

OSHIIP Volunteer Spotlight

The OSHIIP Volunteer Spotlight celebrates OSHIIP volunteers and their hard work. It also sheds insight into the rewards and challenges of being a volunteer while giving OSHIIP volunteers an opportunity to learn about one another and to learn from one another.



MEET DARENDA GEER!

The spotlight's on Darenda Geer! Darenda has been an OSHIIP volunteer mainly assisting the disabled population in Fairfield County since early 2018. Darenda worked for The Boeing Company for 37 years in aerospace and community and government relations. Raised in the Millersport/Buckeye Lake area outside of Columbus she is back home where she grew up and loving every minute of it, especially spending time with her young grandchildren.

For fun, Darenda loves photography, tending to her flowers, and watching the birds. Her favorite vacation spot is an island in Mexico. Her favorite food? Well...Mexican! Favorite type of book and television show? Crime mysteries and anything historical!

Why did you become a volunteer?

I was attending the Ohio Benefits Planner's Taskforce quarterly meeting and heard a presentation given by Becky Hayward of OSHIIP. She also highlighted becoming a volunteer and the training requirements. Because I am a certified Work Incentive Practitioner (Benefits Analyst) I thought the training would be beneficial for when working with individuals providing a Work Incentive Plan (formally Benefits Analysis). It was and is.

What makes volunteering most rewarding?

Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security benefits can be very complicated for many. Being able to somewhat simplify the mechanics of each and help people to more easily understand at least the basics of each is rewarding. The heartfelt appreciation received from the individuals served puts a smile on my face.

What have you found most interesting about volunteering with OSHIIP?

First of all, learning we have a state insurance agency -- the Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI). What a great organization that can provide so much to so many, yet I find often that people are unaware of OSHIIP's existence within ODI. I personally have learned so much about Medicare specifically and have helped many ease their minds about selecting the Medicare option that best fits their needs. When I tell them about OSHIIP they are so happy that someone is there to help them through complicated decisions or situations.

What is most challenging when helping someone on Medicare?

Medicare is complicated. There are so many options and when an individual is also covered under an employee's retirement benefits. Healthcare is so very expensive. The most challenging aspect is finding a plan that best fits an individual's needs, but knowing they can switch plans if they are not comfortable with their initial selection is a big weight off their minds. I believe there are many commercials regarding Medicare that don't tell the whole story and often confuse people.

When people come to OSHIIP, what have you found they most need?

What I find that people need and appreciate the most is simplifying the process of initial election for them. Explaining in easily understood terms the difference between regular Medicare, Medigap, and Medicare Advantage and the nuances within each. It can be overwhelming.

Do you have any words of wisdom to share as an OSHIIP volunteer?

To learn as much as you can to simplify it for those making major life choices regarding their insurance options.