

# Celebrating PDX Volunteers during National Volunteer Week

[portside.portofportland.online/2021/04/celebrating-pdx-volunteers-during-national-volunteer-week](https://portside.portofportland.online/2021/04/celebrating-pdx-volunteers-during-national-volunteer-week)

April 19, 2021



Did you know that April 18-24 marks **National Volunteer Week**? It provides an opportunity to recognize the impact of volunteer service and the power of volunteers to tackle society's greatest challenges.

Here at the Portland International Airport — or PDX as we all call it — volunteers are a big part of our success. You've probably seen them at the airport if you traveled pre-COVID — greeting you with a smile as you come down the escalator or pass through the rotating doors. From staffing our information booth, assisting passengers with directions, or welcoming international travelers, members of the PDX Volunteer Information Program (VIP) offer a friendly and helpful face for travelers from all over the world.

As the Port's Chief Operating Officer Dan Pippenger shared, "The assistance they provide and the empathy they have for passengers is remarkable. I appreciate the number of hours they spend making our passengers' experiences the best they can be."

Speaking of hours spent ... between 2010 and 2020, our VIPs logged more than 210,000 volunteer hours creating a positive experience at PDX. Join us in celebrating our volunteers this week (but really, let's all agree to appreciate them 365 days in the year).

## Going Virtual to Serve Travelers

While many of our volunteers have stayed home during the pandemic, a few are starting to return to PDX to staff a virtual information booth and answer traveler questions. A lot has changed at PDX in the last year — from **construction** to new **health and safety rules** — and our VIPs play an important role in helping travelers feel safe and confident about their experience. For many, it's the first time flying in more than a year.

Since protecting the health and safety of our airport volunteers is paramount, the information booth located on the south end of baggage claim is now fully virtual.



VIPs staff the booth from a computer in their office, answering questions via video link for passengers who approach the screen located in the booth. Pictured demonstrating the system are VIPs Don and Lynn McHarness. So the next time you're at PDX feeling a bit confused, head to the south end of baggage claim and our VIPs will get you back on track.

## Musical Performances at a Much-Needed Time

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During “normal” times (in quotes, because what is normal anymore?), the PDX music program works to create a relaxing, stress-free environment for travelers through live music. **Volunteer musicians** perform in the terminal and help enhance the passenger experience with songs that make them tap their foot, sing along and dance.

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Doug Shafer

These local musicians volunteer their time (about 200 hours a week pre-pandemic), offering travelers an eclectic mix of live music representing some of the best in local jazz, classical and contemporary styles and approaches.



Jordan Richard

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Elizabeth Wisler

Last spring, when PDX was eerily quiet in the midst of a coronavirus surge and stay-at-home orders, our volunteer musicians turned to virtual performances to soothe and uplift PDX



Anthony Cadiz

employees and travelers — all from the safety of everyone’s homes. The musicians, in turn, inspired some of the artists with installations at PDX to give virtual talks that broke down their art process and celebrated the people they drew inspiration from.

[Watch these performances and conversations](#)

While our volunteer musicians remain safely at home, we look forward to welcoming them back to PDX soon.

While the PDX volunteer music program is temporarily suspended due to [#COVID19](#), you can still enjoy it from the comfort of your home. Here is a playlist we put together of just a few of our talented musicians <https://t.co/9zAdW1zYrU> [#PDXPeople](#) [pic.twitter.com/YG6XqoMu5Z](https://pic.twitter.com/YG6XqoMu5Z)

— flypdx (@flypdx) [March 19, 2020](#)

## **Celebrating A Long-Serving Volunteer**

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Speaking of dedicated volunteers, during National Volunteer Week, Sandy Granich will mark her 11th year as a PDX volunteer. To say that travel is her passion might be an understatement. Sandy recently retired from Delta Air Lines as a flight attendant. But she couldn’t say goodbye to PDX for good. Sandy is continuing to volunteer at the airport.



Sandy (3rd from the right) with her Delta Air Lines colleagues

“My favorite thing about volunteering at PDX is all the people from so many different countries coming in and getting to practice using different languages with them,” Sandy shared.

Outside of volunteering, Sandy told us that she loves to travel (which she obviously hasn’t done much of at all this last year). “I really miss flying international trips and layovers.” In fact, Sandy shared these photos below from a previous trip to Japan with her mother and another Delta flight attendant.



In the meantime, her daughter and grandson relocated from New York and are temporarily living with Sandy. “I’m having fun getting to know Luca, taking him to kindergarten two days a week.”

Thank you for your 11 years of service, Sandy, and here’s to many more memories at PDX!





