



# NEWS NOTES

Winter 2024

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

## Triad Conference 2023: A Great Opportunity to Meet, Network, and Learn

*by Mike Thomsen, Triad Program Coordinator*

The 21<sup>st</sup> Triad Conference was held October 20<sup>th</sup> at the American Family Insurance Training Center in Madison. The goal of the conference was to provide attendees with valuable information on topics related to safety, crime prevention and healthy living for older adults. This was the first time in four years, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, that we were able to hold the conference in-person rather than virtually, and it was a great opportunity to meet, network, and learn.

The conference began with Margarita Northrup, the Wisconsin State Health Plan Coordinator, giving the keynote address, *Health and Wellbeing in Retirement: Understanding Civic Engagement and Health*. The keynote was the perfect introduction to a day packed with informative and educational presentations by experts from the Better Business Bureau, the Dane County Sheriff's Office, Madison Area Crime Stoppers, the Madison Police Department, Old National Bank, Safe Communities, AgeBetter, and the UW-Madison. A total of 116 participants, presenters, and exhibitors from around Wisconsin attended. For more information about the presentations and speakers please download the conference program here: <https://bit.ly/3Fe3TeU>.



Mike Thomsen, Triad Program Coordinator, and Margarita Northrup, Keynote Speaker



## In This Issue

**Looking for  
volunteer  
opportunities?  
Pages 16 and 17**

RSVP Board Notes..... 2  
 From the Desk of the Executive Director..... 3  
 Voluntarism Is a Huge Success for Veterans...4  
 Giving Tuesday: Hats Off to You!..... 5  
 Joan Paar: Length of Service Award Winner .6  
 Loneliness on the Rise by David Wahlberg..... 7  
 Memorials and Tributes..... 9  
 A Day in the Life of a Ride Coordinator..... 10  
 Want to get in Touch with US?..... 11  
 Bev Schaefer: Presidential Award Winner..... 12  
 New Funding and Volunteers in the News... 12  
 MG&E Information ..... 13  
 RSVP Donor Honor Roll..... 14  
 Welcome New Volunteers..... 15  
 RSVP Volunteer Opportunities ..... 16  
 RSVP Volunteer Opportunities (cont.)..... 17  
 Wisconsin Stories About Veterans Day..... 18  
 RSVP Calendar..... 20

## RSVP Board Notes

Welcome to 2024!

But before we begin 2024, let's look back at 2023. During the Spring of 2023, we collaborated with The People Company on developing a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Assessment. Staff, members of the Board, and volunteers were asked to participate in the assessment.

Overall RSVP was looked at favorably. There were a few recommendations made that we will look at incorporating into the daily work of the Agency in the future.

Margie Zutter retired after 47 ½ years with RSVP. Diana Jost was promoted to be the new Executive Director and Kate Seal, the Group Projects Manager, became the Assistant Director. Paula Reif returned from North Carolina to become the Intergenerational and Foster Grandparents Manager.

There were monthly Zoom Events about many interesting subjects, including butterflies and various zoo animals. In the fall there was a wonderful Volunteer Appreciation Event with approximately 200 in attendance.

The Assessment Committee of the Board sent out a survey to those taking part in the Community Connections program, both volunteers and participating sites. We want to thank all of those participating in the completion of the assessment. This information will be used to better serve our members.

Our fundraising centered on the 2023 Sweepstakes, Giving Tuesday, and the Annual Campaign. We would like to thank all of you for making these endeavors a success.

So that was 2023. What is in store for 2024? The Board will be holding a retreat to develop a vision of what we want RSVP to focus on in its daily activities to ensure that our goals meet the needs of our population. We will continue having monthly Zoom Events and would welcome suggestions for topics of interest. Summer will bring our Annual Sweepstakes, and we have already started planning the 2024 Volunteer Appreciation Event. Watch for a major marketing campaign from Driver Services. All in all, we are sure that 2024 will be another banner year!

Deborah Ann Speckmann  
 President, RSVP Board of Directors



# From the Desk of...

*Diana Jost  
Executive Director*



**H**appy New Year! Once again, I want to thank you for the many ways you've supported RSVP in 2023 and over the years, and look forward to working together in 2024. As we start this new year, I am reminded of our annual tradition ...making New Year's Resolutions. During this time of reflection, we often reexamine our lives, our beliefs, our goals, and

our activities. We may decide to entertain new ideas, and begin new activities, or find a new purpose for the year ahead.

A lot of articles have been written about the power of purpose throughout our lives, and the ways that purposeful intention changes with important milestones during our lifetime. Maybe in our younger years, our purpose was to graduate from high school, maybe it was to go

to college, maybe it was to have a family, or maybe it was to travel the world. As we get older it is important to continue to explore new ways to maintain a sense of purpose. Many studies have reported that a sense of purpose promotes healthy behaviors and is associated with better physical and mental health outcomes.

One of those studies was done by the McKinsey Health Institute:

aged 55 and older across 21 countries found that having a purpose in life and meaningful connections with others were among the most

A recent survey of adults

*(continued on page 8)*

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## Voluntarism Is a Huge Success for Veterans in Need

*By Lorrie Hylkema, Vets Helping Vets Coordinator*

The 30<sup>th</sup> annual Wayne D. Horner Memorial Stand Down Madison was held Saturday, October 21, 2023, at the Salvation Army building on Darbo Drive in Madison. Stand Down Madison (SDM) seeks to help and serve Veterans who have served our country, and who are currently experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

SDM is organized and run entirely by volunteers – from the SDM board, Community Partners, Buddy Volunteers, and Food Service Volunteers. A total of 70 volunteers worked to make this event happen in 2023, spending 329 hours of time helping Veterans.

Stand Down Madison began in 1993, organized by comrades of Wayne D. Horner, a Vietnam War Army Veteran and subsequently a Dane County Service Officer. Wayne dedicated his time to helping Veterans who were experiencing homelessness. Sadly, he died of the complications of Agent Orange before he could complete his mission.

In honor of Wayne, his family made a point to volunteer for this year's SDM event. His widowed wife, Ravina Horner, was interviewed by Spectrum One and Channel 3 News about Wayne's legacy. For RSVP of Dane County, Mel Bankes and Phil Willems volunteered as drivers and Paul Halverson volunteered as a buddy for those Veterans who came through the SDM event. Steve Jaeschke volunteered as a Community Partner for RSVP Vets Helping Vets, talking to Veterans about the VHV program as they came through. Lorrie Hylkema served as Committee Lead for organizing Community Partners and lead for Transportation services to and from the SDM event.

A total of 70 Community Partners provided services for Veterans, including foot care, podiatry, flu and COVID vaccinations, massages, haircuts, benefits counseling, transportation, childcare, hygiene items, a hot meal, live music, and clothing. New clothes were donated by Lands' End and included winter boots, coats, hats, and mittens. Experiencing the happiness of the volunteers and the Veterans, whether providing services or receiving services, was one of the most precious, unforgettable experiences, bar none. For the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Stand Down Madison event, volunteerism was at its finest, making it clear that giving of your time makes a difference either one day, one year, or 30 years at a time.



Volunteer Drivers John Hylkema and Mel Bankes at the Transportation Station



Madison College Cosmetology students: Free Haircuts for Veterans



Community Action Coalition's table of donations including hygiene supplies for the veterans

## GivingTuesday: Hats Off to You!

*By Kate Seal, RSVP Assistant Director*

The RSVP of Dane County staff would like to say ‘HATS OFF TO YOU’ for your service and support during our [#GivingTuesday2023](#) campaign (and always). [#GivingTuesday](#) was officially on November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, but for RSVP of Dane County (and many like-minded organizations), the initiative begins early in the month. It is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media and collaboration. It is a movement that is intended to connect diverse groups of individuals, communities, and organizations around the world for one common purpose: to celebrate and encourage giving.



There is an immense amount of volunteerism, coordination, programming, collaboration, and fundraising that needs to take place in order for RSVP 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 and want to THANK YOU for doing your part.

We want to extend our sincerest gratitude to everyone who followed our [#GivingTuesday](#) campaign on Facebook and supported our program through financial contributions. We raised \$10,995.00 to support RSVP of Dane County’s programming and donated approximately 790 volunteer-crafted hats to local nonprofit organizations who serve those in need! Thank you, Tara & the Group Projects volunteers, for bringing our community together. The warmth and love are spreading far and wide. ‘Hats off to you’ for your contributions!

# GIVING TUESDAY



Hats off to you from the RSVP Staff!

## Joan Paar, RSVP Length of Service Award Winner

By Tara Curtis, Group Projects/Homeworkers Program Coordinator

Joan Paar, an RSVP volunteer from Cross Plains, was honored with the *RSVP Length of Service Award* for having given 20 consecutive years of volunteer service to the community. She received the award at the RSVP of Dane County Volunteer Appreciation Event on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

Joan understands well the satisfaction that comes from working alongside others to get a job done. She has spent her entire life on farms, first her family's and then her husband's. Now Paar has expanded her reach from the farm into the community through her work as a Group Projects volunteer. These volunteers spread warmth and comfort throughout Dane County through their handmade hats, mittens, scarves, shawls, quilts, and other items.

Paar began her volunteer service with RSVP in March of 2003. Since then, she has logged over 6,000 hours of work. She has sewn fleece mittens and scarves, bus pass wallets, walker bags, tote bags, and quilts. "A lot of them," Paar said of the quilts she has made. "I thought it'd be a fun thing to do, to get together with people and sew," Paar stated. "And knowing that you're giving to other people, that you're helping someone else, and it goes to good use, is great, too."

Paar serves as group leader for Cross Plains RSVP, which meets each month at the Cross Plains Library. Paar's job includes communicating with members and collecting and reporting her group members' hours of service to RSVP. She also occasionally helps to obtain supplies for other volunteers and to teach newer quilters some of her well-developed quilting skills. "I help new members learn how to do the tie quilting and even sew the quilts at home," Paar said.

If you are interested in volunteering with RSVP's Group Projects & Homeworkers Program making handmade items to donate to those in need, please contact Tara Curtis by email at [tcurtis@rsvpdane.org](mailto:tcurtis@rsvpdane.org) or call (608) 310-7280.



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*"I could not afford taxi service to Madison, where my primary doctor & specialists have their offices.*

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— RSVP passenger

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**For information on driving seniors:** Steve Jaeschke, 608.441.7892 or [sjaeschke@rsvpdane.org](mailto:sjaeschke@rsvpdane.org)

**For information on driving veterans:** Lorrie Hylkema, 608.238.7901 or [lhylkema@rsvpdane.org](mailto:lhylkema@rsvpdane.org)



## Loneliness on the Rise as Public Health Threat

By David Wahlberg, Wisconsin State Journal, July 17, 2023

**R**etired, living alone and unable to drive, with her children and grandchildren grown up, Arlene Hensley said she sometimes feels isolated.

When volunteers like Dave Mahoney drive her to medical appointments or the grocery store and chat along the way, her mood picks up.

"The loneliness does get to me," said Hensley, 83, of Madison. "It helps when I meet someone I can talk with. It makes my day."

For Mahoney, 75, of Sun Prairie, giving rides staves off idleness. "It fulfills a need and a purpose," he said. "If I sit in a chair, I'm going to rot and die."

With the COVID-19 pandemic underscoring and exacerbating loneliness nationwide, health officials are increasingly viewing loneliness and isolation not just as inevitable feelings for some people but as public health problems to address and prevent.

The health risks of loneliness are as deadly as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day, according to a report in May by U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy. Poor or insufficient connection with others increases the risk of heart disease by 29%, of stroke by 32% and of dementia by 50%, the report said.

"It's like hunger or thirst," Murthy told The Associated Press. "It's a feeling the body sends us when something we need for survival is missing."

*(continued on page 8)*



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(continued from page 3)

important factors bolstering the health of older adults around the world. Respondents frequently cited personal fulfillment and social connection as primary motivators for working or volunteering. What was also deemed important was lifelong learning and participation in community organizations or activities.

These findings all align with the concept of “societal participation,” defined by MHI as “consistent involvement in deliberate activities that lead to meaningful engagement with one’s society and community.” This covers activities that older adults can pursue in their communities such as working, volunteering, pursuing lifelong learning, or participating in community activities. Through these activities, older adults can fulfill many of the factors that influence their health—from finding purpose to connecting with others and staying active.

As we kick off 2024 and make our New Year’s resolutions, I encourage all of us to take a look at our purpose. What are our goals for the next few years? What do we want to accomplish, and how best to accomplish those goals? We know that volunteering is a wonderful way to be involved and make a difference while connecting with other people in our community. Already volunteering? Maybe your new purpose is to help a friend or a loved one discover a way they can become involved.

As our population ages, it is vitally important that we make sure older adults have a way to stay involved, give back, and participate in community activities. RSVP of Dane County’s purpose has always been to offer a wide range of volunteering opportunities, and ways to help all adults 55 and over become involved and stay connected to their community. To that end, while maintaining our purpose, RSVP will continue to explore new and rewarding volunteer opportunities that will offer everyone in our community a way to be involved, feel connected, and enjoy a new sense of purpose.

In a recent volunteer survey by the RSVP Assessment Committee, 90% of volunteers taking the survey reported that volunteering keeps them healthy and active and that volunteering gives them a more positive outlook. 92% of volunteers taking the survey reported that the experience gives them closer ties to people and the community. One volunteer stated that volunteering “*Makes me feel useful now that I am retired. Gives purpose to my retirement. Gets me out of the house.*”

(continued from page 7)

The Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness, which includes the state Department of Health Services, nonprofits involved with aging and disabilities, academic researchers and others, was formed in October 2020. The coalition is raising awareness about loneliness and trying to better detect it and respond to it, in part by connecting people with community services, said Tim Wellens, who works on the effort for the state health department.

How to get help. If you are feeling lonely or isolated or want more information, contact:

- 988 Lifeline: Call or text 988 or go to [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org).
- Wisconsin Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness, at [go.madison.com/isolation](https://go.madison.com/isolation).
- Coalition to End Social Isolation and Loneliness(national), at [endsocialisolation.org](https://endsocialisolation.org).
- National Resource Center for Engaging Adults, at [engagingolderadults.org](https://engagingolderadults.org).
- AARP Foundation's Connect 2 Affect program, at [connect2affect.org](https://connect2affect.org).

To read the full article, look for the link we have provided on the HOME page of the RSVP website at [www.rsvpdane.org](https://www.rsvpdane.org).





## MEMORIALS AND TRIBUTES



**M**emorial 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

**Virginia Adler** by Leroy Adler  
**Elizabeth “Betty” Amacker** by Judith Amacker  
**Sally Boehm** by Susan M. Zander  
**Mary Cuff** by David Cuff  
**Jim Hellenbrand** by Florence P. Hellenbrand  
**Bernadette Diericks** by Kim and Mark M. Pilgrim  
**Stephen E. Marshall** by Kathryn S. Arndt  
**Jim Morrison** by Susan Morrison  
**Sue Morrison** by Margie Zutter  
**Barbara Palmer** by Mary Kay Palmer  
**Nellie Perrey** by Frances Toon  
**Bill and Mary Rapa** by Tom Rapa  
**Art Redmond** by Edward Baker, David MacLeod, and Mike Wild  
**Miriam Semmann** by Ron and Ann Semmann  
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**Wayne Ziegler** by Hy E. and James Miller

### CONTRIBUTIONS WERE MADE TO RSVP IN HONOR

**All Military Families** by Beatrice Allen  
**Good Folks** by Donald Marx  
**Lee and Mary Ihlenfeldt** by Steven and Janet Riehbrandt  
**Margaret Jensen** by Richard and Marcia Taugher  
**Bob and Shirley Lawrence** by Daniel Gebauer  
**Our Great Former Leader Margie Zutter** by Frederick Kruger  
**Carol Reithel** by Rose C. Sime  
**Kate and Robb Seal** by Thomas and Susan Seal  
**Mary Stamstad’s 90th Birthday** by Keith and Margie Zutter  
**Margie Zutter** by Jim and Barbara Brigham, Alison Koelsch, and  
 Dave and Helen Tetzlaff  
**Margie Zutter’s Retirement** by Robert and Jeanne Skilton

## A Day in the Life of a Ride Coordinator

By *Steve Jaeschke, Driver Services Manager*

As any RSVP passenger knows, our ride coordinators, who are located throughout the county, play a vital role in ensuring that you receive the transportation you need. But do you know how they do it? Here's a quick glimpse into their world.

### The Morning Hustle

The life of a ride coordinator generally starts early. Armed with a cup of coffee (for certain here in the RSVP office!) and a heart full of dedication, the first order of business is checking phones for any last-minute messages so that they can review and confirm the day's scheduled rides. Changes, from appointment cancellations to ill drivers, must be addressed immediately! And it usually involves another cup of coffee.

### Dispatching and Coordination

On a good day, the waiting messages simply have details for upcoming appointments. And that's the heart of a ride coordinator's role. Ride coordinators get to know their drivers and passengers. They develop a keen understanding of the availability and preferences of both, and they go out of their way to try to match you with the best fit for your ride, from type of vehicle to familiarity with your driver.

### Quick Thinking and Problem Solving

Ride coordinators are always troubleshooting! From being often inundated with last-minute ride requests and unexpected changes due to anything from inclement weather, a driver running late thanks to construction or a flat tire, or worst yet, an accident, coordinators must be quick thinking problem solvers.

### Support and Assurance

Your ride coordinators are more than just logistical experts. They are often, as you may have experienced, a source of emotional support for you when needed. They offer reassurance and an empathetic ear for anyone who might be anxious about the journey, the driver, the timing, ... you name it. They are here to listen and help as much as they are able.

### Schedules and Records

Your ride coordinators spend a lot of time balancing the schedules of both drivers and passengers, and even more time recording all that information. They meticulously document every ride.

### End of Day

Back to your coordinators' hearts full of dedication – reflecting each day on how many of you they have been able to help and knowing the impact that has in your lives, they're inspired to do it all over again tomorrow!

It's a job of constant motion, but what makes it wonderful is that it's not only about enabling you to reach medical appointments. Hopefully it also instills a sense of belonging, care, and community in the hearts of all of you and your drivers.



The RSVP Driver Services Team: (front row, l to r), Lorrie Hylkema, Virginia Scholtz. (back row) Steve Jaeschke, Camela King

## Want to get in Touch with Us?

Simply dial 608.238.RSVP (7787) or e-mail us at [info@rsvpdane.org](mailto: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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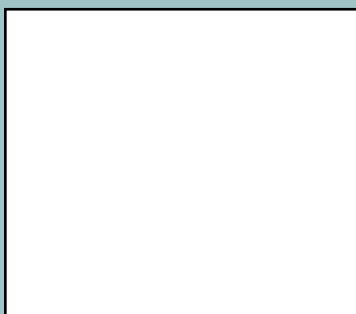
Diana Jost, *Executive Director*  
608.441.1393, [djost@rsvpdane.org](mailto:djost@rsvpdane.org)  
Kate Seal, *Assistant Director*  
608.661.4271, [kseal@rsvpdane.org](mailto:kseal@rsvpdane.org)  
Jack Guzman, *Office Support Administrator*  
608. 238-7933,  
[jguzman@rsvpdane.org](mailto:jguzman@rsvpdane.org)  
Krishna Sijapati, *Accountant*  
608.441.7899, [ksijapati@rsvpdane.org](mailto:ksijapati@rsvpdane.org)

### PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Jan Karst, *Community Connections Coordinator*  
608.441.7891, [jkarst@rsvpdane.org](mailto:jkarst@rsvpdane.org)  
Paula Reif, *Foster Grandparent and Intergenerational Program Coordinator*  
608.441.7894, [preif@rsvpdane.org](mailto:preif@rsvpdane.org)  
Tara Curtis, *Group Projects/ Homeworkers Program Coordinator*  
608.310.7280, [tcurtis@rsvpdane.org](mailto:tcurtis@rsvpdane.org)

Mike Thomsen, *Triad Coordinator*  
608.441.7897,  
[mthomsen@rsvpdane.org](mailto:mthomsen@rsvpdane.org)  
**DRIVER SERVICES PROGRAM**  
Steve Jaeschke, *Driver Services Manager*  
608.441.7892,  
[sjaeschke@rsvpdane.org](mailto:sjaeschke@rsvpdane.org)  
Camela King, *Driver Services Coordinator*  
608.441-7896, [cking@rsvpdane.org](mailto:cking@rsvpdane.org)  
Ginny Scholtz, *Madison/Monona Ride Coordinator*  
608.441.7898, [vscholtz@rsvpdane.org](mailto:vscholtz@rsvpdane.org)  
Lorrie Hylkema, *Vets Helping Vets Coordinator*  
608.238.7901,  
[lhylkema@rsvpdane.org](mailto:lhylkema@rsvpdane.org)  
[vetshelpingvets@rsvpdane.org](mailto:vetshelpingvets@rsvpdane.org)  
Debbie Vogt, *Driver Services Administrative Assistant and Bus Buddy Program Assistant*  
608.310.7281,  
[dvogt@rsvpdane.org](mailto:dvogt@rsvpdane.org)

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## Bev Schaefer, Presidential Services Award Winner

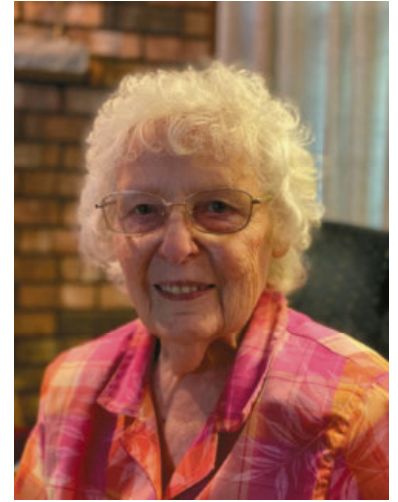
*By Tara Curtis, Group Projects/Homeworkers Program Coordinator*

**B**ev Schaefer, an RSVP volunteer from Verona, was honored with the **President's Award** for serving 4,000 hours of volunteer service to her community. Schaefer received the award from RSVP Director Diana Jost at its annual Volunteer Appreciation event held September 21<sup>st</sup>. Coincidentally, this also marked Schaefer's two-year anniversary of volunteer service with RSVP of Dane County.

Service to others has always been an important part of Bev Schaefer's life. After a career in nursing that spanned 42 years, she began volunteering for a number of organizations including American Girl and St Mary's Hospital as well as at her church. "I've just always volunteered," Schaefer said. "Seemed like the right thing to do."

As an RSVP of Dane County volunteer, Schaefer is a Homeworker, knitting and crocheting baby blankets, sweaters, hats, and booties that provide comfort and warmth to community members in need. "I just wanted to do something that I felt was beneficial to other people," she said. Her soft and beautiful handmade items are greatly appreciated by the Dane County families who receive them.

Schaefer shared that her volunteer service benefits her as well. "Volunteering makes me happy when I'm sad. I hardly have down days. I used to make myself get my work done before knitting or crocheting, but now I allow myself to prioritize handwork."



Bev Schaefer



## New Funding

**I**n October, RSVP was awarded a \$2,000 grant from the Stoughton Area Community Foundation. This grant supports RSVP's Vets Helping Vets Program. We are grateful for their ongoing support.

In January, RSVP received \$1,000 from the VFW Post 8216. Bob Topel presented RSVP with this generous donation.



## Volunteers in the News

**D**ave Mahoney, Arlene Hensley and Lucy Gammeter were featured in the Wisconsin State Journal on July 17, 2023. This article was entitled, "Loneliness on the rise as public health threat," and was written by David Wahlberg.



(l to r): Vets Helping Vets Coordinator Lorrie Hylkema, Bob Topel, and RSVP Executive Director Diana Jost



## **Five Easy Ways to Stay Comfortable This Winter**

*From Madison Gas and Electric Company (MGE)*

Looking for easy, no-cost ways to save energy and keep your home more comfortable this season? MGE is here to help with five simple steps for your household.

- Set your furnace fan to "auto" instead of "on." This is one of the biggest steps you can take to be energy efficient at home.
- You can save an estimated 10% on your heating bill by turning your thermostat down 10 to 15 degrees for eight hours a day. Visit [mge.com/setthermostat](http://mge.com/setthermostat) for recommended settings.
- Open your blinds or drapes to let in the sunshine during the day. Close them at night to reduce heat loss and drafts.
- Leaving windows unlocked allows the air to move in and out of the house as energy loss. It's common for the upper sash of a window to "fall down" a bit, leaving the top of a double-hung window open, which often goes unseen because of blinds or shades. Ensure this doesn't happen by locking your windows!
- Phone chargers, computers and other electronics can still use energy when not in use and can account for 5% to 10% of your total energy use. Help manage your energy use by unplugging items when not in use.

Want more ways to save? Stay up-to-date on energy-saving tips by visiting [mge2050.com](http://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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*(continued on page 17)*

## WELCOME New Volunteers

We enrolled 60 new volunteers from September, 2023, through November, 2023, 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!

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## RSVP VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

*...where volunteers make a difference*

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

### WINTER OPPORTUNITIES!

**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 three hours long from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. once a week.

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

**LITERACY NETWORK** is starting to look ahead to their summer semester which runs from May 30<sup>th</sup> – August 21<sup>st</sup> and needs **Tutors** for all of their programs. There will be a training session for new tutors the week of May 22<sup>nd</sup>. You can help with tutoring adults in Community English, Workplace English, Citizenship, or Group Classes.

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

**AGRACE HOSPICE CARE** has **Kitchen Volunteer** opportunities including Small Batch Baker, Café Cashier, Nutrition Center Stocking, Soup Brigade and Kitchen Prep to assist the Kitchen Team with small prep and recipe work! It's a great place to use your kitchen and cooking skills.

**MADISON STREET MEDICINE** needs volunteers with medical backgrounds (Doctors, Nurses, EMTs, CNAs) 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 where 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 **Volunteer 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 people interested in gardening, prairie restoration, event planning, and educational tours of the historic farmhouse and buildings.



(continued from page 16)

**CATHOLIC MULTICULTURAL CENTER** needs **ESL Teachers** and **Assistants**. You can help with as little as one class a week for 1.5 hours, or help more if you can because each class will meet twice a week.

**HEARTLAND FARM SANCTUARY** in Stoughton needs **Animal Care** volunteers to help with feeding and caring for a wide variety of rescued farm animals. You can help prepare meals for each animal, muck out stalls, or help with grounds and building maintenance in a beautiful farm setting!

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

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

**AMERICAN RED CROSS** needs volunteers to welcome donors, help them register, provide friendly support and to assist them with refreshments as a **Blood Donor Ambassador**. Or as a Red Cross **Blood Transport Driver**, you can help make sure that blood is available for patients in need in Wisconsin.

**RSVP of Dane County's Driver Services Program** is looking for two volunteers to help in the RSVP office. Volunteers will be asked to perform primarily data entry and other administrative tasks that help keep this program running smoothly! Weekly hours can be flexible. If you're interested in learning more about this volunteer opportunity, contact Steve at 608.441.7892.

**RSVP of Dane County's Triad Program** is looking for volunteers who would enjoy researching and writing short articles about health and safety topics for our quarterly *Triad Newsletter*. Triad brings together older adults, first responders, and the community at-large to promote safety and healthy living, and to reduce the fear of crime. The Triad Newsletter, our monthly educational programs, and our annual conference are key elements of our educational strategy. Email Mike at [mthomsen@rsvpdane.org](mailto:mthomsen@rsvpdane.org) for more information.

Please contact Jan Karst, RSVP Volunteer Programs **Community Connections Coordinator**, for more information about these Volunteer Opportunities by emailing [jkarst@rsvpdane.org](mailto:jkarst@rsvpdane.org) or calling 608.441.7891.



(continued from page 14)

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## RSVP Vets Helping Vets Features Wisconsin Stories About Veterans Day

by Lorrie Hylkema, Vets Helping Vets Coordinator

Vets Helping Vets (VHV) Coordinator Lorrie Hylkema organized a fantastic presentation to recognize Veterans Day this year on behalf of RSVP of Dane County. During a hybrid meeting, on Zoom and in-person at local VFW Post 1318 in Fitchburg, Kevin Hampton, Curator of History at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, shared “Beyond the Trenches – WWI Stories from Wisconsin”.

Kevin discussed stories about notable Wisconsin World War I veterans and the history behind the origin of Veterans Day, known elsewhere as Armistice Day. Some examples of the stories were:

William Temple from Oconto Falls – he kept a vivid diary of being on the front lines in France as a survivor of a poison gas attack. He spoke about not being able to see or talk for about a week and how being burned by gas exposure felt.

Rodney Williams of Delafield – was a pilot in the 17<sup>th</sup> Aero Squadron. He was described as reckless, yet he was celebrated by his fellow pilots, even performing a “Williams” (a lean in direction of desired travel and modulating engine output power).

Morris Togstad – the last Madisonian to die in WWI on November 10, 1918.

Helen Bolvsky – a nurse in Base Hospital 22.

John Seng – a Milwaukee native from the 120<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery. He described seeing unimaginable sights – maggots and dead Germans “everywhere” – in his words. There was a lot of gas, but he was well protected by his gas mask.

In all 122,215 Wisconsinites served in WWI and 3,932 died. Armistice Day, later known as Veterans Day here in the U.S. and Remembrance Day in the British Commonwealth, commemorates the end of WWI on the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of 1918. The presentation was incredibly informative and engaging. *Thank you, Kevin!*

Following Kevin’s talk, prizes were given out in a drawing including all 49 participants. This was a record number of participants for a RSVP monthly Zoom event. Thank you for attending! We would also like to thank our hosts at VFW Post 1318 who were friendly, helpful, and gracious beyond all expectations. Curators at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum will be holding more talks at local VFWs in the area, so please be on the lookout for these.

Both the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and the RSVP staff want to feature, honor, and preserve the memories of the brave Wisconsinites who served our country during military conflicts. These stories are important to remember, tell, and share.



(l to r) Kevin Hampton, Lorrie Hylkema, Steve Jaeschke, Camela King and Diana Jost

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## RSVP Calendar

### January

January 24 - Zoom Event with Lauren Salzmann from Henry Vilas Zoo, 1:00 pm

### February

February 15 - Volunteer Drivers Appreciation Gathering: Drivers are encouraged to come for fellowship and heartfelt gifts at RSVP, 1:00 - 3:00 pm

February 19 - RSVP Board Meeting, 1:30 - 3:30 pm

February 22 - Zoom Event with Carla and Tom from Gentle Breeze Honey, 1:00 pm

### April

April 24 - RSVP Annual Volunteer OPEN HOUSE at RSVP, 1:00 - 3:00 pm