

Shriners Hospital for Children—Boston Hospital Volunteers

By MARK STOUGHT

WHILE taking a tour of the Shriners Hospital for Children—Boston, I also arranged to talk to **Bob Tibbetts**, who is the volunteer Director of Volunteer Services at the Shriners Hospital in Boston. The initial “volunteer” is not a mistake; Bob is the only director of Volunteer Services who is himself a volunteer, and volunteering is exactly what I went to talk to him about. He even volunteered to pay for my lunch!

As if it weren't blaringly obvious by now, I'm going to talk about what the hospital volunteers do, what they don't do, and how you can help. The hospital volunteers (which have been around since the Boston Hospital opened in 1968) are organized as a unit format, but the structure is somewhat non-traditional – the position of Captain is rotated daily, so there is a Monday Captain, Tuesday Captain, and so on.

It may seem a little odd, but Bob said, “There's some give in the equation, but the ideal situation is to have the same people volunteering on the same day (or days) for a minimum commitment of a year, so there is a cohesive working relationship between everybody involved. The shift times vary a little, depending on what's going on, but we consider a shift to be roughly 8:30 am to 2 pm.”

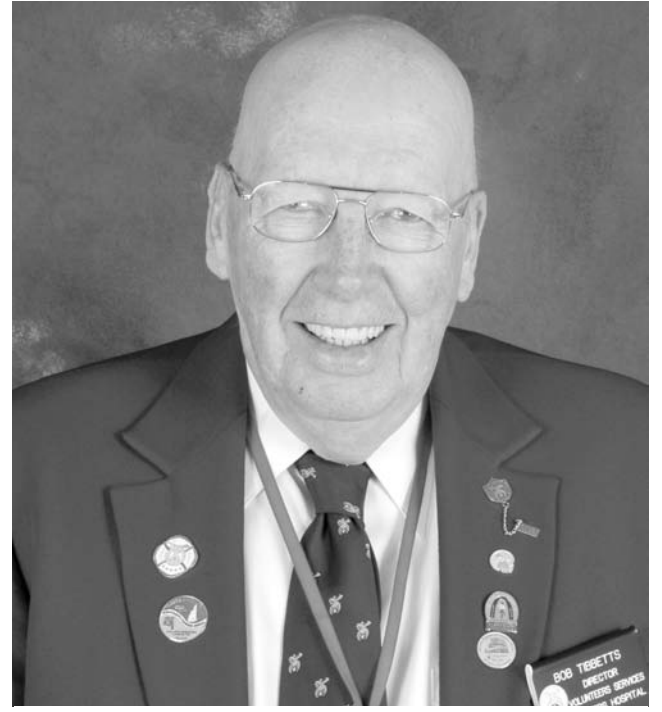
The volunteers do a lot of administrative work: sorting mail, tours, outside speaking engagements, and what Bob calls “mundane work” such as working in the Photo Lab or the Medical Records office. There are also volunteers who handle transportation of patients. So there are volunteers who come into contact with patients, and others who do not. I'm sure many people don't want to volunteer at the hospital because they feel squeamish around the

children. It's a natural reaction at first, but as Bob says, “It's all a matter of getting used to them. Once you realize that, burned or not, these kids are still kids like everybody else, the ‘problem’ disappears.”

So what are the benefits of volunteering? “Well, you have the chance to build relationships with the people you work with, in many ways. Because of the long-term nature of the care here, there are patients who have their favorite drivers, for example. We have one patient who comes here from England a few times a year, and he always wants one particular volunteer to pick him up at the airport, so he calls ahead of time to make sure that volunteer will be there. In other ways, a volunteer who does administrative work will be working with the same people all the time and will get to know them. We also offer training opportunities, and we learn about how the hospital works and what its procedures are.”

The requirements for volunteering are a bit more laborious than most other units, because there is an actual application process involved. All volunteers must be Masons (and preferably Shriners) or be wives of Masons or Shriners. The hospital also has some additional requirements, which are a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information, more commonly considered a background check), and a take-home HIPA (Health Information Privacy Act) course. There is also a driving course for those who want to be drivers. Apparently it teaches you how to be a safe driver, which is perhaps a contradiction in terms when applied to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, but that's a different issue entirely.

We as Shriners say (as one of our many official



BOB TIBBETTS
DIRECTOR OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES

and unofficial mottoes) that “Shriners Help Children.” Since the children are at the hospitals, we can help the children by supporting the hospitals. While I would encourage you all to push the boundaries of your personal comfort zones and get comfortable with all sorts of people, whether burned, disabled, or whatever, there are a lot of things to be done at the hospital that don't require “pushing the envelope” (other than to sort the mail). It's a worthwhile and rewarding experience, and I encourage those of you looking for an opportunity to help the Shrine, who have the time, and would find it easier to get to Boston than to the Shrine Center in Wilmington, to give Bob Tibbetts a call at the Hospital in Boston at 617-722-3000 and volunteer your time.

Finding Help and Hope at Shriners Hospitals

UPON seeing **Karen Crook** and her daughter, **Alyssia**, in a Grand Rapids, Mich. store, **Shriner Ron Hirt** walked over and handed them his Shriners business card.

“I don't normally do this,” he said. “But I have a very strong feeling that I must give this card to you.”

His act of kindness couldn't have come at a better time.

Karen and her husband, **Chad**, adopted **Alyssia** from the Ukraine. A second-generation child from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster of 1986, the young girl had both orthopaedic and craniofacial conditions as a result of radiation poisoning. She had trouble walking and hearing, and had a cleft lip and palate. The Crooks exhausted their many connections to find help for their daughter, traveling as far away as Japan. But after nearly two years of searching for alternatives, the only option seemed to be amputation of both her legs.

But that had happened before they met **Hirt** and discovered Shriners Hospitals for Children.

After searching the world, that fateful meeting in a local store finally brought the family to the Shriners Hospitals for Children — Chicago. Volunteers from **Saladin Shriners** offered to drive the family to the hospital, and from the moment they got into the Shriners' van, the Crooks knew they were in the right place. Especially when the first specialist saw **Alyssia** and declared, “Amputation is out of the question.” Karen was so happy she wept upon hearing the good news.

The Shriners Hospital's team had seen other cases like **Alyssia's**, though not as severe. Doctors were confident that, through treatments like casting and surgery, they could avoid amputating her legs. After her first clinical visit, **Alyssia** left in a cast. Soon, doctors repaired her cleft palate, and specialists have worked with **Alyssia** to improve her hearing and speech.

Alyssia, now 10 years old, has blossomed under the expert care of her doctors and therapists at the Shriners Hospital, but her recovery is not yet complete. Every two weeks, the Shriner's van brings her and her mother to the hospital, where **Alyssia** continues to make progress.

Karen and Chad are grateful to have more time to focus on parenthood and enjoy their time together as a family.

“Everyone knows what the Shriners Hospital does for kids, but what they do for families is totally remarkable,” Karen says. “My husband said the other day, ‘With **Alyssia's** medical needs being taken care of by the Shriners Hospital, I can finally focus on being a father.’”

“That,” Karen concluded, “is the greatest blessing of all!”



Alyssia is all smiles since finding Shriner's Hospitals for Children.

Increasing Membership with Chairman Philip R. Kumph

By HERMES BOYATIS

WE interviewed Phil while he was cooking sausages and a special Italian sauce for he and his wife **Connie's** family en route to West Peabody for Sunday dinner. “I love to cook,” he noted, “sometimes for my North Shore lodges.” Phil owns a business in telephone sales and services, or, as he says, “voice and data systems.” He handles major installations and repairs in large apartments, condominiums, lighthouses, and more!

Phil spoke about his Masonic and Shriner's past, “I served as Captain of the Motor Patrol for three years; President of the North Shore Shrine Club for two years; and since then I have been Ambassador and Marshall of my Golden Fleece Lodge in Lynn.” About his family he told us, “In the past, I have known so many proud times: raising four remarkable, now grown-up children: **Phillip, Jr., Theresa Marie, Suzanne, and Patricia.** Then, of course, my demanding commitments to business, Masons, friends, and even to cooking.”

At last we reached his latest major role. “I have been appointed by **Illustrious Potentate, Steve Eriksen**, as Membership Chairman of **Aleppo**. My number one priority is for each **Aleppo** member to replace himself with a younger guy. Next, to encourage **Blue Lodge** Masons who are not yet Shriners to become Nobles; and I say to Shriners who are not yet in a Unit ‘You have NO IDEA what you're missing!’”

“My team is made up of twelve Nobles including Potentate **Steve Eriksen**. Please give us a call at 1-800-559-4149 or 1-978-535-2203.

We hear you, fantastic Phil. We promise to spread your messages, make many phone calls, and recruit and recruit!



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