between the time I stepped out of my plane and my next flight (DL1814) was scheduled to depart. I asked the gentleman at the information booth how to get to my flight. He looked up the flight and advised me to take the tram, get off on the second stop and turn right to gate C1. As I waited for the tram, he popped up beside me and asked me my name so that he could call ahead and let the gate agent know I was still en route. I … was greeted at the gate by an agent who thanked me for having someone call ahead to let them know I was still trying to make the flight. I was the last person to board and the plane was moving within five minutes. The thanks that the gate agent expressed belong to the gentleman at the information desk – whom I will probably never see again but to whom I am extremely grateful.” – N.M.

“Lots of friendly advice. Even helped us fix our broken suitcase! Thank you Bruno [Drews]!” – H.S.

“I have been to many airports in the US and MSP is the best! I especially like how your information booth is inside security. (I also saw the one outside security). That way people can find out about the area of the airport while waiting for another flight. Also, your bathrooms are exceedingly nice and clean. Plus, I appreciate the free Wi-Fi.” - Anonymous

“It is the first time to visit MSP for us (my wife and me). Five suitcases are too hard to move (transfer) to shuttle bus station. Mr. Joe [Rine] first called shuttle bus to bring cart to help to transfer suitcases. 10 min. later no cart. He takes a big suitcase to help us to downstairs and upstairs to shuttle station. He is very earnestly, patiently. We are moved and appreciative. After all, he is an older man over 70 years old. Now, we arrived Rochester smoothly. We have a good impression of MSP. See you again! MSP!” – T.T.

“Hi MSP, I just wanted to give you some kudos for being a family-friendly airport. We flew in and out of MSP over the holiday weekend and experienced some flight delays. We were traveling with our 6 month old and, although we had packed some extra formula, we ran out. Your [Travelers Assistance] Center in the D concourse had some on hand that they were happy to just give to us (we did make a small donation). Anyhow, it was a lifesaver and our no-longer-hungry baby had an excellent flight. Thanks so much for being great!” - L.O.-T.

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**MSP Airport Health and Wellness Expo**

**Tuesday, Oct. 29: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

Terminal 1-Lindbergh Ticketing on Mezzanine level

More than 50 vendors promoting health and wellness in various ways will be part of this seventh annual expo.

**Free samples, health testing, products for sale, including flu shots.**

**Register to win door prizes!**
Our 2013 Volunteer Meeting broke a record! At the September 11 morning meeting, 157 volunteers showed up while 75 volunteers came to the evening meeting.

Quite a few new MSP Navigator volunteers were in attendance—their first Airport Foundation volunteer event. Everyone was excited to learn about new developments and continuing initiatives at MSP from Foundation staff and Metropolitan Airports Commission guest speakers, Vice President-Management & Operations Roy Fuhrmann and Lieutenant Justin Malone. Afterwards, food, conversation, and a tour of the Field Maintenance Center capped the event.
By Judy Brant,
Travelers Assistance Shift Supervisor

He walked up with that panicked look in his eyes, fidgeting and walking back and forth while I helped another customer.

“May I help you?” I asked.

“Yes,” he said. “Did anyone find a cell phone?”

Asking when and where he lost the cell phone, I helped him retrace his steps. He thought he’d lost it at a restroom on Concourse C about an hour ago. While listening to him, I opened the Travelers Assistance (TA) Manual and flipped to the Airport Lost and Found listing.

“It may be a little soon,” I said, “but articles found in a restroom should be turned into the Airport Lost and Found office, so let’s check with them.”

This story will sound familiar to most Airport Foundation volunteers at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP). In 2012, MSP served more than 33 million travelers, making it 16th in the US for number of passengers served annually. Many items are forgotten, misplaced, dropped, or lost in some other way by these travelers. However, approximately 42% are happily reunited with their owners due to the diligent efforts of the various Lost and Found offices at the airport.

Johnny Butler, Airport Lost and Found Coordinator, notes that when an item lost in the airport’s general areas is brought to them, a “Found Item Report” is completed that includes:

- Description of item
- Name and phone number of person who found item (if she/he wishes to claim item after 90 days)
- Signatures of finder and staff person who received item
- Claim Number

Also, a staff person counts any cash in the presence of the finder and both verify the amount in writing before it is placed in a safe.

Every attempt is made by staff to locate the owner of each piece brought to the Airport Lost and Found as soon as possible. Abandoned luggage is searched for identification. Calls are made to credit card companies. Phone numbers in cell phone address books are called to find anyone who may know the name and address of the phone owner. But, if no owner is found after 90 days:

- Finder may claim item (sorry, employees and volunteers are not eligible!)
- Clothes are sent to Salvation Army
- Books are sent to downtown St. Paul Library
- Glasses are sent to Lions Club
- Keys are disposed of
- Money goes to MAC General Fund

Surplus goods and some other unclaimed Lost and Found items are sold through an electronic bidding process. The following site, www.publicsurplus.com, may offer Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) “sale” items for purchase. If sold, the money goes into the MAC General Fund.

Still wondering if that missing cell phone was ever reunited with its owner? Good news. A volunteer at Green placed a page for the lost cell phone, in addition to notifying the airport’s Lost and Found. One very happy traveler picked up that phone from the booth at Green, then was off to his connecting gate!

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<tr>
<th>When Found Items Come To TA</th>
<th>What should a volunteer do when a found item is brought to a TA Booth?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Note where it was found, by whom, the date and time.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Call Lost and Found and ask if anyone has reported the item lost.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Call paging, if appropriate. (Review the purple Paging Information sheet in the TA Manual’s Quick Reference section.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Before releasing the item to a person who has been paged, ask for ID and a description.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Take unclaimed items to Lost and Found as soon as possible—don’t wait until your shift ends.</td>
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Welcome New Travelers Assistance (TA) Volunteers!

We welcomed six new volunteers to Travelers Assistance between June 7 and August 26, 2013. Three of them were recruited by our current volunteers. Thank you, and continue spreading the word! Others found us through our website or the Hands-On Twin Cities website.

Welcome to the Airport Foundation!

Marianne Adelmann: “I worked for the U of MN for 39 years. After a year of retirement, I found that I was missing adult conversation and interaction. I look forward to helping people find their way in our airport.”

John Erickson: “I retired as a high school English teacher at Osseo High School after 34 years in 1998. Since then I have been a Twin City tour guide and I presently work for Visit St. Paul at information booths at RiverCentre and Landmark Center. I am looking forward to helping people from all over the world.”

Tom Smith: “When I was in the military I was in aviation. I’ve always had an interest in geography and aviation. I'm looking forward to helping travelers.”

Ruth Taukscheck: “I am a math teacher who recently retired after several years of teaching adults at the Ronald M. Hubbs Center in St. Paul. The learners come from all over the world and from the U.S.”

David Tomporowski: “I graduated from Macalaster College in May 2012 with degrees in Geography and Urban Studies. I currently work full time for the MN Department of Transportation as a Research Analyst. I love being in airports and traveling. I've flown in and out of many U.S. airports and had the opportunity to study abroad in Delhi, India; Dakar, Senegal; and Buenos Aires, Argentina (the entire trip involved seven airports, including connections in Dubai and Madrid).”

Gabriel Wa Mbangu: “Saturday, November 21, 2009, around 10:00 p.m., the MSP Airport was the final destination of my long transatlantic trip from Angola, Africa, to the U.S.A. Without sufficient knowledge of where I came from, no one had been at the airport to welcome me or find accommodations. Without a sentence of English in my mouth that could help me express my reason for being here and without knowing where I should go, I felt like a person who is deaf and mute. I hope to provide assistance to travelers by solving immediate and urgent multiple problems as I had when I arrived for the first time at MSP.”

Lost and Found Quick Facts

**Number of items found each year:** About 5,000 lost items are received at MSP’s Lost and Found office each year, according to a Metropolitan Airports Commission source. (Remember that the TSA collects and handles lost items from their checkpoint areas, as does each airline for items lost on their planes and in their gate areas.)

**Most common items found:** Cellphones and clothing.

**Most uncommon items found:** Crutches, walkers, dental plates, and license plates.

Reminder — lost knives are NOT accepted at Lost and Found — they are discarded.
DATES TO REMEMBER

- Wed., Oct. 23: MSP Employee Art Exhibit Registration Deadline
- Tues., Oct. 29: Health and Wellness Expo
- Sat., Nov. 9: Volunteer Orientation, 8:30 a.m.
- Sat., Nov. 16: New Volunteer Classroom Session, 8:30 a.m.
- Nov. 4-5: MSP Employee Art Exhibit Artwork Delivery
- Tues., Nov. 26: MSP Employee Art Exhibit Opens
- Thurs., Nov. 28: Thanksgiving – TA closed
- Fri., Dec. 6: MSP Employee Art Exhibit - Opening Reception

Come on, show off your talent!

Enter the 4th Annual Art Exhibit of the National Arts Program® for MSP International Airport Employees, Volunteers and their Families. (That’s right, your relatives can enter into the fun too!)

Register online at www.airportfoundation.org

Registration deadline: Wednesday, October 23, 2013