



NEWS NOTES

Summer 2024

*Retired and Senior Volunteer Program and Foster Grandparent Program
...where volunteers make a difference*

What Do RSVP Foster Grandparent Volunteers Have in Common with Hedgehogs?

by Paula Reif, Intergenerational Program and Foster Grandparent Program Coordinator

They are both buoyant, protective, caring and patient! Members of the Foster Grandparent Program celebrated the end of the regular school year with a luncheon at the Imperial Garden restaurant. Everyone enjoyed gathering in this great space with good food, good company, and some hedgehog-related recognition. (Special thanks to the McFarland RSVP Group for the hedgehogs!)



The Foster Grandparent Program provides personalized placement and ongoing support for income-eligible older adults to volunteer in Dane County elementary schools and Reach Dane sites. Foster Grandparents receive a federal stipend and work one-on-one with students. The enhanced intergenerational connection results in improved school engagement, school readiness, and academic achievement. Email Paula at preif@rsvpdane.org for more information about the Foster Grandparent Program.



Foster Grandparent Supports UW Alzheimer's Research

By Paula Reif, Intergenerational Program and Foster Grandparent Program Coordinator



Meet Dianne McMurray. Dianne has been active in the Foster Grandparent Program for several years, but she recently shared that long before she was a Foster Grandparent, she served as a recruiter for the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at the University of Wisconsin. Dianne is passionate about raising awareness of Alzheimer's and dementia, as well as sharing information about how to get tested. Dianne really enjoys her role in the research and believes it is vital for all African Americans to get involved. She advises everyone to encourage their friends and family to learn more about participating in Alzheimer's research at the UW-Madison. More information and a list of resources are available at adrc.wisc.edu.

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volunteer
opportunities?
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RSVP Board Notes

Hello! I hope you have survived all the rain and are ready for a robust mosquito season.



On April 15th, we had a Board Retreat. The topic was Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The retreat was facilitated by Deborah Biddle of the People Company. I believe that we got a lot accomplished including updating the Mission and Vision Statements and working through several exercises to prepare us for updating RSVP's Strategic Plan.

On April 24th, RSVP held an Open House. The international theme for the treats and snacks was a great idea! The staff and numerous volunteers attended. All in all, I think the event was a success.

This year we decided against holding the Annual Sweepstakes. Instead, we mailed a letter seeking donations and hosted an Ice Cream Social for the Leadership Circle. The Leadership Circle includes supporters who have donated at least \$1,000 during the year. At that event we asked donors to contribute to the HRA staff benefit in the form of a one-time donation or a three-year pledge. An HRA, or Health Reimbursement Arrangement, allows RSVP to reimburse fulltime staff for such things as health-related co-pays, premiums and over-the-counter drugs. Not only is the HRA a well-received staff benefit, it is a tool we can use in our staff recruitment endeavors.

On June 17th, the Board held its Annual Meeting. Presentations were made by the program managers and coordinators, and volunteers. They talked about what they accomplished in 2023 and their plans for 2024. It was a very informative meeting.

The Marketing Committee is developing a Volunteer Stories booklet, a collection of the experiences of RSVP volunteers. We are asking interested RSVP volunteers to send three to five short paragraphs, between 200 and 300 words, sharing memorable experiences from their volunteer service with RSVP. If you would like to include your volunteer experience in the Volunteer Stories booklet, please email Mike Thomsen at mthomsen@rsvpdane.org or call 608.441.7897.

Finally, September 19th is our annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. Last year's event received many positive reviews, so we will once again get together to socialize and recognize the 2024 service award recipients. The theme will be the Mad Hatter from Alice in Wonderland. Look for more information and your invitation to attend in the coming months.

Deborah Ann Speckmann
 President, RSVP Board of Directors



From the Desk of...

Diana Jost
Executive Director

Behind-the-scenes at RSVP

It has been almost a year since I became the Executive Director at RSVP. During these eleven months, I've learned a lot, especially about the financial aspects of a non-profit, and particularly investments. Reflecting on what I've learned from the Board and our fantastic finance committee, I wish I had known these things 30 years ago for my own finances.

Many articles discuss financial literacy, particularly among women. An article in WILMA magazine titled "Financial Literacy: The Single Most Important Act of Self-Care for Women in 2024" states that women must understand the language of money, learn how to invest, and make informed choices for a secure financial future. It emphasizes that financial independence is empowering. According to the Annuity.org website, an American College of

Financial Services literacy study found that 35% of men between 60 and 75 years old passed a quiz on retirement income literacy, while only 18% of women did.

A Goldman Sachs report, "Challenges Women Face Saving for Retirement" (April 2024), explains that women encounter unique challenges in saving for retirement. These challenges include decades-long income disparities, increased caregiver responsibilities,



insufficient part-time work opportunities, longer life expectancies, and lower benefits from U.S. Social Security.

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“Wisconsin Was There in the Civil War”

RSVP Vets Helping Vets Program Hosts Second Monthly Hybrid Event

By Lorrie Hylkema, Vets Helping Vets Program Coordinator

As part of RSVP's monthly Zoom and in-person Vets Helping Vets events, Kevin Hampton, curator and historian with the Madison Veterans Museum and the WI Department of Veteran Affairs, gave a captivating speech in May 2024.

A previous monthly event with Kevin Hampton for RSVP Vets Helping Vets was all about Wisconsin's involvement in WW I. Please keep an eye out for upcoming talks – let's learn together about the nitty gritty of Wisconsin's past!

VFW Post 8216 hosted the May event in Middleton. The stories of Wisconsin Was There in the Civil War focused on individual soldiers from Wisconsin who contributed to the war efforts from 1861 to 1865. Many African American and other soldiers were pictured, most of whom were around the age of just 15. One of the most memorable moments in the talk was about the soldiers' clothes, which were usually wool, and during times of heat and rain, they stank! The soldiers who wrote home to loved ones quite often complained of the clothing, and also that they had little opportunity to practice with guns but were instead given sticks to practice their skills. It is hard to imagine today.

As Madisonians, another fun fact to learn was that Camp Randall as it is today is not exactly where the camp was located during the 1860's despite a lot of information indicating otherwise.

The event, as mentioned above, was a hybrid event. Refreshments in the form of drinks were provided by the members of VFW Post 8216, represented by Bob Topel, (an RSVP Vets Helping Vets volunteer driver) and Roger Frey (future commander for VFW Post 8216). Our thanks go out to First Responder, Veteran, and Military supported business, Mission Barbecue, which catered all the fantastic food.

This talk went enthusiastically over the allotted time due to so much interest – and there were prizes to boot!

In all, we want to thank those who participated and those who hosted. Many thanks to Kevin who shares our love of Wisconsin stories and Wisconsin heroes from the past.

Speaking of heroes, don't forget that RSVP Vets Helping Vets (VHV) and Driver Escort (DE) are always looking for new volunteer drivers to take Veterans and seniors to medical appointments. Please call Camela King, 608.441.7896, or Steve Jaeschke, 608.441.7892, if interested.



Pictured l to r: Roger Frey, Commander VFW Post 8216; Lorrie Hylkema, RSVP Vets Helping Vets Coordinator; and Kevin Hampton, WI Veterans Museum Curator and Historian.

Stitched Together: The Making of a Quilting Dream Team

By Tara Curtis, Group Projects/Homeworkers Program Coordinator

Through their volunteer work with RSVP, three remarkable women have formed a remarkable bond by way of their shared love for quilting and their dedication to making a positive difference in the lives of others.

It all began with a simple interaction between neighbors, Peggy Currier and Dee Squire, whose lives intertwined through Peggy's husband, John. John, a skilled craftsman, caught Dee's eye one day as she glided past their home on her electric bicycle, admiring the intricate barn quilt block he had crafted. "You should meet my wife, Peggy. She's a quilter," John suggested to Dee, setting the stage for a beautiful friendship to bloom. Joined by their passion for quilting and a desire to serve their community, Peggy and Dee became part of a group that works with the RSVP Wauna-Makers, channeling their talents towards creating quilts for those in need. "We wanted the quilts to go somewhere where there's really a need," Dee explained.

Their team expanded when Peggy, organizing fabric in the RSVP storeroom, met Sandy Onsager, a quilter in search of quilt tops to work on with her longarm machine. Recognizing the beauty of Dee's quilt tops, Peggy wasted no time in introducing Sandy to them. "I found out why she was there and told her 'You should see my friend's quilts. They're beautiful,'" Peggy explained. And with that, she started a collaboration that would prove to be both fruitful and fulfilling.

Working together seamlessly, the trio have embarked on a mission to create a twin-sized quilt each month, with Dee crafting the quilt tops with meticulous care, Peggy managing the logistics and finding backing materials, and Sandy lending her talent and expertise to finish the quilts. "I love doing the tops," Dee confessed, her eyes sparkling with enthusiasm. The COVID-19 pandemic had provided her with more time to dedicate to her craft, and her community rallied around her donating fabric to fuel her creative endeavors.

Dee's husband plays an essential role, cutting fabric with a precision and diligence honed by years working as a printer. Meanwhile, Sandy finds solace and purpose in quilting, having also rediscovered the old skill during the pandemic. "Quilting gives me focus and peace," Sandy remarked, her words expressing the sentiments of her newly reignited passion. "I put it on the machine and just meander."

For these women, quilting is more than just a hobby; it's a means of connecting with others, finding fulfillment, and making a tangible difference in the world. "This is our golf," Dee quipped, highlighting the camaraderie and joy they find in their shared pursuit. "We look forward to it. We make friends through it." As Sandy aptly put it, "In the end, [the quilt] is done and passed on. A quilt never unquits itself. It serves a purpose somewhere. It meets a need."

Indeed, each quilt they create serves a purpose, bringing warmth, comfort, and a sense of belonging to those in need, a testament to the power of compassion and the enduring legacy of giving back.



Pictured left to right, Peggy Currier, Dee Squire, Sandy Onsager

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RSVP's Computer Buddy Party 2024

By Paula Reif, Intergenerational Program and Foster Grandparent Program Coordinator

Wow, we've been in a rainy stretch of weather! But on May 28th, the rain held off just long enough for RSVP's Intergenerational Computer Buddy Program volunteers to meet their Deerfield Elementary Computer Buddy students in-person!

The majority of the Computer Buddy Program is done remotely; RSVP volunteers are paired with students in Dane County schools and correspond via the Internet throughout the school year. The volunteers and students use a secure blog platform to correspond on a regular basis. This allows the students to sharpen their writing and correspondence skills, and it allows for a unique opportunity for intergenerational connection! The volunteers and students finally get to meet in-person at the end-of-the-school-year party.

Here's what some of the volunteers shared when asked about their favorite part of the program:

"I enjoyed the written emails we exchanged consistently throughout the school year. Of course, I enjoyed meeting my buddy but that was a short get together compared to writing almost weekly during the school year."

"Since I am a Snowbird this program allows me to be a part of it from anywhere. Most volunteer programs don't have that flexibility."

"I loved receiving emails from my buddy. They were always so genuine and so positive!"

If you are interested in participating in the Computer Buddy Program next school year, email Paula, the RSVP Intergenerational Program Coordinator, at preif@rsvpdane.org to learn how to get involved.



Join Our Bus Buddy Tours and Learn to Ride Madison Metro Bus Like a Pro

Madison Metro has been making a lot of improvements in the system. The biggest is the addition of the NEW Bus Rapid Transit. Join us on one or more of these free, fun bus trips. The trips are free of charge and all participants will receive a bus pass. Before you know it, you'll be riding the bus system like an expert.

Bus Buddy Tour Schedule

(All of the trips are on a Thursday)

July 18: Olbrich Botanical Gardens, 11:00 AM

August 1: Madison Mares Softball at Mallards Field, Warner Park, 11:00 AM

September 12: Henry Vilas Zoo, 11:00 AM



For more information and to register to participate, email Jan Karst at jkarst@rsvpdane.org or call Jan, at 608.441.7891.



Volunteers in the News

Grant Gelhar was in *InBusiness Magazine*, June 2024 issue, Letter from the Editor.



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Upcoming Triad Events

July 17th, 10:00 a.m. Triad July virtual presentation “Elder Financial Empowerment Project” presented by Attorney Sonia Komisar, Coalition of Wisconsin Aging and Health Groups. Email TriadEvents@rsvpdane.org for the Zoom link.

August 21st, 10:00 a.m. Triad Program: Technologies to improve access to independence, presented by Rebecca Patterson, Access to Independence.

September 11th, 10:00 a.m. Triad Program: Motor Vehicle Repair Contract Laws and Tips, presented by Jeff Kersten, Wisconsin Bureau of Consumer Protection.

Fall Car Check, date and time to be determined. Free vehicle safety inspections for older adults. More details coming soon.



Where In the World Will RSVP Turn Up Next?

Come see RSVP at these upcoming events! Giveaways, information, and more will be on hand!

July 18

Dane County Fair Hometown Hero Day
www.danecountyfair.com/events/2024/hometown-hero-day

August 24

Urban League of Greater Madison
ulgm.org/events/black-business-hub-ribbon-cutting-and-10th-annual-unity-picnic

September 18

UW Madison Institute on Aging Colloquium
aging.wisc.edu/annual-colloquium

September 24

Madison Health and Resource Fair
 Madison Senior Center, 10:30 to 1:00
www.cityofmadison.com/senior-center/programs-events/special-events

October 3

Verona Health Fair and Flu Clinic

October 19

Wayne D. Horner Memorial Stand Down, Madison
www.standdownmadison.org

WELCOME New Volunteers

We enrolled 70 new volunteers from March, 2024, through May, 2024, serving in a wide variety of assignments throughout Dane County. Do you know someone who might like to volunteer? RSVP volunteers are our best recruiters as they spread the word about why they like volunteering and the need for more volunteers. Please pass this newsletter on to a friend or neighbor and tell them what RSVP means to you!

Byron C. Anderson
Tracey Anderson
Amara Baktha
Marian J. Barnes
David G. Bell
Mary Ann Berkholtz
James H. Blankenheim
Phyllis A. Blankenheim
Cathy Coady
Kathleen A. Danner
Srishti Datta
Jennilyn DiPiazza
Alison Dorner
Pamela Eklund
Patricia Eldred
Denise Fergusson
Teresa B. Forman
Rhonda K. Frank-Loron

Noralee E. Geach
Benjamin O. Graupner
Margaret M. Hamner
Mary Hessling
Barbara Hinckley
Krista Hinckley
Karen Jaeschke
Patricia Jeglum
Dale W. Johnson
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Julie A. Lechelt
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Lynn Morris
Sunitha Murthy
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Barbara Paulson
Judith Pertzborn
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Srini Ramachandra
Dawn Regenbogen
Dennis Roed
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Nancy B. Rusch
Michael T. Saltow
Cecelia Schieve
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Colleen Sendecke
Janet Short
Carl R. Stangl
Jeanne M. Stangl
John W. Swiatek
Cynthia Tahtinen
Daniel A. Tobin
Josep Tordera
Joanne Vogt
Barjo Vorster
Beth A. Weyenberg
Barbara (Bobbi) White
Margaret (Gail) Winship
Liz Wood
Paula A. Zapp
Tricia L. Zembroski



GIVING TUESDAY

We extend our sincerest gratitude to those who followed our #GivingTuesday campaign last year on Facebook and supported our program through financial contributions. We raised \$10,995 to support RSVP of Dane County's programming. An immense amount of volunteerism, coordination, programming, collaboration, and fundraising is needed for us to provide services that help keep seniors (and local community members) independent and thriving each day. We are honored to do our part in enhancing our community. Thank you for doing your part.

RSVP will again participate in #GivingTuesday on December 3rd, 2024. This year, we aim to raise \$20,000 to support growing programs and needs in the community. Your participation in this campaign is crucial to our success. Every donation, no matter the size, makes a difference. Donations for our annual Giving Tuesday Campaign can be made at any time. Donations can be made on our website at www.rsvpdane.org; when donating online, please designate your gift as Giving Tuesday under special instructions to the seller. Or you can send a check to RSVP for Dane County, 6501 Watts Rd. Suite #250, Madison, WI 53719; please write GIVING TUESDAY in the memo part of the check.

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AmeriCorps Seniors logo, RSVP logo, and Dane County logo are included at the bottom.

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According to a 2023 Bankrate survey, nearly 60% of working women feel behind on their retirement savings, and 46% of women cite money as harming their mental health, compared to 38% of men.

Regarding investments, almost every article I read states that women tend to be more conservative or moderate than men, who are more likely to invest aggressively. "When it comes to money, women tend to think of themselves as savers rather than investors. This perspective can affect women's ability to grow wealth over time," said Nancy Tengler, CEO and Chief Investment Officer of Laffler Tengler Investments in Scottsdale, Arizona (CNBC Women and Wealth, Sept 2023).

A 2023 Fidelity study showed that nearly 37% of women surveyed do not invest at all, compared to 23% of men. The reasons given included not having surplus money to invest, thinking the risk was too high, finding investing too complicated, worrying about not being able to withdraw money urgently, and not knowing where to start. The study also found that 48% of women don't feel knowledgeable about how to invest their savings for retirement, and 27% said they didn't save for retirement because they felt they didn't make enough money.

The investing gap widens when considering race. A 2021 survey by CNBC and Momentive found that 59% of black women do not own any investments, compared to 48% of Hispanic women and 34% of white women.

While reading articles on financial literacy for women, I did find some good news. According to a 2023 Fidelity study, more women, especially younger generations, are starting to invest. Sixty percent of women now invest in the stock market, up from just 44% in 2018. According to consulting firm Spencer Stuart and investment services/bank Morgan Stanley (2022), women might still invest less than men, but they control more investable capital, voting shares of stock, and corporate board seats than ever before. Women held 32% of S&P 500 company board seats, and in 2023, women ran more than 10% of the businesses on the Fortune 500 list, up 18% from 2022.

There is still work to be done and so much for women to learn about the subject of Financial Literacy. If you are like me, you may be thinking "Where do I start? How can I learn more about my 'Financial IQ'?" You can talk to a finance professional (at a bank), subscribe to a financial newsletter, read articles online such as CNBC's article *Woman and Wealth*, www.cnbc.com/amp/2023/09/29/women-tend-to-be-better-investors-than-men-but-avoid-taking-risk-ceo.html, or listen to a finance podcast or webinar focusing on Financial Literacy for women such as Annuity.Org www.annuity.org/financial-literacy/women/

One very good resource I found is Savvy Ladies. Savvy Ladies is a non-profit (501c3) organization providing free financial education to all women. According to their website. "*Women in America are 35% more likely to live in poverty and 5 times more likely to live paycheck to paycheck than men. Becoming financially literate is imperative for women so that they can gain the necessary knowledge to create a financially stable future for themselves and their loved ones.*"

The website offers a Financial Wellness Quiz to get you started, www.savvyladies.org/ext/financial-quiz/ as well as articles, free courses, and webinars.



(continued from page 5)

This quilting dream team is truly inspirational and brings to mind all of the ways RSVP Group Projects & Homeworkers volunteers work together to complete a project. Examples include multiple sets of hands all working to finish a baby sweater for their late friend's newest family member, collecting items for fidget quilts, and making up quilt kits to have on hand in the storeroom. While Sandy is unable to take on more quilts, there are other RSVP groups and individuals who enjoy finishing quilt tops. If you would like to lend a skill to finish a project, such as crocheting together donated granny squares, binding, quilting, or creating kits, please contact RSVP at info@rsvpdane.org.

Want to get in Touch with Us?

Simply dial 608.238.RSVP (7787) or e-mail us at info@rsvpdane.org—or you can reach individual staff members directly at the phone numbers/e-mail addresses listed at right. In the event we're not available at the time you call, our 24-hour voice mail will ensure you receive a prompt response.

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We Want You! Join Our New Senior Tech Mentoring Program

By Mike Thomsen, Triad Program Coordinator



RSVSP's Triad Program is organizing a new project to help seniors improve and increase their smartphone, computer, and internet skills. Experts call these skills “information and communication technology (ICT)” skills because they are core skills for obtaining, making sense of, and communicating information in everyday life for most Americans.

Many older adults, unfortunately, are being left behind as ICT skills become more and more important in daily lives. They are missing out on the choices, connectedness, convenience, and money and time savings that ICT skills can bring us. One reason is that their computer and technology skills are out-of-date, or they may not have used computers very much before retirement. Our new senior tech mentoring project will work to change this!

Phase One of the project will focus on recruiting a group of volunteers who would enjoy helping other seniors improve their computer and smartphone skills. These volunteers will participate in some initial training sessions to help them supplement their existing ICT skills. After completing these initial sessions, they will become “Senior Tech Mentors” in Phase Two of the project, helping seniors who may have little or no experience with computers and smartphones.

We Want You! If you would like to volunteer to become a “Senior Tech Mentor” and help other seniors to improve their computer and smartphone skills, or if you would like more information about the program, email Mike Thomsen, our Triad Program coordinator, at mthomsen@rsvpdane.org. **We Need You** to get this new program off the ground.



Meet Julia Pierstorff, RSVP's New Group Projects and Homeworkers Program Coordinator



Hello, Current and Prospective RSVP Volunteers and Friends,

Having recently retired, I knew that I would like to find part-time work, but little did I know that the right position collaborating again with volunteers was closer than I could have imagined. As the new Group Projects and Homeworkers Coordinator, I now have the honor of helping older adults share their crafting talents with people throughout Dane County. Imagine, you might be a knitter, quilter, sewer, etc., looking to share your beautiful creations with those in need. It's fun and a great way to give back!

My nearly twenty years of experience managing volunteer programs (including with the State of Wisconsin Volunteer Ombudsman Program, St. Mary's Hospital and the San Francisco Marathon) has prepared me for my new position, especially as it relates to volunteer recruitment, supervision and recognition. Volunteers were the heart and soul of these organizations, helping us function effectively and keeping us connected to the communities we served. Volunteers are a Blessing!

To all of the wonderful volunteers at RSVP, *Thank You* for all that you do and give! To prospective volunteers, we look forward to welcoming you on board! – Julia



Ten Easy Ways to Save Energy This Summer

From Madison Gas and Electric (MGE)

Stay cool and comfortable at home with these tips from MGE.

1. Use a qualified contractor to professionally maintain your central air at least every two years. And, be sure to routinely clean leaves and grass clippings off your outdoor air-conditioning unit.
2. Run major appliances before 10 a.m. and after 9 p.m. or on weekends. This helps lower the demand for power during peak times.
3. Set your thermostat as high as is comfortable, preferably 78° or higher when you are home and up to 85° when you are away. Consider upgrading to a smart thermostat—they can adjust temperatures automatically based on your routine and can make saving energy easier. Consider participating in MGE Connect® and help reduce strain on the electric grid during periods of heavy energy use—all while getting a reward!
4. Swap your light bulbs with LED bulbs, which use up to 75% less energy than standard incandescent bulbs and last longer.
5. Unplug your phone chargers, printers, computers and other electronics when you are not using them. These devices can still use energy when not in use. Standby or "phantom" power can account for 5% to 10% of your total energy use.
6. Run a whole-house fan, room fan or ceiling fan. Be sure to turn off ceiling and room fans when no one is in the room—fans cool people, not rooms.
7. Seal around your window air conditioner so cool air cannot escape. If you need to purchase a new unit, consider a Wi-Fi window air conditioner—you can control them remotely with smartphone apps, which allow you to adjust the temperature while you're away.
8. Keep your window coverings closed to block out direct sunlight.
9. Run full loads in your washer and dryer to cut down on excess energy usage.
10. Keep your water heater temperature set at 120°, and if you go on vacation, remember to switch it to vacation mode.

By managing our energy use collectively, we can help manage energy costs and reduce carbon emissions as we work together to achieve net-zero carbon electricity by 2050. Find other ways to save energy at mge2050.com.

RSVP DONOR HONOR ROLL

We gratefully acknowledge donations received from the following individuals and organizations since our last newsletter, and extend our thanks to each for their generous support.

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MEMORIALS AND TRIBUTES



Memorial and tribute gifts to RSVP are a meaningful way to honor someone special and to extend the services provided by volunteers. Every dollar contributed allows us to enrich the lives of many children, families, and older persons.

CONTRIBUTIONS WERE MADE TO RSVP IN MEMORY OF

Lyle O. Blank by Mary Blank

Jim Enders by Noelle Chesley and St. James Home and School

Karen Laszewski by Margie Zutter

Douglas Witzeling by Linda and Jerry Knight

New RSVP Funding

In April, RSVP received \$900 from the Oregon Brooklyn VFW Post 10272. We are so grateful for your support!

In April, RSVP received a \$1,000 grant from the Madison South Rotary to support our Group Projects & Homeworkers Program. Thank you for this generous contribution!

In April, RSVP received a \$200 contribution from the Mt. Zion Baptist Church in support of our Group Projects & Homeworkers Program. Thank you for your support and collaboration!

In April, RSVP received a \$500 donation from the Sun Prairie Lions Club Foundation. Thank you for your donation!

In June, RSVP received a \$5,000 grant from the Evjue Foundation in support of RSVP volunteer recruitment, transportation, and programs.

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

June 1 – October 31, 2024

Starting in June, the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) of Dane County will distribute farmers' market vouchers to older adults for use in purchasing \$45 of Wisconsin grown fruit, vegetables, or herbs at farmers' markets and roadside farm stands.



The vouchers are distributed on a first come/first serve basis to those **age 60+ or Native Americans age 55+**, who live in Dane County, and have gross incomes under \$27,861 per year (or \$2,321/month) for a one person household and \$37,814 per year (or \$3,151/month) for a two person household. One set of vouchers is available per person.

Individuals who received vouchers last year will automatically receive an application by mail this year. If you wish to apply to the program, or need to update your mailing address, contact AAA Dietitian Shannon Gabriel at 608.261.5678 or Gabriel.Shannon@countyofdane.com. Applications will be mailed out in early May. Once we receive and approve your application, vouchers will be mailed starting on June 1st.

"This program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

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RSVP VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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"Life is never so busy that there is no time to serve." - author unknown

SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES

RSVP VOLUNTEER BUS BUDDY COORDINATORS are needed to help teach others how to navigate the Metro Bus system! Are you a seasoned bus rider who would like to help others open a whole new road to independence? You can help teach older adults, refugees, and people with disabilities to ride the buses to work, school, medical appointments, grocery stores, or places of interest.

WISCONSIN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ARTS, AND LETTERS has a unique opportunity for a volunteer to help with archiving and filing historical documents and materials. They also need help with landscaping and event support.

BRAILLE LIBRARY AND TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES is gearing up for their Fall training to become volunteer transcribers to prepare and provide books in braille. You can learn to turn print into braille! All transcribers take a one-year braille transcription course that consists of weekly classes and culminates in certification by the Library of Congress.

LITERACY NETWORK has planted new perennial gardens and needs volunteer gardeners to help with their upkeep. You can help make them flourish!

WHEELS FOR WINNERS is an earn-a-bike program that rehabs used bikes and offers them to participants who earn them through community service. You can help clean and fix bikes and see the smiles on kids' faces when they earn a bike and helmet!

ALDO LEOPOLD NATURE CENTER needs dedicated volunteers at their reception desk to engage with visitors, assist community members in person and via phone and email, and perform administrative tasks. Weekday and weekend shifts are available!

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK needs help sorting, labeling and packing food into family friendly portions for distribution. Volunteer projects are well-organized, safe, and led by wonderful staff members! Shifts are flexible and easy to sign up for!

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE needs Weekend House Volunteers and Weekday Front Desk Volunteers. You can help with light housekeeping, organizing donations, welcoming guest families, answering phones and questions, and checking guests in and out. Volunteers are the first face and interaction with families in their moment of greatest need and being warm and welcoming is very important. Shifts are 3 hours long from 9am to 9pm once a week.

ST VINCENT'S FOOD PANTRY needs more volunteers to help sort and shelve produce in the mornings from 8am – 10am. Help make food available for shoppers who need it!

(continued on page 17)

(continued from page 16)

DAIS (Domestic Abuse Intervention Services) has many volunteer needs right now! Reception/Front Desk to greet visitors, Shelter Chef to help prepare meals for women and kids once a week, Court Watch to observe court hearings, Help Line Advocates to answer the 24-hour Help and Text Line, Support Group Advocate to help survivors come together to share experiences and support each other, and Children's Advocates involved in structured activities and free play to help individual children and group activities.

OAKWOOD VILLAGE UNIVERSITY WOODS needs Village Store Grocery Ordering Assistants and Cashiers at their Independent Living facility. Volunteers must have online ordering experience and be able to bring their own laptop or tablet for use. Cashiers are needed Monday and Thursday, 10:30am – 1:30pm and Saturday 10:30am – 12pm.

MADISON STREET MEDICINE needs volunteers with medical backgrounds (Doctors, Nurses, EMTs, CNA's) to help provide medical attention to people in the Porchlight Men's Shelter, the Beacon, and on the streets. They also provide a Foot Care Clinic and volunteers do not need to have a medical background.

OAKWOOD PREFERRED HOSPICE is looking for dedicated volunteers to help provide companionship to residents in Hospice Care. Spend an hour visiting with a resident offering love, compassion, and companionship.

NEWBRIDGE needs volunteer Guardians and Representative Payees! A Guardian is someone appointed by the State of Wisconsin to make medical, housing, and other decisions for an older adult who can no longer manage their finances. A Representative Payee is someone who works through the Social Security Administration to help manage the social security funds of an older adult, who can no longer manage their funds. All volunteers will go through training and supervision. Time is flexible and will require 2-6 hours a month.

FRIENDS OF SCHUMACHER FARM PARK, in Waunakee, has volunteer opportunities available for those interested in gardening, prairie restoration, event planning, and educational tours of the historic farmhouse and buildings.

CATHOLIC MULTICULTURAL CENTER needs volunteers to help with the Food Pantry Gardens on Mid Town Rd. in Verona. Help plant, grow, care for, and harvest 8,000 pounds of fresh food for the CMC food pantry and meal program!

HABITAT RESTORE needs volunteers to help sort and shelve used and new building materials and supplies, assist shoppers, and work at the cash register with purchases. Morning and afternoon shifts are available Tuesday – Saturday. Most current need is at the Eastside store on Monona Drive.

SSM ST MARYS HOSPITAL needs help with their At Your Service program (escorting patients and families, delivering belongings, etc), Patient Registration (welcoming patients and escorting them to their destination), Surgical Waiting Area supporting families while their loved one is in surgery, offering caring presence and support through touch and conversation.

Please contact Jan Karst, RSVP Volunteer Programs Community Connections Coordinator, for more information about these Volunteer Opportunities at jkarst@rsvpdane.org or 608.441.7891

RSVP Volunteer Driver Escorts Needed!

By Steve Jaeschke, Driver Services Manager

RSVP needs more volunteer Driver Escorts to help transport older adults to medical appointments throughout Dane County, including the cities of Madison and Monona. We have recently had some long-standing volunteer drivers retire from their assignments due to their own health concerns or concerns about their own driving skills when transporting other people. The Driver Services program relies on people who have some free time at least one day per week on average to provide transportation and to serve as an escort to older adults who don't have their own transportation.

We would like to clear up some myths about the program that often prevent some potential volunteers from pursuing this type of assignment. One myth is that volunteer drivers will be doing some sort of lifting to get their passengers into the vehicle. This is not true. Passengers must be ambulatory, that is, they have to be able to enter and exit the vehicle without any lifting by the volunteer driver.

Another myth is that people feel that if they sign up to be a volunteer driver, they will be asked to transport passengers every day or much more often than they want to drive in this assignment. This is not true. One thing we offer that is so important to so many people is flexibility. When we get you enrolled and oriented to this assignment, we fill out a form with you that provides the Local Driver Escort Coordinator information about which day or days you feel you would be available from Monday through Friday.

Drivers' preferences vary. Some like to drive once per week, on average. Other drivers like to drive more often than that. We have seasonal volunteers who only drive in the summer months and go to warmer climes in the winter. And we have retired farmers who take the summer months off to help their children on the farm get crops in the fields. The important points we want to make are that 1) you decide how much time you are comfortable with putting into this assignment, and 2) you should never feel guilty about turning down a ride request. This is why it is so important for us to have lots of volunteer Driver Escorts in each community or area that we serve in Dane County.

Another myth we want to clear up is that many potential volunteer drivers think they will always be waiting in doctors' offices for long periods of time. This is not the general rule. Again, we offer flexibility for drivers to drop off a passenger, ask the front desk when to return and, depending on the length of the wait, either return at a later time or set up a one-way ride with the passenger and the Driver Escort Coordinator. The coordinator then arranges for another driver to pick up the person at the end of the appointment. This arrangement is often used when passengers go to Madison for dialysis and other lengthy appointments. It also helps us to avoid tying up drivers who may have other rides to give or other things to do. Also, one system that works well for some volunteers is to work as a team with a spouse, significant other, or friend. This allows one volunteer to be the driver and the other to be the escort helping the passenger to and from the vehicle.

Finally, some potential volunteer drivers believe that they will have to pay for gas and insurance. This is also not true. RSVP is able to reimburse drivers at the rate of 67 cents per mile, to provide free excess insurance when volunteers are on assignment and to offer drivers a Volunteer Driver Escort badge and other things to assist with this type of assignment.

If you are a safe driver, enjoy helping older adults and your community, and have some free time to help with this most important volunteer assignment, please call Steve Jaeschke directly at 608.441.7892 or e-mail him at sjaeschke@rsvpdane.org. He'll be glad to explain the program to you in more depth and answer any questions you have. Your help is greatly needed and much appreciated.

Memorials and Tributes

Please use this form to make a contribution to RSVP in memory or honor of someone special.
Enclosed is my gift of \$

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RSVP Calendar

July

July 24, Zoom Event with Alice Pauser (“Life is Better When You Laugh”) 1:00 p.m.

August

August 19, RSVP Board Meeting at RSVP, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

August 29, Zoom Event with Gail Ambrosius, Chocolatier, Madison, 1:00 p.m.

September

September 2, RSVP Office CLOSED for Labor Day

September 19, (SAVE THE DATE) Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event at Barnwood Events, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

October

October 21, RSVP Board Meeting at RSVP, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

November

Triad Virtual Conference, Dates and Times TBD

December

December 15, Zoom Event “Downsize with Ease,” with Jess Lex, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.