



Blue Light Express

Volunteering Qualifications

This issue is focused on volunteering and the training we conduct and require, that provides the skills and knowledge necessary to be confident in the field for this "All-hazards" organization.

"All-hazards" means that CCDC assists the County and its residents in all types of emergency situations such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, pandemics, food drives, medical testing, as well as emergency communications and emergency sheltering of humans and pets. We must be trained for the possibility of all community hazards.

NIMS Courses as Qualifications

The NIMS courses that are required for CCDC volunteers provide the understanding of the structure of how an emergency situation operates so that the operation runs smoothly and there is no confusion among us.

We all need to read and understand the playbook of volunteering with a government entity; what the hierarchy is - who reports to whom; what the scope of work for which we are responsible is; how we can have the most impact for the most people.

These courses are the fundamental playbook that we all need to know. When the pandemic hit we did not have the luxury of time to require these courses, so we provided just-in-time training and hoped that you would take the courses on your own. Now you have the time to learn the principals of the National Incident Management System and comprehend their meanings with the added bonus of applying them to the work you have performed for two years!

Now we must require the NIMS courses for all of our volunteers. These courses are required by many other organizations as well, for whom you might volunteer, or you can apply them to a group or agency that would benefit from them. **NIMS 100 and 700 will be required by September 31, 2022.** You will not be able to view our mission calendar without having uploaded your completion certificate in answer to these qualifications. The next two NIMS courses recommended are NIMS 200 and 800, for volunteers who are interested in further understanding of the framework of basic and national responses.

Instructions are on the Galaxy website in the left menu for taking and uploading the NIMS courses. Please also view all of our recommended training classes, most of which are online. Worthwhile Summer reading and all-hazards prep-work!

You will notice that the name of our Volunteer Newsletter has been modified. The "Special" was initially to represent the diner special of the day and then transformed into a train metaphor. We agreed on "Express" to better illustrate the image of The Blue Light train traveling down the tracks with CCDC news delivered to you.



"I want to change the world," said Tiny Dragon.

"Start with the next person who needs your help," replied Big Panda

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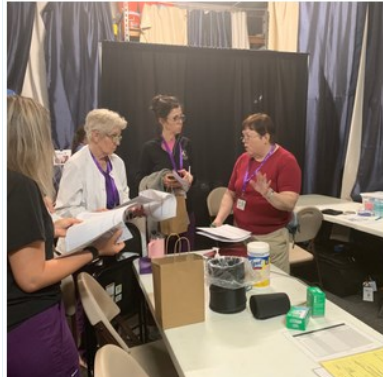
Imagine a world in which the vast majority of people wake up every day inspired, feel safe wherever they are and end the day fulfilled by the work they do.

Inside this issue

To Enhance Their Vision	2
ServPA-Attention Required.....	3
The Volunteer Heart	4



The little girl in red is translating for the adults. A frequent helper every day.



Cathy providing Just-In-Time training to the volunteers, a new concept for the group that saved a lot of time.



A couple of grateful clients!



Happy Adventurers on a mission to provide enhanced vision!

Volunteering to Enhance Their Vision

By Cathy Pensyl

Earlier this month, I volunteered in Clarkston, Georgia (suburban Atlanta) by helping to conduct eye exams for immigrants who have settled in this area and do not have the means for the much-needed vision assistance. Envision Atlanta (EA) is a local ministry that fosters personal relationships with immigrants as they settle in the area. Great Faith Vision, based in Havertown, partners with Envision to show the love of God to immigrants by providing practical help in a respectful manner, i.e., vision care. GFV's motto is "because sight matters". It is a 501(c)3 funded by individual and corporate donations and generally returns to Clarkston annually.

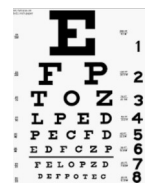


The team this year consisted of eight GFV volunteers, supplemented by about 20 or so EA staff. In addition to myself (a PA & RN), we had 3 optometrists, social workers, student nurses, EMTs and others.

My husband, Earl, and I packed up his truck full of equipment and supplies for a 2-day road trip each way to transport the equipment and supplies. Earl was also responsible for photography and traffic management in the parking area at the vision clinic in Clarkston.

The clinic setup should sound familiar to any of you who have worked in a VPOD. In a small warehouse facility, stations were created with curtain dividers among pop-tents with overhanging tarps to create dark rooms. Outside, covid screening and confirming presence of needed translators were done. Inside, clients registered, were asked about permission to photograph (anyone declining received a red lanyard to identify them), underwent medical history screening and basic eye screenings, glaucoma testing, retina photos, and consultations at two doctor stations (one for refraction, one for eye health examination), and finally they got to select their eyeglasses. Referral forms were completed so that Envision Atlanta staff could arrange ophthalmology and/or general medical follow-up when needed. Clients were given appointments to return in June, when EA staff will give them their eyeglasses.

I was able to give a name to the training of volunteers who were only able to come on some of the days. You know it – just-in-time training. In particular, a group of student nurses from Western Carolina University came for part of the time. I showed them what they needed to do and they jumped right in.



This neighborhood is dense with apartment complexes filled with immigrants from all over including Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Ethiopia, Congo, Eritrea, Myanmar and more. As you can imagine these people encompass more of a village vibe rather than an individual families feeling. On many appointments the volunteers would see the same children over and over accompanying adults and seniors to their exam to translate for them since most of the adults did not speak English, while many children were fluent. We served 40-50 clients each day.

Host families provided GFV volunteers with lodging. Breakfast was at another family home, lunch was brought into the clinic by EA staff, and topping off the day was a different ethnic meal each evening for dinner.

ServPA is Being Updated: Attention Required

By Judy McKinney & Cathy Pensyl

The Commonwealth's Volunteer Database (ServPA) is being updated to improve its functionality. This is a process, like everything else, but we wanted to provide you with a couple of tips and requests.

Identity

If you log onto your account and look at your Summary tab, you might find that your Identity is incomplete. Go to the Identity tab and scroll to the very bottom of the page. There you will see a "Training Provider" section that is new. This section is asking for your "Train PA" user name. Once you fill that in, all of the training that you have done in TrainPA will automatically be logged in to your Training Tab! Whoo-hoo! Please fill this in.

Background Checks

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has ceased to conduct background checks for volunteers signed up in the ServPA Volunteer Database and has requested that local organizations handle this themselves. A new volunteer who signs up now in ServPA is required to obtain their own **FREE** proof of Background Check and upload it to their ServPA account.

The Background Check was updated annually but now the volunteer must take on that responsibility to update their own accounts for whom they volunteer. This includes the CCDC and is a soon to be a required qualification. For current members, below is a clip from a ServPA that shows the uploaded Background Check.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit Training' form in ServPA. At the top, there are tabs: Summary, Identity, Deployment Prof, Contact, Occupations, Training, and Skills & Certificate. The 'Training' tab is selected. Below the tabs, there's a section for 'Training Course' with a 'Patch' button. The form includes fields for 'Institution', 'Training Course Date' (set to 06/18/2021), and 'Expiration Date' (set to 06/18/2022). There's a checkbox for 'Check this box if your training course has no expiration date'. The 'Upload Certificate' section has a 'Certificate #1' field with a 'Remove' button, a 'Choose File' button (showing 'No file chosen'), a 'Clear' button, and an 'Add Another Certificate' button. The 'Verification Status' is set to 'Success'. There's also a 'Verification Notes' text area.

This is an issue now because local organizations relied upon this requirement of lawful due diligence by the Commonwealth and were provided a volunteer vetting check point that no longer exists. We must require you to get a Background Check because of the changes enacted by ServPA.

Please complete this procedure by 12/18/2022.

- ◆ Go to <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp> and complete the FREE check
- ◆ Download and save the certificate
- ◆ Upload the certificate into ServPA-Your Account>Training>using "Patch" and enter the date of the certificate as the course date and the following year as expiration date.
- ◆ Upload the certificate as the answer to a Qualification Question in Galaxy, too!



Attention Health Professionals:

A reminder from the PA Department of State, which regulates our professional licenses: The waivers that allowed volunteers to administer covid-19 vaccine, **are set to expire June 30, 2022.**

This means that volunteers, including those with professional licenses, will no longer be permitted to administer Covid vaccine.

We will be able to perform other medical tasks that fall within the scope of our licenses, and also can volunteer for non-medical tasks. And since CCDC responds to other events, such as fire or weather emergencies, you are still needed!

Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore, the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature (1913) wrote:

"I slept and dreamt that life was joy,"

"I awoke and saw that life was service.

I acted and behold, service was joy."



Laurie reading a poem at an open mic at Lansdowne Landing.

Laurie is a computer programmer for a local health information company since 2006. She loves to do creative things, especially with her hands such as: redecorating the covers of blank journals, creating collages with magazine and calendar images, and painting.

She self-published a book of poetry in 2006. Her poems have also been included in two anthologies: and she wants to compile another book of poems related to living through the pandemic.

Laurie is also one of three friends who run a monthly poetry sharing circle started in 2017 and currently meet on Zoom .

The Volunteer Heart

By Laurie Pollack



In November 2020, like a lot of us, I was really worried about the pandemic and wanted to do something. I felt so weighed down by it and scared.

I heard that a local site had opened up for one of the Phase 3 COVID vaccine trials and I signed up. I qualified medically and fit into their age bracket. I was given what that could have been either placebo (saline solution) or the actual vaccine, instructed to continue social distancing precautions, to behave on the assumption I had gotten the placebo, and to check in twice a week on an app about my health. There would also be occasional in person visits to draw blood to measure antibody levels.

It felt good to be part of the solution. But after a while I wanted to do more. In January 2021, I learned about an organization I had never heard of: Citizen Corps of Delaware County, that needed volunteers for vaccine clinics. It sounded like something I could do and as if it might be the next step for me.

I was surprised to learn they needed non-medical people like me as well as just doctors and nurses for vaccine clinics. I work full time from home, but volunteers could volunteer as much or little as they wanted to. I filled out the forms on ServPA and attended a virtual orientation and then signed up.

I was nervous at my first shift: would I mess up and do everything wrong, or not fit in? Instead, I felt very welcome, and it was such a good feeling to help out in getting shots to people. Except for a day of volunteering at the polls, I had pretty much stayed at home since early 2020 so I enjoyed being back with people again and appreciated the strict safety protocols that kept us and the clients safe.

I volunteered as much as I could because every time I did, I felt more hopeful that this pandemic could end as I am the kind of person who likes to take action to help solve problems. Each shift had a similar structure, yet every shift is different, and I learned and experienced something new each time.

I had found out in March 2021 that I HAD received the real vaccine in the trial. I had been vaccinated for months and never known it! So, my most interesting and moving experience as a CCDC volunteer was directing cars at a drive through clinic where they were administering the very same vaccine I had been given in the trial. It felt as if I had come full circle.

Volunteering fills a need in me, a need to help, that I had not even known I had.

In another step forward as in March 2022 I decided to donate blood with the Red Cross. I had not done so since 2004 so it had been a long time. This felt good to do too. And I intend to donate again whenever I am eligible.

CCDC also needs volunteers for other situations such as natural disaster. I intend to be ready to be there if and when this happens. And it is likely to be "when" not if. Thank you CCDC for all you do.

Oh, One More Thing....

Citizen Corps of Delaware County

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<https://delcocitizencorps.org>

<https://cccredi.delcocitizencorps.org>



It is not the food provided, or the physical task at hand that volunteers thrive on. It is the appreciation of the smile on the face of one you just helped; it is the fist bump of a colleague when you were successful in making a difference and it is the full heart from a day well done that has the volunteer rinse and repeat.

citizen  **corps**
of Delaware County