



### January 31, 2014 - Verde Valley Caregivers Volunteer Inspires Hope in "Neighbors"

Gail Guntermann, a Verde Valley Caregivers volunteer since 2008, and current member of the Board of Directors at VVCC, has continued to provide friendly visits, shopping, and transportation services to those in need. She recalls first hearing about VVCC stating, "One of my neighbors, Lillian Hildebrand, put up information around our community bulletin boards, and I talked to her about it," said Guntermann.

Making an impact in the local community is important to her, as she reflects on her parents lives and lack of resources available to them. "My folks, who can no longer drive, did not have services like VVCC when they needed transportation. When I learned about the organization, I had an understanding of what this community needs and thought I could help," said Guntermann, who plans to remain a volunteer for as long as possible.

For the last 20 years, VVCC has provided services for older adults throughout the Verde Valley who wish to live more independently in their own homes.

VVCC currently has 300 volunteers serving over 1,900 clients who can no longer drive, are disabled or live alone. Volunteers give back to the community by helping older adults with transportation, friendly visits, and transition from hospital to home, just to name a few.

"Gail inspires her neighbors by showing them there are local individuals that care about their needs and are willing to help. Most of these folks live alone, so when our volunteers stop by, it makes all the difference," stated Executive Director, Kent Ellsworth. "The most important aspect in all of this is human connection.

When we make that a top priority, our neighbors and volunteers will benefit."

Ellsworth added. When asked about the neighbors she serves, Guntermann said, "Many are women without other forms of support. They live alone and do not have anyone to help them with day-to-day duties. I enjoy being that support for them."

When asked why she would encourage people to become a volunteer she said, "We work as much or as little as is comfortable for us, and anything we do is a big help. I can't imagine not being eager to help in one's own way. Actually, volunteering for our 'neighbors' gives me a chance to see how I can better plan for my own future, and it makes me feel useful. It has also given me the opportunity to try out a new career in a sense, and that's great."

There are many ways to serve VVCC. "Shopping assistance and transportation services play a huge role in making VVCC as successful as it is. Sometimes our neighbors enjoy just a friendly phone call each day, others would prefer us to transport them to a doctors appointment. Just knowing someone is there to help, really gives them a boost. A number of them have absolutely no one else," Guntermann added.

For more information on becoming a volunteer, contact Verde Valley Caregivers at 928.204.1238 or Operations and Mobility Manager, Kim Meller at [kimmeller@vvcaregivers.org](mailto:kimmeller@vvcaregivers.org).