

by Barbara Baer Pillay

In keeping with this newsletter's theme of keeping active and being productive, it is very easy to reflect on how volunteering provides win-win opportunities on many levels and I have examples to prove it! I remember two volunteers who came specifically to NABIS to volunteer in our office volunteer program so that they could get back into a routine, practice their communication and people skills and most importantly, gain back their confidence after having a brain injury. They were clear about their motives and when they felt ready they moved on; in the meantime, NABIS had the service of two very valuable volunteers. Many other volunteers come to us with the same idea in mind and some move on quickly and some stay until their volunteer work becomes simply their work. And what a gift that is! We do sincerely try to live the philosophy that every contribution, big, small, long-term, short-term is a gift that we cherish and appreciate, knowing that volunteers have many options and lives to lead. Anything they give to NABIS was not here before and would not be without their contribution.

So, someone new contributing to NABIS is Wednesday afternoon volunteer, Bev. **Welcome, Bev!** And someone who has been a NABIS volunteer stalwart is **Trudy Rabinovitz**, a retired government worker who came to us when she decided that she needed to get out and do something. All of our office volunteers work closely with staff person, Mary Pfeffer, and Trudy was telling Mary one day how volunteering at NABIS has been one of the best



"Volunteering at NABIS has been one of the best things to have happened in my life,"
Trudy Rabinovitz

things to have happened to her in her life. Well, I was instantly intrigued so I asked Trudy what she meant by that. She was very happy to report that first, NABIS has done great things for her self-confidence and self-esteem. Just the little things mean so much; staff tell her that it is nice to see her, that she is doing a great job, they give her so much encouragement. Also she really enjoys meeting all the different people that walk through our doors and she says that volunteering at NABIS has made her more open-minded – opened to what's on the inside of a person, not what they look like or how well they express themselves. She also notes that being around NABIS makes her realize again how everyone has their problems; it is just a matter of degree. Trudy has a minor foot disability but working at NABIS has made her thankful for her own circumstance because there is always someone either in better or worse shape than her. Finally, Trudy reflected that even though there is no pay for volunteer work, you do get paid in the long run in terms of self-assurance and the knowledge that you are helping someone else. That is Trudy's experience and we hope that all our volunteers would agree with these sentiments; we'll ask Bev a few months from now!

I cannot end this missive without acknowledging the tremendous support our departing ED, Ginny Gillen, has always given our volunteer program. Her great leadership has meant that volunteers have always felt valued and appreciated and sadly, that is not the case in every agency. Ginny would be the first to laugh if a volunteer cut her phone call off or mixed up someone's name and we have taken our cue from her. The volunteers are really going to miss Ginny but I know, she, too, will miss them.



Keogh Charleton shares a Christmas hug with NABIS' Executive Director Ginny Gillen. Photo taken Dec. 2004.