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NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS: SUPPLIES FOR CONVALESCENTS

Just broke a leg and need crutches? Caring for a relative who had had surgery and can't walk?

If so, and if you live in the district served by the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department, a special community service is available to you.

The Loan Closet at the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department may have all the equipment you need to tide you over a difficult period. The Ladies Auxiliary, which operated this service, has a large supply of crutches, wheelchairs, canes, portable potties, hospital beds, and other convalescent equipment to lend.

Anyone living within the Kensington fire tax area may borrow equipment from the Loan Closet for 90 days. Wheelchairs can be borrowed up to 30 days, with a \$25 deposit.

Locates in the basement of the fire station at Connecticut Avenue and Plyers Mill Road, the Loan Closet is open on Monday and Friday evenings from 7:30 to 8:30.

It is staffed and run by the Ladies Auxiliary, a group of about 12 women whose husbands, sons, or sons-in-law are members of the fire department.

Most of the equipment is easy to handle alone. Beds, however, are very cumbersome. Polly Hawkins, chairman of the Loan Closet, advises people to bring a person to help when borrowing beds. She also notes that, for health reasons, the beds come without mattresses.

This loan service is available to anyone living in the area the Kensington fire department serves. The area extends south to Beach Drive and Parkwood Terrace, north to Norbeck Road, and East to Kemp Mill Road.

The service has been provided for about 25 to 30 years. According to Priscilla Jones, another member of the Ladies Auxiliary, this is the only fire station in the county that had a loan closet. It sounds like a good project for other departments to star in their areas.

Call the Loan Closet at 949-0850 or visit on Monday and Friday evenings between 7:30 and 8:30 to see if the equipment you need is available.

—Martha Rosacker

THE LADIES AUXILIARY

When the firefighters of the Kensington Volunteer Fire Departments went to put out a fire in the shops at Connecticut and Knowles this spring, the women of the Ladies Auxiliary accompanied them in their mobile unit. For three and a half hours, the women served coffee, soft drinks, and doughnuts to the hard working firefighters.

The Ladies Auxiliary, women whose relatives are member of the fire department, often go to the fires to help out. In addition, they hold rummage sales to raise money, and they operate the Loan Closet to provide convalescent supplies on a temporary basis to anyone in the community who needs them.

—M.R.

MILESTONES: THE KENSINGTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

...Started in 1894 as a bucket brigade.

...Obtained a hand-operated pump in 1919

...Operated from the basement of the National Guard Armory for 30 years

...Started an ambulance service in 1942

...Opened more fire stations in 1953, 1962, and 1978.

...Now has 9 paramedics and 124 emergency medical technicians.

...Operates 7 fire engines, 2 one hundred-foot ladder trucks, 2 ambulances, 1 mobile intensive care unit, and several other emergency vehicles.

...Has just started publishing an illustrated newspaper, available free at local grocery stores.

...Welcomes volunteers age 16 or over. Volunteers receive extensive training at Montgomery County's Public Services Training Academy.

...Can be reached at 949-9094 weekdays and 949-0851 evenings and weekends. Prospective volunteers should ask for the Personnel Department.

—From KVFD May '86 Newsletter