

# Giving Back Provides Sense of Fulfill



There are many benefits to volunteering: it connects you to others, is good for your mind and body, and brings fulfillment and a sense of purpose. Giving back may also help combat depression, increase self-confidence, and counteract the effects of stress and anxiety. All of us want to have meaning in our lives and feel good about ourselves. At House of Welcome (HOW) Adult Day Services, participants in the Day Program have opportunities to engage in many different volunteer activities. Participants collect newspapers for animal shelters; make cards for veterans in honor of Veteran's Day; send cards to veterans taking honor flights to Washington D.C.; and bake for PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter), a homeless shelter.

**“At HOW, we strive to keep participants in the community for as long as possible. Working on service projects allows people living with dementia to engage in activities that facilitate that sense of purpose and community.”**

—Stacey Manning, Program Specialist

Last fall, the service project group prepared cards for veterans participating in honor flights through Honor Flight Lake County, a nonprofit organization whose mission is “to transport America’s Veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit those memorials dedicated to honor the service and sacrifices of themselves and their friends.” As part of their honor flight, veterans experience “mail call,” where they are presented with a personalized mail bag of cards honoring their service.

Stacey explained how important giving back is, especially for people living with dementia. “As people experience more advanced dementia they may lose their ability to do some of the things they’ve done in the past and to



# ment for People with Memory Loss



initiate activities on their own. Participating in service projects at the Day Program provides people living with dementia an opportunity to engage in helping others, which helps increase self-confidence and happiness.” She explained how, for example, while people in the baking group enjoy making things for others, other participants take great pride in folding newspapers and putting them into bags so they can be delivered to animal shelters.

Day Program participants give back to PADS at St. Alphonsus Church by baking for them once a month. Kathy Talken, who is a volunteer food coordinator at St. Alphonsus said, “The participants at the HOW Day Program prepare muffins and cakes for our homeless community. In doing so, they provide a homemade touch for people who don’t have homes. It’s a lovely partnership.”

**“Helping others is a win-win for everyone, including people living with dementia. At HOW participants take great pride in giving to the broader community.”**

—Stacey Manning

