



News Advisory

Blue Water Area Transportation Commission

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“Common Cents” Program Shows Transit Employees

How They Share Enthusiasm for Volunteering

PORT HURON, MI — During the first half of their one-year involvement with the Common Cents Philanthropy Program, Blue Water Area Transportation Commission employees have discovered that they share an enthusiasm for volunteering.

The Program, which was developed by Jim Relken, gives an organization the opportunity to recognize community service and encourage random acts of kindness among employees.

“The Program is a really good fit for us, because the very nature of our mission is community service,” says Jim Wilson, BWATC general manager. “It’s been great to learn about all the activities that our employees are involved in throughout the community.”

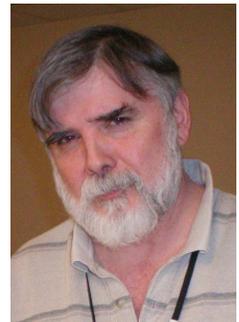
Good examples of such volunteerism can be found within the crew that fields the constant stream of requests to dispatch dial-a-ride buses within the townships.

Karen Earabino, lead dispatcher, enjoys volunteering at her church and her son’s school. “I have been a Sunday School teacher for several years and also really like to chaperone on school field trips,” she says. Karen has worked for BWATC for six years.

Dispatcher Laura McGinty, a single mom of three, also helps out with activities involving her children. She has served as a girl’s softball coach and a Girl Scout leader. Laura has worked five years for BWATC, initially as a bus driver.



**Karen Earabino
Lead Dispatcher
BWATC**



**Kevin Dixon
Dispatcher
BWATC**



**Laura McGinty
Dispatcher
BWATC**

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Dispatcher Kevin Dixon helps the community through his membership in the local Masons and his involvement with the Bridges ministry. He has worked for BWATC for 20 years.

In addition to recognizing community service, the Common Cents Philanthropy Program has been encouraging good deeds by issuing monthly blank checks to the nearly 90 employees who work for BWATC.

Each month, an employee can honor or thank a coworker for “going the extra mile” by officially promising an act of goodwill on the check’s redemption line.

“The checks are not about money, but about giving a simple act of goodwill to a coworker,” explains Jim Relken, president and founder of the Program. “Examples might be promising to bake a dozen cookies, wash a coworker’s car after work, or share a simple smile.”

For additional information about the Common Cents Philanthropy Program, contact Jim Relken at (810) 985-1999.

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BWATC continues a proud tradition of innovation in public transit that has served Port Huron for more than a century. Port Huron was one of the nation’s first communities to operate an electrified transit system in the 1880s and one of the first to operate motor coaches when they became popular in the 1930s. Following an eight-year hiatus, the current bus service began in September 1976. Since then, BWATC has carried more than 20 million riders and continues the tradition of innovation by producing its own compressed natural gas alternative fuel since 1996.

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