

THE Importance of . Caring

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my journey into volunteering



Peggy Meyer

PATIENT CARE AMBASSADOR/MEALS ON WHEELS

All of Peggy Meyer's life, she has tried to make a difference.

First, it was as a math teacher — she started out in Presho, South Dakota, and ended up in Columbus, Nebraska. Then, when she retired, she brainstormed other ways she could touch other people's lives.

"I still wanted to do something to make a difference, but I needed more free time to do things with my kids and husband," she said.

Meyer started volunteering with Meals on Wheels two years ago, but she wanted to be even more involved. So, she started volunteering for Columbus Community Hospital's newly developed patient care ambassador program. Through the program, volunteers advocate for patients and help improve their stay. They are a liaison between the nurse and the patient.

Meyer underwent extensive training for the program, including role-playing, meetings and education.

The program involves patient care ambassadors wheeling a cart packed with stress balls, hearing aid batteries, adult coloring books and other items from room to room. Meyer and the other volunteers had

the opportunity to brainstorm about what patients might want in the cart. She said the hospital was very supportive in listening to their suggestions and patients' suggestions.

"I think, like any volunteer, you want to make a difference," she said. **"What ends up happening is they make a difference for you. You just don't realize the rewards you get from volunteering."**

Meyer speaks highly of the volunteer and guest services team.

"We have a really strong program here, and I think it's second to none in the state," said Meyer. **"We talked to a group that coordinates volunteer programs in hospitals from around the state, and until I went to that meeting, I didn't know they all look up to the Columbus volunteer program as much as they do."**

She recommended that if you are interested in volunteering, you should find what fits you and give it some time. It's something you will not regret, she said.

In her free time, Meyer likes to spend time with her kids and the rest of her family and travel. She also likes to walk, solve puzzles such as Sudoku, listen to music and play golf. Her 30th wedding anniversary is this

summer, and she and her husband plan to take a family trip to Alaska to celebrate.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities available at the hospital, visit columbushosp.org.