

More Volunteers Are Needed By Volunteer Services

There are volunteers and then there are volunteers.

The kind that actually work with persons in need are members of the Volunteer Services of Santa Cruz County.

Three hundred and fifty-seven strong.

And growing.

An interesting outfit, doing an old fashioned kind of service helping others without making it seem like charity.

It concentrates on areas not covered by other agencies and it opens its arms to any resident of the county who has a need for the services.

Currently these services include transportation, friendly visiting, English language tutoring for adults and children, a buddy program for youngsters without fathers, teacher helpers, and helping families of prisoners or women prisoners themselves when they get out.

Sixty percent of the volunteers are retired persons.

Donna Kern, executive director, says there is a urgent need for more in every classification. The headquarters is at 1110 Emeline Ave. on the General Hospital grounds, phone, 423-0554.

In most demand is transportation. Fifty-seven volunteers help but more are needed. Some 1950 rides were given last year.

People need rides for medical appointments, to obtain food or to visit families. Needy mothers need rides to clinics or to pick up surplus food. And there are always emergencies.

Another program is teaching English to adults, headed by Kathryn Merriam. Many people living in the community cannot speak English or speak it brokenly. A team of 74 is helping.

Volunteers serve on a one-to-one basis, teaching conversation or elementary writing so that the pupil can advance in his work or get a better job. Volunteers devote two periods a week at this duty.

Coupled with this is a pre-school program to teach children English so that they will progress normally in school. Elizabeth Wood and Dorothy Howard are co-chairmen.

In another school - orientated program, volunteers work in seven schools, aiding the teachers.

About 54 are involved, work-

ing with students on special problems and doing many tasks which take the teachers away from her main job. More volunteers are needed. Bettie McKeemen is chairman.

The buddy program is in dire need of the right volunteers.

Earl White, chairman, said that presently some 20 adults are providing companionship to youngsters who have no father. There are some 500 such kids in the county.

These men meet with the youngsters once a week, usually individually, taking them fishing, for a walk, to a sports event, or they just talk.

Most of the boys are 8 to 12 and there are some 20 volunteers working in this program. White said that girls need the same companionship and soon a women's buddy program will be under way.

Anyone interested can call White at 476-2730.

Friendly visiting is a much needed service. Isebell Oswald is chairman. Her volunteers mainly visit elderly persons which, by the hundreds, lead lonely lives in the Santa Cruz area. There are 39 volunteers working in this section. More are needed here, too.

Perhaps the most unusual facet of the organization is its Friends Outside group.

Headed by Marcia Anderson and Jeanne Faulkner, this group conducts a program of useful activity for women prisoners.

Some 15 volunteers visit the prisoner's family in cases where the husband is in jail leaving the family stranded without funds or knowledge of where to go for help.

Part of their work is to involve the prisoners and their families in volunteer service to give them the opportunity to help and befriend others in their circumstances.

Volunteers are needed to maintain the information desk, answer phones, keep the books and help recruit more volunteers. Kathleen Hoxie is treasurer and Ole Olsen is in charge of public relations.

Mrs. Kern said the organization is a natural for the retired.

They can use their many skills and serve in a highly useful way in the community, she said.