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Wheeling Toward Retirement, Barbara Trigg Remains on the Go

Friends, co-workers
call her an
inspiration to others

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 21, 2006) For the past 21 years, Barbara Trigg has performed her job as a Human Resources records clerk while seated in a wheelchair. You'd think she's handicapped. She doesn't.

"No," she says emphatically. "I'm disabled, but I'm not handicapped."

In fact, Trigg has established a reputation as one of Metro's most reliable employees and one of its best volunteers. She has worked all but one Metro Rail grand opening and staffed Metro booths many weekends at community events throughout Los Angeles County.

Her dedicated service and volunteerism, her persistence against odds that would discourage others, her winning personality, her smile — all were mentioned repeatedly, Thursday afternoon, during a retirement party in the Metro Headquarters cafeteria.

Photos by Gayle Anderson



Trigg's friends and co-workers surrounded her as she sat at a table featuring a huge chocolate cake decorated like a baseball diamond – she's a rabid Dodger's fan who attends 30 to 40 games a year. Her effective retirement date is July 31.

'A very positive individual'

"She's really a very positive individual," said her supervisor, Carmen Mayor. "She comes in early in the morning and works hard at her job. She's really a good employee."

Rich Morallo, who coordinates the Metro Volunteer program, said of Trigg: "She continues to be THE outstanding Metro Volunteer of the agency. She has always been so selfless, so giving of her time."



HR Director Stefan Chasnov presents Trigg with traditional Metro plaque cheered

on by Brenda Diederichs, EO Labor and Employee Relations, at left, and Lynda Bybee, DEO, Community Relations.

HR Director Stefan Chasnov thanked Trigg for her service and “for being an outstanding example of people who have physical impairments...and showing us that, despite any challenges, she can do a great job and contribute to the organization.”

Barbara Trigg was in her 40s, newly divorced and a student at Pasadena City College, when she first came to work for the SCRTD as an as-needed employee. She was hired for only three weeks to back up full-timers who were assigned to the agency’s 1984 Olympics operation.

She was supposed to work in Revenue passing out tokens, but wound up as a receptionist in HR. Eleven months later, she was hired full-time as a Records clerk. In those days, she and her co-workers – Dale Petres and Cookie Roberson – processed employee records and filed them alphabetically in banks of metal drawers.

A computer on her desk

“Suddenly one morning, a computer was sitting on my desk,” Trigg recalls. “We all had to learn how to use them. They told us the paper work would be a lot less with the computers – forget it!”

Nowadays, the neatly kept Records office on the Plaza level of Metro Headquarters is surrounded by huge banks of revolving shelves that deliver a set of records to desk level at the touch of a button. No longer in alpha order, employee records are filed by badge number.

It’s work Trigg is good at and says she enjoys. So, why retire now?

“I’m tired of getting up at 4 in the morning,” she says, and hers is a routine that would be difficult for most people.

Up at 4 a.m., she gets ready for an Access Services van that arrives at her El Monte home around 5. They pick up another passenger and she’s at the Gateway Building by 6 or a little after. She has some breakfast and is on the job no later than 7:30.

Trigg puts in a full day and then reverses her travel routine to get back home in the evening in time to feed her cats, Whimsy, Tinkerbelle, Poppy, Kasey and Penny. Or, maybe she’ll take in an evening Dodgers game. Hers are long, eventful days.

Talking up Metro

Then, on many weekends Trigg and her electric wheelchair travel to some community event where, along with other volunteers, she talks up Metro and passes out literature.

And, she does all this despite a hereditary, congenital condition that only some 250 people in the entire world are afflicted with. It’s called

What Others Say
<Cookie Roberson, Records Clerk: “I’m happy and I’m sad. I don’t want her to leave, but I’m happy for her because she’s been waiting a long time for this.”
<Dale Petres, Records Clerk: “I’ll miss her; we were always there for each other. I wish her well in whatever she does. She’ll be good.”
<Lynda Bybee, DEO, Community Relations: “You are a wonderful ambassador for this agency and a wonderful colleague to work with.”
<Brenda Diederichs, EO Labor and Employee Relations: “It has inspired me every time I see her because she’s happy and deals with the agency’s issues with a smile on her face.”
<Don Ott, EO, Administration: “She has a reputation of being an ideal employee who comes to work every day, does a great job and is great to work with.”

osteopetrosis and it causes a person's bones to become overly dense. Symptoms can include fractures, frequent infections, blindness, deafness and strokes.

Trigg's father, uncle and grandfather all suffered from osteopetrosis, which affects males 80 percent of the time. However, she says, "My brother's fine. I'm the one who ended up with it." Unfortunately, since so few people have the disease, there's not much research in the field.

But, back to that handicapped label. Why doesn't she put herself in that category?

"I think I can do pretty much what I want to do," she says, patting the arm of her electric wheelchair. "I may not be able to do it as fast as other people, but there are lots of people I know who are handicapped. Who are sad that they have whatever they have, but I figure life tossed it to me and I'll cope."

And there's no doubt about it, Barbara Trigg copes. In fact, she has taken life by the horns and wrestled it to the ground.