



To be a volunteer fire fighter you have to go through intense training such as the ones the Vermillion department takes part in.

COURTESY PHOTO

Vermillion Fire Department rated one of South Dakota's finest

By Dylan Geuther
For the Plain Talk

Even though the life of a firefighter has its disadvantages at times, the rewarding experiences greatly outweigh the negatives.

Shannon Draper currently serves as the Fire Chief of the Vermillion Fire Department. He has been a fireman for 25 years, two of which have been in Vermillion.

As Fire Chief, Draper's duties consist of responding to emergencies and overseeing them, fire inspections and teaches fire education on safety for the community. He also maintains the fire trucks, provides training for volunteers, and conducts lesson plans. Additionally, there is an administrative side to the job.

The department is split into three divisions. Fire Department, EMS, and Wildland training. The fire department currently operates with 50 volunteers, while the EMS department has 25 volunteers.

Volunteers meet every Wednesday from 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Their

duties include maintaining trucks, equipment training, and safety training.

"The great thing about the community is employers are able to let volunteers go if need be, in case of emergencies," Draper said. "We, as the fire department, could not exist without volunteers."

According to Draper, the first priority when arriving at a scene is life safety, then property. Last year Insurance Service Office gave the Vermillion Fire Department a class 3 ISO rating. The purpose of this rating is to gage how well the department runs, and how well they respond to saving people.

On a scale of one to 10, Class 1 represents the best public protection, and Class 10 indicates no recognized protection. The highest rating is a three in South Dakota. Therefore, the Vermillion Fire Department is one of four departments in South Dakota to achieve the highest rating.

"It is very rewarding to step up and serve our neighbors, and community," Draper said. "All 50 volunteers at the fire department have each other's lives in one

another's hands, and we form a unique brotherhood bond."

Keith Thompson has been with the Vermillion Fire Department for 25 years. He is currently one of 5 captains, and has been a captain for 7 years.

As a captain, he is in charge of the crew in the truck. The main priority for Thompson is to make sure everything is safe, and is done correctly and efficiently as possible.

Thompson also helps out with the training of volunteers and field officers.

"I believe the part I enjoy most is just being able to give back to the community and helping people," Thompson said. "The comradery we have in the fire department is great."

According to Thompson, family life and volunteering is a balancing act. He tries to work around everything, and is dedicated to both. However, Thompson says volunteering can come at the most inopportune times, such as when they get called out for fire rescue at 3 a.m.

For an extended version of the story visit www.plaintalk.net.

Coat drive in need of many winter wardrobe cast-offs

By Sarah Wetzel
For the Plain Talk

'Tis the season where the temperature drops, and those in the Vermillion community are encouraged to think of the less fortunate by donating winter gear to the Winter Warmth Coat Drive hosted by Grace Baptist Church.

Collection began Tuesday October 28 and goes till Tuesday November 11.

"We've just begun collecting the coats," said Sandi Shumaker, head of the event this year. "There are collection barrels right inside the second doors right as you come inside HyVee and each of the entry doors at Wal Mart have that as well."

According to Shumaker, the store owners have been more than happy to help.

"Each year we talk with the manger that happens to be there. We've never been turned down in the past for setting up the barrels for the coat drive."

Though the main focus of the drive is coats, Shumaker said all forms of winter gear are welcome.

"We are in dire need for snow pants for children," Shumaker said. "They can donate boots. We have run out of mittens and hats and gloves right away."

Shumaker also said there is more than one way to donate.

"If they don't have anything that's gently used, they can either go and purchase new items or if it's easier they can send a monetary donation," she said.

According to the event's Facebook page, checks should be made payable to Grace Baptist Church and mailed to Grace Baptist Church, Attn: Winter Warmth, 1102 E. Main St., Vermillion, SD 57069.

"Up till now we have never taken monetary donations," Shumaker said. "We've had a budget at our church that we've used to purchase the coats and we go to Civic Council, New 2 You, Savers up in Sioux Falls, and Goodwill and that's where we use the donations to buy the coats."



Community members can help clothe the cold and needy this winter by dropping off new and gently used winter gear at collection barrels at the local HyVee and WalMart, making a monetary donation or helping with the washing and distribution of the donated coats.

SARAH WETZEL / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

While most coats given are donated, Shumaker said they will not hesitate to buy one if someone in need cannot find one in their size.

"Last year we did have to purchase certain coats in certain sizes that aren't as ready to be donated especially 4T and 5T up to size 10," Shumaker said.

"Kids are really hard. Those are ones that we had to purchase. Also the larger sizes in particular. We actually have had to go to stores and purchase brand new coats. We don't turn anyone away. If we don't have the size we go and buy a coat for them."

The drive had humble beginnings about six years ago and has grown to a community-wide effort.

"One of the people from our church that was attending at the time found there was a need in Vermillion to be able to give out winter coats to people who are unable to purchase them," Shumaker said. "He decided to start collecting and it was just within our church at first but he put out some ads and the community just really pulled together to go through their closets to get rid of coats that are no longer being used."

"It was completely a community effort," she said. "Even though the Grace

Baptist church has the coats and that's where people come get them, we wouldn't be able to do it without the entire community donating coats."

The coats will be distributed next Friday from 4 pm- 8 pm, Saturday, November 15 from 10 am - 3 pm, and Wednesday, November 19th from Noon - 4 pm.

"It's almost as if they come shopping basically," Shumaker said. "We have the coats arranged from infants all the way up through 2X or 3X and break it down womens versus mens. They are able to go to the size they need and try on different coats."

The availability of such a gift does not fall on ungrateful recipients.

"From last year there were so many people who were just so thankful that we were providing that," Shumaker said

Community members who are interested in helping either in the distribution process or washing donated coats, please contact either Shumaker or Grace Baptist Church at the numbers below.

Sandi Shumaker: (605)-670-6533

Grace Baptist Church: (605) 624-4949

SUCCESS From Page 1A

Pressing Matters operates as a husband and wife duo. A few part-time employees have been through the doors throughout the years, but it is mostly a family run business located at 102 E. Main St.

"It's just us," Paulette Wipf said.

Paulette Wipf graduated from USD with a degree graphic design, which gives her the back-bone understanding to help people design logos and imagery.

"I was a craft kind of person and USD offered a fine arts degree," Paulette Wipf said. "At the time, that was hard to find."

Pressing Matters specializes in helping businesses promote their services, assisting organizations in marketing their events, and helping individuals distribute information.

Their ability to keep ahead of the technological curve has been part of their success.

"We've always been a leader in innovation," Lindy Wipf said. "We've also entered the market first. You need to be there for your customers."

Currently in the third storefront Pressing Matters has been in they have seven computers that run off of three different operating systems. In addition, they have over 30 pieces of specialized equipment and the experience to back it all up as well.

"We can do letterpress, offset, xerography and digital printing," Lindy Wipf said. "We have the ability to

do very specialized things, which helps our customers."

Their talents and dedication help them stay relevant in an ever changing market.

"We still use pieces of each one of our technologies," Lindy Wipf said. "Both old and new."

Pressing Matters has seen a shift in the pressing business since they first opened their doors in 1986.

"It's getting more digital," Paulette Wipf said. "We have several presses in the back but mostly we are using copies now. We used to develop all of our negatives in a tray, and now that's gone."

Aside from their expertise in specialized equipment, Pressing Matters also focuses on the end product the consumer receives.

"You have to talk to the person and find out what they want," Paulette Wipf said. "It's not about what we want, but what the customer wants."

Just as technology has changed the printing business, it has changed how interaction happens with customers as well.

"You do a lot more emails back and forth now," Paulette Wipf said. "With a visual so they can see it."

"It's changed because now instead of describing how something looks, we can actually show them."

Lindy Wipf added. Pressing Matters provides unique services to Vermillion. The first to offer recycled paper products and a host of other services such as walk-in copy service, in-house banner and sign service, color copies, direct mail and wide format printing.

For the Wipfs, it goes beyond just products and services, it's about personalization. One of the original Dakota Dome logos was Paulette's creation.

"I think the most important thing with logos is connecting with the person," Paulette Wipf said. "You have to find out what they like, you have to realize their vision- not just your own."

Pressing Matters is mostly a business to business operation, with some walk-in interest as well.

Sara Bye, local Farmers Insurance agent and fellow downtown business owner had nothing but good things to say about working with Pressing Matters.

"They printed me two window signs," Bye said. Their printing services were also a Pressing Matters amenity Bye has used. When asked if she recommends them her reply was simple and strong.

"Yes. Definitely." Bye said.

Freddy Balleweg has also used Pressing Matter's

services. He was enthusiastic about their capabilities.

"They do awesome work," Balleweg said. "They're also very likeable people."

And while all these years the Wipfs have been helping businesses and individuals reach their advertising and print goals, they have gained some emotional benefits as well.

"It's about helping someone else," Lindy Wipf said. "It's about the contribution to the community."

Being a locally owned small business has given the Wipfs an insight to Vermillion.

"The kids are the best part," Paulette Wipf said. "We get to see them grow up."

Pressing Matters has taken part in community driven projects such as Coyoteopoly and the time capsule and centennial materials. They have also

helped volunteer groups and non-profit organizations with their printing needs and have been involved in the Downtown Vermillion Action Team.

"It's a group of business owners who are dedicated to the downtown business scene," Paulette Wipf said. "It's all volunteers with a revolving membership."

Being part of downtown local business is representative of the kind of attitude the Wipfs have at Pressing Matters.

"If a customer has an issue, you can talk to the

owner in a downtown business and resolve that issue right away," Lindy Wipf said. "Not so much elsewhere."

At the end of the day, Pressing Matters likes to stress the value to provide to Vermillion. Their mission statement is to guarantee their work, emphasize quality, offer competitive pricing and deliver as promised.

"To compare apples to apples, we've got the best value," Lindy Wipf said. "It's pretty tough to be a small business owner, but it's rewarding as well."

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Event Information

Date: Thursday, November 20, 2014 Presented by: Tara Jo Bernhardt, RN
 Check-in: 5:30 PM Advanced Neurology of Colorado, LLC
 Time: 6:00 PM Fort Collins, CO
 Location: Red Steakhouse
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