



Catholic Healthcare West

## **Ask the Expert**

*Arizona Republic*

**Q: I am thinking of volunteering in the community and have researched many non-profit organizations. What options are available for volunteers in a hospital setting and how does it affect patient care?**

**A:** We currently have more than 565 volunteers working at Chandler Regional Medical Center and Mercy Gilbert Medical Center in a variety of areas. Volunteers assist in just about every department of the hospital. We interview each potential volunteer and do our best to match them to an appropriate area that will challenge them, interest them and make them feel like an integral part of our team. Our volunteers help us by performing administrative services such as computer projects, copying, faxing, and other office duties. They also serve on our nursing floors by assisting with patient and family needs, stocking supplies or answering patient call lights.

Our gift shops are manned solely by volunteers. The proceeds generated by the gift shops are given back to the community in the form of scholarships, as well as other community and hospital needs. To date, the volunteers have offered more than 27,721 courtesy cart rides to our patients and their families; our pet program, "Paws for Patients," made 4,607 visits; and our Tender Loving Care program, which offers facials and foot or hand rubs, has provided 1,827 soothing visits.

Both Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers offer a unique service, called the Flower Delivery Program, which is funded with a portion of the proceeds from our gift shop sales. Volunteers visit patients, offer them a fresh flower, and spend time with those who may not have family members available or living in the area.

We also have an Art Therapy Volunteer Program where creative volunteers utilize their skills by painting, sketching, and Origami. These volunteers sit in the surgery waiting areas and create their art, providing relaxation for families of patients undergoing a surgical procedure.

To honor the hard work and dedication of our volunteers, we will celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Week from April 7-13, 2008.



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*Barb Farmer is the manager of Volunteer Services at Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers. To learn more about volunteer opportunities at either organization, please e-mail Barb at [Barb.Farmer@chw.edu](mailto:Barb.Farmer@chw.edu), or visit [www.chandlerregional.org](http://www.chandlerregional.org) or [www.mercygilbert.org](http://www.mercygilbert.org) to download a volunteer application. You may also reach the Volunteer Services office at Chandler Regional Medical Center by calling 480.728.3308 or at Mercy Gilbert Medical Center by calling 480.728.7187. EOE*