

Voluntarism Is 'Way of Life' for Mrs. Raskin

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By K. CONNIE KANG

You get so much more out of volunteering than you can ever give, says Vivian G. Raskin, who ought to know.

For Mrs. Raskin, who this month, became president of the Maryland Association of Hospital Auxiliaries (MAHA), voluntarism has become a way of life. MAHA is an organization of 54 hospital auxiliaries throughout the state with more than 30,000 members.

HER CAREER in voluntarism began in 1951 as the first salaried director of volunteers at the Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago.

Over the past 20 years, with the exception of "a sabbatical" she took (1958-1963) to have four children (Philip, 13,

Daniel, 12, Lisa, 11 and David, 9) Mrs. Raskin has worked as a professional volunteer in many different capacities.

Today, she works on the average of four days a week without pay, she says. Her many commitments include chairmanship of the Volunteer Services at the University of Maryland Hospital, where her husband, Dr. Howard F. Raskin, is associate professor of medicine and head of the Division of Gastroenterology.

She sits on numerous boards and committees including the Advisory Committee of the Center for the Study of Voluntarism.

And Mrs. Raskin is a tireless promoter of voluntarism — especially in the hospitals.

"WHAT A LONELY thing to

walk into a hospital," she says. "It's a very traumatic experience. The volunteer can help ease this kind of situation."

The volunteer not only supplements and complements the working staff by providing such amenities, but she/he can become a tremendous force in educating the community about health needs and care, Mrs. Raskin adds.

For an increasing number of Americans, voluntarism is becoming "a lifestyle," she said.

And in her opinion it's a lifestyle that is "open to everyone" — whether rich or poor, man or woman, young or old.

VOLUNTARISM is simply the commitment to help

"one's fellow man," she says — a natural quality that is present in every human being.

"By making a meaningful contribution, a human being can fulfill his desires to grow and meet the potential of opportunities," Mrs. Raskin said.

"Why" a person wants to be a volunteer is "immaterial," in her opinion.

It doesn't matter if a young girl is looking for a husband, so long as she fulfills her responsibilities to the institution, Mrs. Raskin said. And it doesn't matter if a middle-

aged woman volunteers in order to get out of the house once a week.

"It's what we do with that person that's important," Mrs. Raskin says.

What happens frequently, is that motivation of the volunteers change as they become increasingly involved, she said. That's the "fun part," she added.

The whole process of professionalizing volunteers in the recent years means that people's talents are utilized properly, Mrs. Raskin said.

The question for the volunteer is no longer, "Here I am,

take me," but "Utilize me properly," she said.

That's why volunteers should be carefully trained and supervised just as the salaried staff is, Mrs. Raskin stressed.

After all, many volunteers are "highly-skilled men and women who cannot for one reason or another receive a salary," she added.

She feels, too that the volunteers should be made accountable for, and responsible to, the institution just as the salaried staff is.

"There's been a great deal of misunderstanding about the salary," she said. "Monetary remuneration should not be the common denominator for determining the quality of contribution."

IN HOSPITAL voluntarism, the volunteer has a dual role, Mrs. Raskin said:

Representing the community to the hospital and representing the hospital to the community.

Volunteers can be an effective force in educating consumers about health care and play an important role in affecting health legislation, Mrs. Raskin said.

In a 1969 survey by the American Hospital Association more than 1 million auxiliary workers worked in almost 60 per cent of the nation's hospitals. They raised more than \$38 million for hospital construction to research and other purposes.

With the physical growth of the health industry, new concepts in medical care are emerging, Mrs. Raskin said.

The new concept is in preventing illnesses as well as in curing them, she added.

And in all this the volunteer plays an important role.

After all, voluntarism has left the "lady-do-gooder" era "eons ago and has now" come to a full circle to the age of the professional volunteer," Mrs. Raskin said.



HEADS HOSPITAL AUXILIARIES—Mrs. Vivian G. Raskin, president of the Maryland Association of Hospital Auxiliaries, advocates voluntarism as a lifestyle.

—News American Photo by John Davis.