

Heart of the hospital: How Banner volunteers help our patients

In a single year, volunteers donate 20 years' worth of time

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SUN CITY (April 5, 2019) – From simplifying complicated health jargon to bringing a lovable dog for a visit, Banner Boswell Medical Center and Banner Del E. Webb Medical Center volunteers provide the “heart” when it comes to hospital life.

As part of National Health Care Volunteers Week April 7 through April 13, Banner Health is recognizing the contributions of people who donate their time in service of others.

“I really can’t say enough about how much our volunteers contribute to our hospitals,” said Susan Kryn, senior manager of Volunteer Resources and Gift Shops at Banner Boswell and Del E. Webb. “We love their enthusiasm, excitement and dedication to caring. They inspire us every day.”

In 2018, Banner Boswell and Banner Del E. Webb volunteers donated 177,030 hours – that slightly more than 20 years’ worth of time. The hospitals have 1,188 registered volunteers – representing the largest number of volunteers and donated time of all the 18 Arizona Banner hospitals.

Volunteers provide all kinds of different services, from driving golf carts to transport patients and visitors, to secretarial work, to knitting afghans, to working in the gift shop.

Pam Van Ast, for example, volunteers as a member of the hospitals’ patient liaison team. As part of that team, she visits patients and asks them about their concerns. She tries to address non-medical concerns directly and escalate medical concerns to the proper staff.

“Patient liaisons are really a pair of extra eyes and ears to listen to patient stories, ferret out needs and work to address those needs,” Kryn said. Banner Boswell and Del E. Webb hospitals are the only ones to offer that kind of volunteer patient liaison outreach.

For Van Ast, who retired as dean of healthcare from an Iowa community college, volunteering as a patient liaison allows her the chance to return to what she loves and knows best: healthcare.

“Growing up on a farm, I always knew I wanted to be a nurse,” she said. Van Ast now splits her time between Sun City and Minnesota.

She sees a real need for her work. “So many times, people move to the Sun Cities and they are here without their families and they really need a little extra help when they are in the hospital.”

For Joann Duvall of Sun City, volunteering means a chance to do something with one of her best friends: a sweet Papillon named JoJo.

“You take the dog into the room and the patients just light up. They pull up their cell phone to show photos of their dog. Or they just want us to stay with them, so they can love on JoJo,” Duval said.

“It just tugs at your heart.”

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About Banner Health

Headquartered in Arizona, Banner Health is one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country. The system owns and operates 28 acute-care hospitals, Banner Health Network, Banner – University Medicine, academic and employed physician groups, outpatient surgery centers and an array of other services; including Banner Urgent Care, family clinics, home care and hospice services, pharmacies and a nursing registry. Banner Health is in six states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming. For more information, visit www.BannerHealth.com.

 [Joann Duval with Jojo](#)
(97 KB)

 [Pam Van Ast](#)
(130 KB)

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