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VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE IN DeKALB, LaSALLE, KENDALL COUNTIES

This month marks the 40th Anniversary of Voluntary Action Center (VAC)! We are grateful for the community support and partnerships that have enabled us to meet this milestone. We are so fortunate to have had such dedicated staff over the years, an excellent Boards of Directors, and most importantly, the wonderful people we have served, are serving, and will serve in the years to come!

Originally incorporated in 1974, VAC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of representatives throughout the community. Our Public Transportation Facility and Community Kitchen are located at 1606 Bethany Road in Sycamore, IL. We operate five senior luncheon sites throughout DeKalb County including one in Somonauk, two in DeKalb, one in Sycamore, and one in Genoa.

The agency began as a volunteer clearinghouse matching volunteers to needs in the community. After becoming aware of a lack of access services to the community for seniors and persons with disabilities, VAC began providing door to door transportation services with one van and several volunteer drivers. VAC provided 7,111 rides in that first year of operation.

In 1987, the F.O.O.D. / Meals on Wheels agency joined VAC in an effort by both agencies to improve coordination and efficiency among senior service providers in the county. In 1988 the Public Transportation Facility was constructed on Bethany Road, with a grant to DeKalb County from the Illinois Department of Transportation. In 1991, VAC completed construction of the Central Kitchen Facility at the same location. These centralized facilities allowed for a rapid growth and expansion of services which continues to this day.

As we celebrate 40 years serving DeKalb County, we also celebrate 10 years of service to LaSalle, Bureau and Putnam Counties, and 5 years of service within Kendall County. Milestones that have only been achieved with the generous support of the communities, tremendous partners, phenomenal staff and Directors, and the wonderful people we serve!
In 2003, VAC began administering the Meals on Wheels, Senior Luncheon Sites, and Transportation Programs for senior citizens living in LaSalle and Putnam Counties. In 2005 Bureau County became a part of the VAC Senior Nutrition program.

In 2010, VAC began operating the Kendall Area Transit program in Kendall County. As the first County-wide community and public transportation system in the County, KAT has experienced tremendous growth in a relatively short period of time. In 2010 KAT averaged 24 dial-a-ride trips per day, had 300 registered riders, and logged about 230 miles a day. Fast forward to today, and KAT averages 102 dial-a-ride trips a day, averages 50 park-and-ride trips a day – averaging 3,000 rides a month! – has over 2,000 registered riders, and logs over 1,500 miles a day!

VAC could not have achieved such success over the past 40 years without its dedicated staff and Board of Directors; support from local communities, community members, and local partners; and the wonderful people we help serve. While these past 40 years have been successful, VAC looks forward to the achievements the following 40 years will bring!

For more information on VAC, contact Associate Director, Ellen Rogers, at (815) 758-3932. For more information on KAT, contact KAT Director, Paul LaLonde, at (630) 882-6970.

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