

Delray Medical Center Volunteer Enjoys Helping Others at Hospital

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While Charles Carroll recuperated from his heart attack, he was making plans for his future.

Coincidentally, he wanted to return to Delray Medical Center, where he spent nearly a month recovering.

"They took such good care of me and did such a great job I thought I would give back," says Carroll, who returned as a volunteer five years ago. "I love the camaraderie. "

Carroll, who volunteers twice a week from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., navigates the three-story hospital with ease. At 98, he's the oldest volunteer there, but his energy level is off the charts.

"He embodies everything that is good about a volunteer. He's friendly and warm and is willing to help anyone. He doesn't let his age get in the way of what has to be done to help patients and staff," says volunteer services director Becky McCoy . "When they see Charles coming they know the job will be done and will be done correctly."

Carroll takes his duties seriously, but loves a good quip and enjoys making people smile.

The Delray Beach resident and retired Army officer has amassed a lot of volunteer hours in his lifetime, including transporting patients at the VA Medical Center in Riviera Beach and manning the information desk and checking patients in at clinics at Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, Va.

He also lent a helping hand while a recreation specialist in the Department of Defense, where he worked with Army commanders to provide recreational, educational and cultural programs for disadvantaged youths as part of President Johnson's Youth Opportunity Program. His work caught the eye of Vice President Spiro Agnew, who commended him in 1969 with a certificate for "helping improve the lives of these young Americans ."

Carroll appreciates the accolades, but says he doesn't volunteer for the glory.

"I just want to give back and I decided I wanted to volunteer as long as I am physically able," says Carroll, who has been married to Vera Helena since 1946.

And although Carroll is nearly a century old, he's not ready to stop volunteering anytime soon. He's healthy, says he feels great and still drives (his license doesn't expire until he is 100).

"Every day is a blessing," says the father of two.