

The
Shared Legacy of



Dick Graham
and **DARTS:**

Ideals, Ideas,
and Good Work

Approaching the entrance to the DARTS campus, one notices among the greenery a work of sculpture—a figure with an umbrella providing protection from the elements. But in this case, the elements look like bubbles, and the spirit is akin to Gene Kelly’s when he dances while *Singin’ in the Rain*. The sculpture symbolizes DARTS’ way of doing things: **“We do serious work without taking ourselves seriously.”**



Founder and retiring president Dick Graham offers that motto with satisfaction, careful to note that he’s quoting former board chair Doug Differt. Although it is Dick who is being honored for his 31 years of service to DARTS, he seems incapable of mentioning thoughtful words, creative ideas, or noteworthy achievements without crediting someone else. **And that may be the secret ingredient to DARTS’ success.**

In 1974 when Dick was hired as executive director, DARTS was being organized by some Dakota County seniors and the Inver Hills Community College to provide transportation for seniors interested in taking college classes. At first, this ride service depended on an old school bus, two airport limousines, and a van. Pickup and drop-off schedules were organized by rearranging pink cards on the desktop, like a sleight of hand trick. Gone are those days. Recently, Dick led a quick tour of DARTS’ two attractive and highly efficient buildings.

The ride service is now housed in the

Transportation and Technology center, and what happens there is dazzling. “We use the most sophisticated ride software in the world,” says Dick.

“We take seniors and people with disabilities anywhere they need to go—to work, to doctor appointments, to volunteer jobs. But, we’re personal too. Lorraine [an 80-something employee]

comes in and calls clients from 5 to 9 a.m. five days a week to confirm their rides for that day.” Quality of service is a high priority, and client satisfaction is never taken for granted.

On the other side of the building is a six-bay vehicle maintenance facility. There the tax-paying nonprofit DARTS VMS (Vehicle Maintenance Services) maintains and services not just DARTS vehicles, but buses, vans, and specially equipped vehicles for 80 or more nonprofit agencies across the Twin Cities metropolitan area. **Now, organizations such as Presbyterian Homes and Hennepin County’s Head Start can focus on what they do best, knowing that DARTS mechanics will keep their clients safely on their way.** “It’s one-stop shopping,” says Dick. “They no longer have to go one place for brake service, somewhere else for preventive maintenance, and a third place for warranty work. It’s all here.”

Ever alert to new ideas, Dick was reading *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* when he spotted an article about a national nonprofit business plan competition sponsored by Yale University/Goldman Sachs Foundation/Pew Charitable Trusts. To Dick, it was obvious that DARTS had a winning concept—spinning off vehicle maintenance as an income-producing entity that provided a substantial social return. **In May 2004 the sponsors concurred, naming DARTS VMS as one of four grand prize winners.**

“We do serious work without taking ourselves seriously.”

“I just brought the idea up, everyone else did the work,” claims Dick, but scratching the surface reveals that while the dedicated DARTS staff did a great deal of work over an extended period of time, it was largely because of Dick that there were DARTS board members and community leaders who were able to contribute expertise on business planning and presentations.

The impromptu tour progressed to the Community Resources building where the other areas of DARTS are housed—Community Services, Volunteer Resources, and Administration. A \$7.15 million capital campaign, launched in 1999, provided for extensive renovation of the main building as well as the construction of the Transportation center.

The main building is beautiful and has not only offices, but also larger spaces for meetings, training, and community gatherings. “We don’t apologize for having a nice place to work,” says Dick. “This building reflects the value that the community places on DARTS’ services; the community paid for it.”

The building houses a great deal of activity. Colleen, whose parents were early DARTS volunteers, was scheduling some of the 1,400 volunteers whose generous donation of over 36,000 hours per year leverages DARTS \$5.5 million annual budget to serve thousands of area seniors and their families. Across the room, Lynn was advising a Los Angeles caller who needed help securing appropriate services for her mother in the Twin Cities. Through Lynn's referrals to social workers, homemaking, and other services, the caller's mother will receive friendly, professional



Dick with DARTS volunteer, Jim Nelson

assistance, while the caller herself can count on “caregiver coaching” phone calls to help her care for her mother without losing excessive job time to worry and research. DARTS information specialists provide not only caregiver advice, but a broad range of information and assistance on all issues related to aging.

“From the beginning, professional staff and volunteers have worked together,” says Dick. “DARTS is as much about the contributions of seniors as about their needs.” In fact, the mission statement was changed in 1997 to reflect DARTS’ role in finding meaningful outlets for elder wisdom and energy. “DARTS has always

believed that helping seniors connect and give back to their community supports our vision of ‘age-friendly’ and vital communities.”

Everywhere he goes at DARTS, staff and visitors greet Dick, and volunteers flag him down with questions, visible proof of the claim that no hierarchy separates the many people who contribute to DARTS. Part of Dick’s legacy at DARTS is that the commitment to high quality is not just for services provided. It’s equally important that DARTS be an excellent place to work and build a career, a great place to volunteer, a responsive community partner, and the best possible steward of voluntary donations.

—Jan Shaw-Flamm, freelance writer



DARTS Vision:

We work to build caring and vibrant communities for present and future generations.

DARTS Mission:

DARTS, a volunteer-based organization, works with others to pioneer and deliver high-quality services that support the full participation of seniors and all generations in community life.

DARTS Values:

The people we serve come first; their dignity is always respected.

Volunteers and professional staff work as partners.

We join with the community to meet shared goals.

We stand for and stand behind high-quality services.

We are stewards of the time, talent, and resources the community entrusts to us.

In the Beginning... perspectives from the early years

Although it now provides a vast array of services, DARTS began as a ride service bringing intellectually curious seniors to classes at the local community college. Among those who knew Dick and DARTS in the beginning are Larry Margolis, who provided financial advice for the startup of DARTS, and Paul Verret, a past nonprofit colleague.

Dick has attracted **many dedicated board members, staff, and volunteers** who have helped make DARTS the **outstanding organization** it is today.

My first contact with DARTS was in October 1975 when I began working at Inver Hills Community College as the college's business officer. With the support of a federal grant, DARTS became part of the college's continuing education division, led by Phil Anderson. Phil was very entrepreneurial and he hired in Dick someone very like himself—energetic with good ideas. It was a great deal of fun working with Dick. Those first years at the college involved a lot of laughter over limos that constantly broke down, and kidding about who would have to answer to the auditors for a particularly interesting purchase.

Dick is always seeking new challenges, and in 1978, Dick and Phil agreed it was time for DARTS to incorporate as a nonprofit and expand its mission. When DARTS left the college, I wondered how DARTS would sustain itself financially. Knowing Dick, I should never have worried. DARTS has built a sound financial base to support its mission.

I felt very honored to be the organization's first board treasurer. It was an experience that has been one of the most rewarding of my career. As one who is caring for two aging parents myself, I cannot overstate the value of the broad array of services that DARTS provides to the seniors of Dakota County. They are critical to supporting a good quality of life.

Dick has attracted many dedicated board members, staff, and volunteers who have helped make DARTS the outstanding organization it is today. **The best way to describe Dick is the Yiddish word “mensch,”** meaning someone to admire and emulate, someone of noble character. Dick brought to his work an extraordinary vision of what DARTS should be, and a determination to see that vision become a reality.



Larry Margolis

first board treasurer of DARTS

VP of Administrative Services, Inver Hills Community College

I first knew Dick Graham in the early 1970s when he and I both worked for the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. I was starting out in the executive offices, and Dick was a social worker at the Wilder Senior Center next door. I lost track of Dick for a few years, and then he reemerged as the executive director of DARTS looking for advice, encouragement, and funding. We have remained in regular contact since.

Dick possesses a great number of leadership qualities that have made him successful in addressing the needs of the community. Dick is

Visionary. Repeatedly, Dick has been able to envision where DARTS next needs to go, and express this vision in ways others could understand and help advance.

Courageous. Once Dick knew where to proceed, he was ready to set out on the trail. The size and complexity of next steps did not daunt him.

Persuasive. Every time he moved to expand or improve DARTS, Dick was able to enlist the various internal and external publics needed to proceed, and to keep them on board.

Patient. One mark of a good administrator and leader is the willingness to work one's way through difficult situations. Dick has always persevered until the job was completed and completed well. He works his way through issues and does not cave in.

Kind. No matter what the issue, Dick has always been welcoming and accepting of the views of others. Once others are heard, Dick moves ahead with what he believes is right.

Dick has secured and maintained the support of the many players who have a stake in assisting DARTS—public funders, corporate donors, foundation grantors, United Ways, individual donors, regulators, vendors, board members, and customers. Dick recruited volunteers from the start, and the building of a volunteer base has served DARTS well. Over time, Dick has built up an enormous supply of “social capital” to be spent to advance DARTS when needed.



Paul Verret

*president emeritus,
The Saint Paul Foundation*

Shared Journey... thoughts from friends and associates who share a long history

One of the key elements of DARTS' success has been the loyalty of its volunteers, staff, and board members. Kris Barrett, now director of transportation, began as a driver in 1980. Millie Gignac has served on the volunteer Board of Directors for 25 years. Like Kris, Mark Hoisser was also a driver when he joined DARTS in 1975. What inspires such loyalty? Perhaps it is shared commitment to the mission and an organizational culture that respects and challenges its people.



Kris Barrett, DARTS director of transportation

DARTS helps make Dakota County one of the best places for seniors to live. DARTS strives to serve people in a personal way, and we've always looked for ways to do our work better. As we have more programs and more people, Dick reminds staff that it's important to stay "high touch." Being "high tech" helps us do that. The technology gives us more time to help people. We can track what kind of ride someone needs, do they use a wheelchair, do they prefer the side to the front door, and so on. Someone might call in and say, "I need to go get my hair done tomorrow," and we often already know where they go for this. They think it's magic!

Dick sets an example for other community leaders, employees, and volunteers with his commitment to serving seniors in Dakota County. He has great vision, and he enthusiastically encourages staff to carry out his vision. He celebrates successes and, regardless of outcome, is never discouraged from moving on toward another great vision. Most tough spots in DARTS' history were kept in proportion by Dick's calmness and his faith in staff to overcome difficulties. He sees success where others do not.



Millie Gignac, DARTS long-time board member and past chair

Serving on the DARTS board has been a great experience. I have seen DARTS' services continue to grow with the growth of the senior population.

Everything about DARTS touches my heart. It is one of the most wonderful organizations I've had the privilege to be involved with, and I attribute this largely to Dick Graham and the wonderful, caring staff that runs DARTS. I am always amazed when someone leaves—someone I thought was essential to the organization—because Dick always manages to find an excellent replacement.

Dick is very innovative and open to new ideas. He's also a very caring person, and I cherish his friendship. Dick has made DARTS an organization with such strong roots that I know it will continue to thrive.

Dick has connected **key community partners**—older adults, foundations, funders, donors, and volunteers—in the vision of a **better future for seniors and their families.**

DARTS allows the community to be a more hospitable host to seniors, which helps in the stabilization of neighborhoods. It provides the mobility that allows older adults, and adults of all ages with disabilities, to participate more fully in their community of choice. DARTS offers many volunteers the opportunity to give back to the community, while also providing direct services by paid staff who live in the community. **Because DARTS is well connected regionally and nationally,** we have the opportunity to expand our reach and funding potential through strategic partnerships and corporate sponsorships not readily available to struggling or small organizations.

In the early days, Dick's leadership and tenacity paved the way for DARTS to become the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) provider for Dakota County. This service and funding is now the cornerstone of DARTS' ride service. Dick has connected key community partners—older adults, foundations, funders, donors, and volunteers—in the vision of a better future for seniors and their families. His leadership has attracted strong board membership, which has helped create a deep-rooted sense of place for DARTS in the community as an organization accessible, available, and capable of providing quality services to many different clients and residents. Within the community, **DARTS is proud to be known as a trusted and caring resource.**



Mark Hoisser

DARTS executive vice president

A Building Block of Community... DARTS' place in Dakota County and the greater metropolitan area

Many Dakota County residents cannot imagine life without DARTS. Not only does it support a high quality of life for individuals, it also connects people by bringing customers to businesses, employees to their jobs, and volunteers to the places where they contribute. Galen Pate notes the importance of mobility to the health of the community as a whole. Commissioner Joe Harris is well aware of the services DARTS provides his constituents. LaRhae Knatterud recognizes DARTS as a leader in providing consumer-friendly services to the aging.

DARTS has been very important to businesses and services in Dakota County because providing seniors and people with disabilities an opportunity to be independent and mobile is critical to the health of a community.

Dick Graham's low-key style, and his ability to lead without a large ego, made it possible for him to access community leaders in both business and government. Dick's leadership was crucial to making DARTS a leading provider of services in the Twin Cities area. In my opinion, Dick has made DARTS the success story it is today.



Galen Pate

*past chair of DARTS board,
past president of Signal Bank*

Dick Graham's leadership is so strong that it is stamped into **how nonprofits and social service agencies approach providing services** to their clients in Dakota County.

DARTS has played an important role in serving transportation needs for many population groups within Dakota County. These transit services help citizens achieve the independent lifestyle they value so much. For them, **DARTS' services are a quality of life issue.**

DARTS has always been good at seeing trends. They have looked to the future to figure out what to do next, or what to do better. They have shown their ability to be responsive by continually marketing their services to new audiences, as well as enhancing existing programs for their current clients.

While DARTS' emphasis has been primarily on transit services for the elderly, **they also offer several social and preventive programs that give people the means to stay within their communities.**

Judging by the number of people DARTS has served, those efforts have been a great success.

Dick Graham's leadership is so strong that it is stamped into how nonprofits and social service agencies approach providing services to their clients in Dakota County. I think of Dick as the persuasive gentle giant.



Joseph Harris

*commissioner for Dakota County,
county board chair, 2005*

The vision of Dick Graham, and a board that is **willing to take risks to move into new areas**, are critical elements of DARTS success.

DARTS is an excellent example of a multipurpose agency serving the elderly and their families in a specific geographic area. It is important to have one agency meeting a variety of needs, rather than a different agency for each service. **DARTS' model is integrated and consumer friendly.**

My contact with DARTS goes back to its birth. I worked at the Metropolitan Council, which was the Area Agency on Aging at that time, and we were the first funders of DARTS, awarding the federal Title III Older Americans Act funds to get it started. It has become a master at transportation, which was one of its first services. DARTS' work in the area of caregiver support and related services is also noteworthy, and its leadership in developing the SASS (Strategic Alliance for Senior Services) concept for collaborating with other metro community agencies is an important direction for the future.

In the turbulent world of nonprofits, I think DARTS has survived and grown because it has not stood still, or rested on its laurels. The vision of Dick Graham, and a board that is willing to take risks to move into new areas, are critical elements of its success. Dick is a great example of the enormous impact one visionary can have on a mission-driven agency and its services to thousands of persons over a long and successful career.



LaRhae Knatterud

*planning director, aging/continuing care,
Minnesota Dept. of Human Services*

The Fabric of Community... the interweaving of DARTS and neighborhood

DARTS is an integral part of life in Dakota County, where individuals weave together need and opportunity, creating a richer, fuller life for all generations. Kathy LeMay and Dick shared ideas on ways to make communities more livable for seniors and people with disabilities. Connie Ford was influential in supporting the efforts of people helping their neighbors and friends through volunteering. Charlotte Johnson, through her effort on the board, and Beth Wiggins, as head of community services, have brought experienced leadership to bear in support of community. In a variety of ways, DARTS has provided structure and opportunity for individuals to support a high quality of life for everyone.

Dick and I collaborated over the years in whatever ways we could to build and strengthen our organizations. While our services were not totally compatible for formal collaboration, we were able to share ideas, information, and strategic visioning to build strong organizations that could complement each other and contribute to the infrastructure of human services within Dakota County. He is a remarkable person whom I feel honored to call a good friend as well as a colleague.

Dick has grown DARTS because he did not lose sight of the original vision. He has paid attention to the changing issues within the senior community, as well as the nonprofit sector in general, and has surrounded himself with those people who could move the mission forward—both internally and externally.

I believe that the systematic way DARTS has approached planning for a new president demonstrates how committed the organization is to sustaining the viability of DARTS for the future.

Organizations who have a clear sense of where they want to go in the future, and positively approach the monumental task of replacing a founder, will continue to be respected leaders in the community.



Kathy LeMay

*past president and CEO of
Dakota Communities, Inc.*

When I started working at DARTS in 1980, the agency staff, including drivers, was about 20 people. We were generalists because we all frequently ventured outside our job descriptions to get done whatever needed doing. We had 100 or so active volunteers.

Formalizing the volunteer program meant that many new volunteer roles were established, including volunteer drivers, grocery shoppers, friendly visitors, respite workers, reporters, photographers, information and referral specialists, and chemical dependency aides. From those early matches of volunteers with individual seniors grew the multifaceted Community Services division.

DARTS grew because of the needs of older people, as well as an ever-growing talented staff, a dedicated board, and the unique leadership qualities of Dick Graham. Above all else, Dick is creative.

Dick has an amazing ability to build relationships. The way he did business was to meet people, tell them the DARTS story, listen carefully to their perspectives and experiences, and keep in touch. Dick was an inveterate fundraiser, and he saw fundraising as just another kind of relationship building. Dick was quick to point out that raising funds is good, honest, and honorable work. **Just as I knew that people “gave and got” when they volunteered, Dick knew that when asked to meet genuine human needs, people would respond because it felt good to contribute.**

DARTS has grown into a large, complex, and sophisticated agency. It reminds me of looking at a college student and thinking back to the preschool years. The grownup child looks different, has new activities, and certainly has a maturity and independence that was unimaginable years before. On further thought, however, the essence of the child, just like the essence of DARTS, is molded and shaped by years of experience, yet the core remains the same. **And the core of DARTS is quality service, individual attention, tenacity in the face of change, and an understanding of how seniors live and thrive in community.**



Connie Ford

*first director of
volunteer services at DARTS*

In great part due to Dick's leadership, **DARTS has a unique quality** that is relatively rare for nonprofits—**an eye to the future.**

My first contact with DARTS came through seeking services for my parents, who were residents of Dakota County. As I learned more about DARTS, I was increasingly interested in the organization and its close attention to seniors' needs.

In great part due to Dick's leadership, DARTS has a unique quality that is relatively rare for nonprofits—an eye to the future. In my years of association with DARTS, I have found that most ideas are considered from a long-term perspective, and with an open mind. I think this has kept DARTS mission-focused and a step ahead of whatever might be coming down the road. DARTS has a strong track record on providing services, as well as a mindset to think “generatively.” **As DARTS prepares to move in new directions, questions are asked and answered about effectiveness and relevancy.** And, rather than being territorial, DARTS has always had feelers out into the community to better understand what other services are being offered in both the public and private sectors, and where DARTS fits into the larger environment.

Dick has an amazing combination of talents. He has a creative mind that can also follow up with the essential details to create results, and he is connected to a broad network of other “doers” who collectively take on big issues. Dick leads from behind, by encouraging others to take leadership roles, as well as by example.

DARTS has been extremely fortunate to have 30-plus years of leadership from Dick. **It is rare that the founder of any organization can give birth to the organization, parent it through its growth years, and then set it free, knowing that it is healthy, strong, and has great potential to take on the future.**



Charlotte Johnson

*chair of the DARTS board,
trustee of the Otto Bremer Foundation*

Beth Wiggins,

DARTS vice president for community services

DARTS plays an important role in fostering community engagement, and can be held up as an example of what a steadfast commitment to volunteerism can accomplish. Volunteers were at the heart of the organization's grass roots beginning, and have been integral to DARTS' growth and development ever since. Today, DARTS volunteers number over 1,400, are aged 8 to 89, and serve in a multitude of ways.



Volunteerism is just one way DARTS impacts the community. DARTS makes sure transit-dependent people get where they need to go while also ensuring that isolated seniors get the practical assistance and emotional support they need. DARTS helps family members thrive when caring for their elders, and DARTS promotes activities that bring different generations together. **As a community resource, DARTS strives to inform and educate the community about its own needs and opportunities.**

Dick's unyielding attention to the personal and individual nature of our business has been central to its success. He appreciates the power of relationship, whether it be the affection that develops between riders and drivers, the camaraderie that emerges among a group of volunteers working together, the trust in DARTS demonstrated by a donation, or the intimacy

of life stories and struggles clients share with DARTS' staff. **These relationships are where DARTS' mission lives, and Dick underscores the responsibility that comes with the privilege of those relationships.**

Dick brings curiosity to his leadership. What are others doing? What's around the next bend? How is the community changing, and how will DARTS change along with it? Is there a new constituency we should be responding to? He challenges the status quo, and asks the hard questions: Why do we do it this way? Must we continue in the same fashion? **While "living the questions," the organization learns and improves, and new initiatives are born.** This is all part of Dick's legacy, and DARTS is better for it.



Dick, Dawn Simonson, and Tom Kingston

In the Future... perspectives on the coming years

Success depends on the ability to anticipate the future and help shape it. Dawn Simonson foresees greater and different needs and gifts among the new generation of seniors. Beth Wiggins and Mark Hoisser are excited about the future, and confident that DARTS has grown and positioned itself to meet the rising challenges and opportunities.

Dawn Simonson,

executive director, Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging

DARTS seeks and responds to input from the community. They have demonstrated successful entrepreneurship and the ability to define and implement innovation. At the same time, DARTS has broad community support, and its roots as a serving organization are deep.

In the future, many of the basic needs of frail, older people will be constant—safe, accessible living environment, transportation for medical appointments and shopping, and help with meals, personal care, and maintaining a residence. **A primary driver for new services and innovations is the growing number of older people.** The first baby boomers are retiring now. The expected, unprecedented number of older people in our society will give us incredible assets—healthy,

educated, active older people making choices about contributing to organizations, community, and society.

Yet as this cohort ages, and their acute and chronic conditions require changes in lifestyle and care, **senior-serving providers like DARTS, and the community at large, will need to respond in new ways.** One critical requirement will be meeting the mobility needs of older drivers and non-drivers. In addition, family caregivers (primarily adult children) will need credible information, reliable respite, and counseling—likely wanting accessibility via the Internet, and services available around the clock.

In representing the MAAA, some of the most challenging and exciting work I've been involved in the last year is working with the newly formed Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging. Dick Graham's leadership with the group is powerful—he has often challenged our thinking, and our work is so much better as a result.



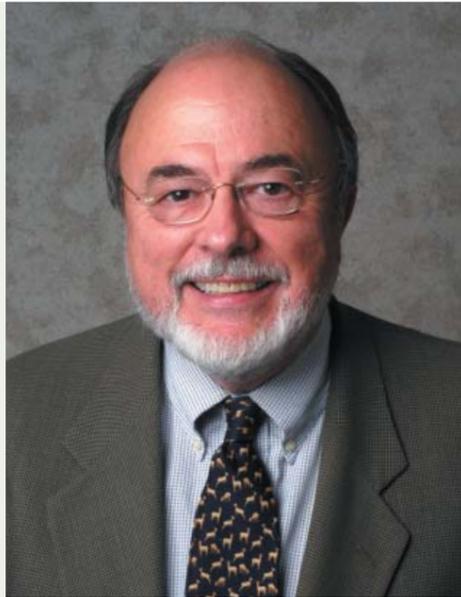
Mark Hoisser and Beth Wiggins

As a respected community-based provider, DARTS is keenly prepared for the future. We have

- A commitment to balancing high-tech with high-touch.
- A solid reputation for delivering high-quality service, using a professional approach to business, and embracing innovation—ingredients critical to attracting productive partnerships of various kinds.
- An effective and energetic board that focuses on the future.
- A debt-free status and a growing endowment.
- A deep connection to the community, and a reciprocal bond with it.

DARTS is physically and financially stable with a great base of operations from which we can grow well into the future. DARTS has assembled an excellent staff who are committed to DARTS' mission and have a broad range of expertise. We will continue to attract such expertise as we are faced with more opportunities to provide the ever-changing array of services that communities request. With such a solid foundation beneath us, and so many opportunities to contribute to the healthy development of an aging community, it's an exciting time. After three decades of being a resource people turn to for help, we're ready to take on the next three and more!





Reflections: Dick Graham

It has been my greatest honor to have been associated with DARTS for over 31 years. I have had, without question, the very best of jobs. For the rest of my life, I will humbly cherish the memories that have come from being associated with this great organization and the wonderful people who continue to make DARTS important to so many lives.

This special publication should not be read solely as a tribute to any one person's work, but instead, as documentation of the first chapters of the DARTS story and the dedication of hundreds and hundreds of volunteers and staff. I have worked with committed people who, day in and day out, found job satisfaction from contributing to the lives of others before seeing to their own comforts. And, I have known the generous people who have given their own resources to make it possible.

I admire the architect Frank Gehry and his simple idea that knowing how something is going to turn out probably means it isn't worth doing. In our early days, no one could ever have imagined how DARTS would evolve. One can say that the past 30 years have been a preparation for the first part of the 21st century. The time we now live in will see unprecedented need for service to elders and their families and for leadership in building communities that are caring and compassionate. Gehry's viewpoint makes the possibilities of the future brighter right now! DARTS is "worth doing," and I get more than a little excited imagining how it will next evolve. I'm counting on all of you being excited by the possibilities, too.

What has been the foundation for DARTS success? Maybe it's been the affinity of ideals, ideas, diligence, and a lightness of spirit. Ideals have made our work sacred. Ideas built our identity and our horizons. Diligence gave us the skills to do good work and move forward with confidence. But, after all is said and done, laughter and friendships, along with finding pleasure and humanity in possibilities, helped DARTS define a community to be envied.

My thanks to all of you for a memorable journey.

Dick Graham



1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1984 1985 1986 1987

1974 1980s

1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001 2004

1990s 2005

1974 — DARTS begins with a used school bus, two airport limousines, and a van. Dick Graham is hired as director.



1974 — The *DARTS Journal* begins publication. It features stories of the county fair, 100th birthdays, and hot dish recipes.

Late **1974** — Ridership grows exponentially – 81 rides in Sept., 342 in Oct., 565 in Nov., and 500 rides in one week in Dec.!

1977 — DARTS adds three vans with wheelchair lifts. A ride costs 25 cents.

1978 — DARTS incorporates as an independent nonprofit: Dakota Area Referral and Transportation for Seniors. Walter Bertram is the first board chair.



1978 — In Sept., DARTS provides trip number 100,000.

1978 — DARTS' Chemical Dependency program for seniors is started and becomes a model for others in the state.

1979 — DARTS moves from Inver Hills Community College to Central Square in South St. Paul.

1980 — DARTS Transportation begins providing once-a-week service to western Dakota County communities.

1980 — DARTS pilots the University of Minnesota's Peer Counselor Training Program.

1984 — DARTS begins a planned giving program to establish an endowment.

1985 — DARTS becomes part of the Metro Mobility transit system.



1986 — Education and support for family caregivers is added to DARTS Community Services.

1987 — DARTS moves to larger offices at 60 East Marie in West St. Paul.

1992 — DARTS purchases a building on Marthaler Lane in West St. Paul as its headquarters.

1992 — Four part-time mechanics are hired to service DARTS buses. Maintenance costs are cut 50%.

1993 — DARTS becomes the ADA transit provider for Dakota County.

1993 — DARTS secures a federal grant to provide services in South St. Paul and West St. Paul senior high rises.

1993 — DARTS pilots Guide Star transit technology. "High tech" is paired with "high touch."

1995 — Homemaking services are launched. Computerized ride scheduling begins.

1996 — 22 years after 500 rides in a week, DARTS gives 500 rides in a day.

1997 — A new mission statement gives rise to intergenerational projects such as the Reading Buddies program.



1998 — DARTS website goes online: www.darts1.org

1999 — DARTS announces \$7.15 million capital campaign to expand the DARTS campus.

2001 — New transportation and technology building and renovated community resources building are completed.

2001 — Caregiver information and support goes online as www.caregiverMN.org

2004 — Business plan for establishing DARTS VMS (Vehicle Maintenance Services) wins 1 of 4 grand prizes in Yale national competition for nonprofits.



2004 — Some 2,600 callers to DARTS receive answers to their questions.

2004 — Families, businesses, and individuals who volunteered number 1,400.

2005 — DARTS has 170 full- and part-time employees and an annual operating budget of \$5.5 million. More than 8,000 people are served, and over 166,000 rides are provided annually.

Looking for Senior Services? Seeking Community Connections?

DARTS Can Help

We provide professionally coordinated home-help and transportation services for Dakota County seniors and their families and can help them find services throughout the Twin Cities.

DARTS is:

Information & Assistance – Answers about services for seniors.

Transportation – Door-through-door rides for Dakota County seniors and ADA transit service for persons with disabilities.

Caregiver Support – Resources, education, coaching, and respite for caregivers.

Volunteer Opportunities – People of all ages help others of all ages and serve the community.

Help at Home – Connecting seniors with a variety of home-help services.

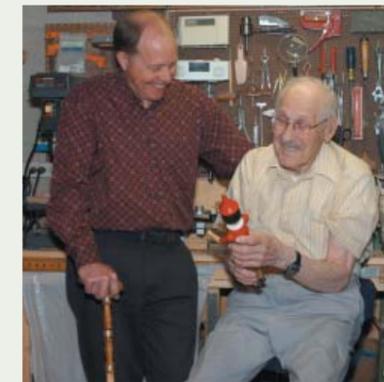
- **Homemaking** – Light housekeeping, laundry, and help with other chores; general light repair service also available.
- **Outdoor Chores** – Mowing, raking, snow shoveling, garage cleanup, and similar chores.
- **Respite Care** – Providing a break to those caring for an elderly loved one.
- **Shopping** – Help with groceries and other errands.
- **Visiting** – Socializing and companionship.

Care Management – Help with arranging services at home. Personal advisor service for seniors and their caregivers.

Education Programs – Presentations for seniors, caregivers, volunteers, and other professionals.



Dakota Area Resources and Transportation for Seniors Serving Seniors, Families, Community



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