

a vision of *heart*

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A VOLUNTEER

From teens to retirees, Elmhurst Memorial Healthcare volunteers choose to serve the Hospital for different reasons. Some choose to volunteer because they want to serve their community. Others choose to volunteer because it provides an avenue for meeting people and making friends. Louise Lynch volunteers because it helps her keep her mind and body active.

“Staying busy and working with people helps me stay active in retirement,” Lynch said. “It’s satisfying to help people, and I feel very needed and appreciated at the Hospital.”

WRITTEN BY **CASSANDRA SURA**



EMHC patients enjoy the personal touch that volunteers add to their experience at the Hospital, such as the delivery of flowers and newspapers to their rooms.

Lynch began volunteering at Elmhurst Memorial Hospital (EMH) nearly seven years ago. Each new volunteer attends an orientation and has a one-on-one meeting with a volunteer coordinator to determine what skills and interests he or she has and which departments are most in need of support. Lynch's 45-year career in administrative support made her ideal for working in the Volunteer Services office.

“Some people want to volunteer in a certain department because of a personal experience, or they want to work in areas where they will have a lot of contact with the public,” she said. “I always enjoyed serving people in an administrative role and am really happy to be able to continue using those skills after retirement.”

On occasion, Lynch supports Elmhurst Memorial Healthcare (EMHC) staff at health fairs, blood drives and screenings, but on a typical Thursday, Lynch is the Chairman of the Day for the Volunteer Services department.

As chairman, she is responsible for coordinating daily activities and requests. In the morning, volunteers make Telecare phone calls. Telecare is a free service that ensures that seniors or people with disabilities who live alone are safe and provides them with a friendly contact.

Throughout the day, inpatients may call in requests for videos from the Volunteer Services library or for other room service needs. “If there is anything we can do to make a patient’s stay more comfortable, we’ll do it,” Lynch said. “Inpatients especially enjoy having the newspaper or flowers delivered by a volunteer.” Volunteers not only deliver flowers that are received from florists, but they also unpack and arrange flowers mailed to the Hospital before they deliver them to the patient. “It’s an extra, personal touch that makes the patient feel special,” Lynch said.

On Fridays, Lynch volunteers in the surgical waiting area where she serves as a liaison between the medical staff and patients’

Meet:

Louise Lynch

EMHC VOLUNTEER

Louise Lynch has been volunteering at Elmhurst Memorial Hospital for nearly seven years as a way to keep both her mind and body active post-retirement. She has provided approximately 2,700 hours of service to the Hospital.

Along with volunteering, Lynch stays involved with her family and community.

- Sundays: Lynch serves as a deaconess at her church.
- Tuesdays: Lynch attends line dancing class in the morning and aerobics class in the evening.
- Wednesdays: Lynch serves as secretary one day each month at the Volunteer Services committee meeting.
- Thursdays: Lynch works in the EMHC Volunteer Services office during the day and attends aerobics class in the evening.
- Fridays: Lynch works in the Hospital's surgical waiting area.

Lynch also enjoys participating in travel excursions around the Chicago area and visiting with her son, grandchildren and great-grandchildren who live in Wisconsin and Florida.



Louise Lynch, EMHC Volunteer



Volunteer Services director **Lora Vega** (left) works with volunteers to identify how their individual interests and skills can help enhance the patients' and families' experiences at EMHC.

families. "I make sure families are comfortable and talk with them to ease their anxiety as they await news about a patient's surgery," she said. Throughout a patient's procedure, the surgeon or nurse will alert the volunteer of progress so that he or she can share the information with the family and direct them to the patient's room after recovery. "Most importantly, I assure them that the patient is being cared for," Lynch said.

Lynch is also a member of the Elmhurst Memorial Hospital Guild, an organization that, in addition to volunteer work, raises funds

through events and the resale and gift shops. Over the years, funds raised by the Guild have supported teen scholarships, the Guidance Center and the purchase of new neonatal incubators for the Family Birthing Center.

"Volunteers are here to give of themselves," said Volunteer Services director Lora Vega. "Patients and families expect high-quality clinical care when they come to EMHC, and the personal assistance that volunteers provide is the icing on the cake."

Volunteering: Volunteers are a very special part of the care that is provided at Elmhurst Memorial Healthcare. They provide services such as transporting patients throughout the Hospital, guiding visitors to their destinations, staffing the gift shops, delivering mail and newspapers to inpatients, providing administrative assistance to the organization and maintaining the Telecare program. Volunteers of all ages serve at Elmhurst Memorial Hospital, the Center for Health and Lombard Health Center. For more information about volunteering opportunities or to register for an upcoming orientation session, please call Volunteer Services at 630.833.1400, ext. 41095.