

# Trauma Volunteers - a Lifeline for Families



Trauma Volunteer **Dorothy Lake** provides vital information and support to family members while their loved one is treated in our Trauma Center.

A tragic car accident leaves a mother with life-threatening injuries while her son is unscathed in the back-seat. She's transferred to Northridge Hospital Medical Center's **Level II Trauma Center** and rushed into surgery. But what happens to her child?

Upon arrival, he's comforted by a Trauma Volunteer who notifies the boy's family of the accident and reads to him until someone arrives. That's just one of many scenarios encountered by our Trauma Volunteers since the team's inception in 1984.

When a trauma occurs, the on-call Trauma Volunteer is paged and immediately reports to the **Emergency Department (ED)**. If the patient arrives alone, the first task is to locate family, which is easy if he/she is conscious. If not, the volunteer looks for contact information.

"The staff relies on the volunteers as a much needed resource," states **Melanie Crowley, RN, BSN, CEN**, Trauma Center Program Manager. "The volunteers act as a liaison between physicians and family members who are eager for patient updates."

"We assure family members that their loved one is in the best place and receiving the best possible care," adds Trauma Volunteer **Dorothy Lake**. "We calm them by explaining how long a procedure might take and reassure them that the physician will speak to them as soon as possible."

"One time, a young woman was struck by a car and we called her mother on the East Coast, remembers Trauma Volunteer **Joan DuPont** who helped to develop the program. "The mother spent her last dime to fly here so we used money from our fund to pay for her hotel. When financial burdens forced her to return home, we called her every day with medical updates."

Trauma Volunteers also pick up patients' family members from the airport, provide transportation to and from the hospital and arrange for hotel accommodations. They even return to accident scenes to retrieve wallets and purses and search for missing pets who fled after the wreck.

"No two events are ever the same," says Joan. "But it's always rewarding."

Northridge Hospital has one of only two trauma centers in the Valley. If you are interested in becoming a Trauma Volunteer and have five hours to spare each week, please call **818-885-8500, ext. 2961**. If being a Trauma Volunteer is not for you, other volunteer opportunities are also available at the Hospital.

## In the Spotlight

Our Trauma Volunteers garner local and national attention. They've received the Shining Point of Light Award from President George Bush Sr., the JC Penney Lifesaver Award and have been recognized by the Northridge Chamber of Commerce and Kiwanis Club. Trauma Volunteer **Joan DuPont** even traveled to Seattle to speak to physicians and nurses who want to use our Trauma Volunteer program as a model for a similar one.



Trauma Volunteer **Joan DuPont** visits patients at bedside to offer non-medical assistance, including a friendly ear to listen when patients need someone to talk to.

# Trauma Volunteers

## What Is a Level II Trauma Center?

As a Level II Trauma Center, Northridge Hospital maintains specialized equipment and a panel of physician specialists, including trauma surgeons, who are available 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week to treat patients with severe life-threatening injuries. The Medical Director is Shawki Saad, MD, along with a team of Board-certified physicians.

## Golden Opportunity

Join the **Golden Hour Guild** for a heartfelt event when a former patient is reintroduced to Trauma Center caregivers for the first time since his/her miraculous recovery. The Guild will also honor Columnist Dennis McCarthy from the *Los Angeles Daily News*.

**"Golden Hour" Brunch**

**Sunday, March 30**

**Odyssey Restaurant**

**Reception & Auction: 10 a.m.**

**Brunch: 11:30 a.m.**

**Tickets: \$55**

The Golden Hour Guild is a volunteer fundraising group dedicated to supporting the Northridge Hospital Trauma Center. The guild's name reflects the critical first hour of care after a serious injury that can impact the patient's outcome. With the public's support, we can continue to provide essential medical care in our Level II Trauma Center. For more information or to be a sponsor, please call the Northridge Hospital Foundation at 818-885-5341, ext. 2.