

Duke's Volunteers

Auxilians Display History of Helping

They're called pink ladies, volunteers, auxiliarians, and sometimes just hospital helpers.

Whatever they're called, their job is lending a helping hand.

Their history dates back to an auxiliary group organized shortly after the Hospital opened. It was revitalized and reorganized in 1950 through the efforts of Ross Porter, then superintendent of the Hospital, and two faculty members' wives, Mrs. Bayard Carter and Mrs. Watt Eagle.

On April 11, 1950, the first meeting for the new auxiliary attracted 252 charter members.

Mrs. Carter, chairman of the group, explained the three-fold purpose of the auxiliary: 1) interpretation of the Hospital to the community 2) service to others and 3) readiness for service in any emergency.

During the first year of operation, the ladies began selecting gifts for various Hospital departments from the money earned through their coffee counter. The N.C. Cerebral Palsy Hospital, the Duke Pediatric Clinic, the gynecologic cancer laboratory, and the pediatrics wards were recipients of some of the first gifts of the auxiliary.

Junior Volunteers, usually called candystippers, first worked in the Hospital in the summer of 1950. Duke pioneered in using junior volunteers in the Hospital.

The Duke auxiliary is also responsible for the introduction of the cherry pink smocks now used by most auxiliaries in the United States.

Through the years, the Duke Auxiliary has added a number of new services to their original coffee, shop cart, and pediatrics work. Auxilians currently volunteer for the library cart which travels to the wards, work at two coffee counters, provide guide and information services in the Outpatient Department, and staff a gift shop.

Gifts to various departments throughout the Hospital now total several thousand dollars each year.

Intercom had its start with the auxiliary, too. The ladies began the newsletter in 1950 as a means of communication to members. The Hospital took over the function some years later.



THE FIRST SNACK BAR — The Duke Hospital Auxiliary began its coffee service in the early 1950's with the small traveling cart at left. To the right of the picture is a portable ice cream cart purchased a short while later. The group now uses more than 3,000 pounds of coffee a year in its two modern snack bars.



FIRST AUXILIARY PRESIDENTS — These are the first six presidents of the Duke Hospital Auxiliary after its reorganization in 1950. Starting with number one are Mrs. Bayard Carter, Mrs. Watt Eagle, Mrs. H. Shelton Smith, Mrs. Alan K. Manchester, Mrs. Julian Ruffin, and Mrs. Theady Daniels. (photo courtesy of Duke Hospital Auxiliary)