



NEWS

NOTES

Winter 2025

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

RSVP Looks Ahead: Our Upcoming Events for



**WATCH FOR INVITATIONS AND OTHER INFORMATION
ARRIVING THROUGHOUT 2025!**

**RSVP OPEN
HOUSE IN
CELEBRATION
OF NATIONAL
VOLUNTEER
WEEK**

**50TH
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION
OF THE DRIVER
SERVICES
PROGRAM**

**35TH
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION
OF THE FOSTER
GRANDPARENT
PROGRAM**

**53RD ANNUAL
VOLUNTEER
RECOGNITION
EVENT**

**ANNUAL FOOD/
ESSENTIAL
PANTRY DRIVE**

**ANNUAL
VETERANS DAY
CELEBRATION**

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volunteer
opportunities?
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RSVP Board Notes

Well, Winter arrived with snow and cold temperatures on Thursday, December 19, 2024; it made for a beautiful, picturesque holiday.



The Board has been very busy, welcoming a new Board Members at its August and December Meetings. We now have a full Board of Directors. The Board did not hold an October Meeting.

The budget for the 2025 calendar year was approved at the December 16th Board Meeting. Members of the Board and its various Committees have completed their work on the Strategic Plan. The Diversity Committee will review the Plan in January and bring it to the Board at the February 16, 2025, Board Meeting for approval.

Thank you to those of you who completed the Volunteer Survey.

The Assessment Committee finished its review of the Triad Program and will report its results at the February 16th Board Meeting.

RSVP had a successful Giving Tuesday receiving over \$11,000 in donations. Thank you for your generosity.

In December the Annual Campaign letters were mailed. Thank you for your generous contributions.

The Development Committee, in conjunction with the Finance Committee, is in the process of expanding the Levels of Giving.

The Marketing Committee is in the process of finalizing the Volunteer Booklet; it contains stories from volunteers about their experiences. The Marketing Committee, in conjunction with the Development Committee, is looking to revamp the Program pamphlets.

For those of you in the City of Madison watch for buses with wrap-arounds advertising RSVP of Dane County.

2025 is the 50th Anniversary of Driver Services and the 35th Anniversary of the Foster Grandparent Program. Watch for announcements about anniversary activities.

Stay warm and safe during these winter months.

Deborah Ann Speckmann
 President, RSVP Board of Directors



From the Desk of...

Diana Jost
Executive Director

Happy New Year!

As I reflect on 2024 and look forward to 2025, three thoughts come to mind.

First, I am thankful to work each day with such an incredible team of volunteers, board and committee members, and staff. We are fortunate to live in a county with many kind and compassionate people who genuinely want to make a difference in their community.

Second, during the holiday season, I had the opportunity to read some insightful articles. One, in particular, made me think about RSVP. In *The Lost Art of Conversation: Society Must Improve* (*), author Shira Zeiberg discusses how society is "losing the art of meaningful conversations." She points out that in our busy world, where texting, email, Snapchat, and Instagram are often more convenient, we must make time for what she calls 'real

conversation'—whether in person or over the phone.

In an age where communication can feel impersonal, I am proud of how hard RSVP's staff and volunteers work to keep interactions personal. When a volunteer expresses interest in opportunities in their community, our staff makes a point to meet with them face-to-face. We take the time to listen, learn about their talents and interests, and ensure



we match them with a volunteer role that suits them.

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Reviewing the 2024 Driver Services Marketing Campaign

By Steve Jaeschke, Driver Services Manager

We are excited to announce the outstanding success of our 2024 Driver Services marketing campaign aimed at recruiting volunteers and boosting the name recognition of RSVP. Thanks to your incredible support, we have made significant strides in expanding our reach and strengthening our community impact. We're thrilled to share the results of this campaign with you and express our gratitude for your continued commitment to our mission.

Campaign Overview: The primary goal of this campaign was twofold: first, to recruit dedicated volunteers to support our vital driver services programs, and second, to increase awareness of RSVP across the community. Over the last year, we used a multi-channel marketing strategy, including digital and print media, local partnerships, and traditional outreach efforts, to engage new volunteers and elevate our presence.

Key Achievements:

- 1. Record Volunteer Sign-Ups:** We are thrilled to report a **100% increase in volunteer sign-ups** (compared to 2023 statistics) during the campaign period! Through targeted outreach and compelling messaging, we successfully connected with enthusiastic individuals eager to serve others. With over **132 new volunteer drivers** joining our network, we are now able to serve even more seniors and individuals with mobility challenges.
- 2. Increased Name Recognition:** As part of our effort to raise awareness, our campaign reached **more than 22,200 people** through social media posts, digital ads, local press coverage, and community outreach events. We've seen an **82% increase in website traffic** (compared to 2023 statistics), with many visitors discovering us for the first time and learning about the vital services we provide. Our name is becoming synonymous with dependable volunteer-driven transportation in our community!
- 3. Successful Community Partnerships:** Our campaign included partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and media outlets to spread the word. These collaborations have helped us reach a wider audience and build trust within the community. We are grateful to our partners for their efforts and for sharing our message with their networks.
- 4. Stronger Social Media Presence:** Social media has been a crucial tool in connecting with potential volunteers and spreading awareness about our mission. Over the course of the campaign, we saw a **68% growth in social media followers** (compared to 2023 statistics), and engagement rates on posts related to volunteer opportunities have increased.

What's Next? While we're celebrating the success of this campaign, the journey doesn't end here. With our new pool of volunteers and increased visibility, we are better equipped to grow and serve our community.



RSVP Driver Services Staff (l to r): Dell Barlow, Camela King, Lorrie Hylkema, Steve Jaeschke, Debbie Vogt

Foster Grandparents Gather Ahead of Winter Break

By Paula Reif, Foster Grandparent Program Coordinator

They gathered. They ate. They co-created!

Co-creation is a process that brings together people with diverse perspectives to inform ideas and create solutions. A sense of hope was abundant as the Foster Grandparents gathered at the Imperial Garden restaurant in Madison on December 6, just ahead of the Winter Break, to celebrate and plan for the next semester. Our hearts were warmed as the Foster Grandparents connected with others at their shared sites, highlighted stories of tender moments with students, and brainstormed solutions to challenges. The team of Foster Grandparents also offered ideas for celebrating the upcoming 35th Anniversary of RSVP sponsoring the Foster Grandparent Program in Dane County. To learn more about the Foster Grandparent program, contact Paula at preif@rsvpdane.org.



RSVP Foster Grandparent Volunteers (l to r): Pam, Dianne, Nancy, Larry, Pat, Donna, Sue, and Shirley



(continued from page 4)

Here's what's coming up next:

- **Volunteer Training and Support:** As new drivers join us, we're enhancing our volunteer training programs to ensure everyone feels supported and confident in their roles.
- **Community Events:** We're planning a series of volunteer appreciation events and community outreach activities to celebrate Driver Services 50th Anniversary.
- **Ongoing Campaigns:** We'll continue our efforts to recruit volunteers and raise awareness. If you know someone who might be interested in volunteering, please encourage them to reach out!

Thank You for Your Support! This campaign's success would not have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers, the generosity of our supporters, and the trust of our community. To everyone who shared our message, volunteered their time, and helped spread the word, we extend our heartfelt thanks.

Your belief in our mission has been the driving force behind this campaign, and together, we are making a significant impact. We're excited about the future and look forward to continuing this journey with all of you!

Stay Connected: Follow us on [Facebook.com/RSVPofDaneCounty](https://www.facebook.com/RSVPofDaneCounty) and visit our website RSVPDane.org to learn more about how you can get involved and support our mission.

Wisconsin Veterans and Their Stories

By Lorrie Hylkema, *Vets Helping Vets Program Coordinator*

Heard and Celebrated at the RSVP of Dane County Office on Veterans Day 2024

What a wonderful day of camaraderie, music, stories about D-Day, and comfort food! Music was provided by Madison's *Vets on Frets* guitar group and included sing-a-longs and mouth harp playing. Songs like 'This Land is Your Land' and 'America The Beautiful' delighted everyone. Comfort food was provided by TNT catering in Middleton. Not much was left over, which is always a good sign!

We were honored to have Kevin Hampton from the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs return to speak to us a 3rd time; this time sharing his knowledge about Wisconsin Veterans who were involved in D-Day, June 6, 1944. This past year, the 80th anniversary of D-Day was commemorated in Normandy, France. Kevin came with many truly compelling stories about individuals who were part of this confrontation, one of the three bloodiest conflicts in military history.

Approximately 8,230 US soldiers died on that day as 156,000 troops landed on the beaches of Normandy, France. Amazing pictures included one of General Eisenhower meeting with a paratrooper from Stoughton, Wisconsin, Hans A. Sannes, the night before D-Day, and chatting about fly fishing in Michigan. Another was a picture of paratroopers in a C-47 plane that same night getting ready to face the cloud cover over Normandy and jump via static line at 12:30 am (paratroopers were attached to the plane by a line to make their parachutes open automatically as they jumped). Wisconsin paratroopers James James from Fond du Lac and Glen Drake from Loyal were part of the first group to jump. James ended up being hung up on a tree. Another paratrooper, Scott Stevenson from Merrill, was carrying heavy gear and was shot and drowned before he made it to the beach. The first troops to land by sea who did make it to the beach had to immediately climb 50 feet while avoiding minefields set up by the Germans.

Kevin also told a story about Ralph Woodsword from Columbus, Wisconsin. Woodsword was in a Sherman tank named "Donald Duck" that disembarked from the landing craft two miles from shore. Unfortunately, "Donald Duck" had only been tested for 500 yards of amphibious maneuvering in the sea, not the two miles it actually had to travel to the beach that day. The tank sank with Ralph in it. Ralph got caught in some pipes trying to get out of the tank and thought he wouldn't survive. But against all odds he somehow got loose and rose



Vets on Frets performs at the RSVP Office on Veterans Day 2024



Vets Helping Vets Driver Dave Mahoney at the Veterans Day Celebration November 2024

GIVINGTUESDAY

2024

Thank you to everyone who supported RSVP of Dane County during #GivingTuesday this year! We are thrilled that our donors' generous contributions helped us to raise \$11,875.00 to enhance the lives of seniors and families in our community! THANK YOU!

We are VERY excited about the upcoming community programming that these funds will support, programming that will offer leadership opportunities for volunteers, computer literacy education for seniors, and help reduce the risk of social isolation for people without transportation and social outlets.

Our mission is to continually BUILD our capacity, GROW our programs, and GIVE back to the community. THANK YOU for helping us BUILD, GROW and GIVE by supporting RSVP of Dane County. We are incredibly grateful for your support!

Please be on the lookout for additional ways to give by exploring our website www.rsvpdane.org and following us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/RSVPofDaneCounty/> to stay up to date on how our volunteers are making a difference! Better yet, JOIN US and spread the word.



Triad Update

by Mike Thomsen, RSVP Triad Program Coordinator

Triad held a shortened **Virtual Triad Conference** in November with two presentations on the 8th and two more on the 15th. The theme of the day on the 8th was *Senior Safety in Our Digital World*. Marisa Giorgi, PhD, the Director of Curriculum Development at Senior Planet and Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) from AARP, gave a presentation titled *Internet Safety Best Practices*. Following this, Courtney Anclam, Senior Program Specialist at AARP Wisconsin, gave a presentation titled *Slam the Scam: Knowledge to Fight Scams in an AI World*.

The theme of the day on the 15th was *Senior Safety at Home*. Suzanne Morley, Health Promotion Program Coordinator at the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA), gave a presentation titled *Reducing Older Adults' Risk of Falling*. The second presentation of the morning was given by Ann Albert, the Executive Director at AgeBetter, Inc., and was titled *Safe at Home: A Home Safety Assessment Program*. Older adults and professionals from Dane and ten other counties in Wisconsin attended the conference sessions. Thank you to the speakers and to everyone who attended.

Our new **Senior Planet tech skills project** is getting closer to launch. We will offer free *in-person* small-group “lunch-and-learn” classes for older adults wishing to update and gain new skills using laptops, smartphones, applications, and the Internet. The classes will also be a nice way for older adults to come together to help each other learn and practice their new skills, and to enjoy being part of a fun learning community. Three volunteers as well as yours truly have completed the Senior Planet “Train the Trainer” program, and we hope to begin classes very soon. Senior Planet offers a wide range of classes online via their SeniorPlanet.org website. Our in-person classes, however, will offer participants the opportunity to get one-on-one help from trained tutors to help them master the new skills.

We need more volunteers to help out as Tech Tutors and Tech Trainers. And you don't need to be a computer geek to get started. If you feel reasonably confident using a computer or smartphone and would enjoy helping older adults improve their tech skills, email me at mthomsen@rsvpdane.org to volunteer or to learn more. We received an Innovation Grant from the Rotary Club of Madison to get this project started, but we will need more funding to keep it running when the Rotary grant is exhausted. If you are interested in supporting this project, please email me to learn more.

Volunteers in the News

June 2024, *In Business Magazine*, Rendezvous with Retirement, Grant Gelhar

New RSVP Funding

In October 2024, RSVP received a \$5,000 grant from the Madison Rotary Foundation to design and implement a series of computer learning opportunities for seniors. We are grateful for your continued support.

In November 2024, RSVP received a \$2,000 grant from the Stoughton Area Community Foundation for the Driver Services Vets Helping Vets (VHV) Program. Thank you for your continued support.

In December 2024, RSVP received a \$1,000 donation from VFW William "Sonny" Simon Post 8216 in support of the Driver Services Vets Helping Vets (VHV) Program. Thank you for this generous contribution.



WELCOME New Volunteers

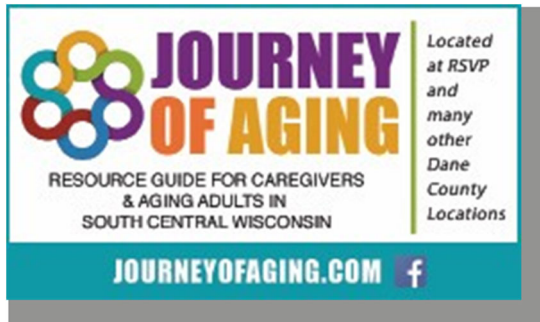
We enrolled 76 new volunteers from October 2024 through December 2024, serving in a wide variety of assignments throughout Dane County. Do you know someone who might like to volunteer? RSVP volunteers are our best recruiters as they spread the word about why they like volunteering and the need for more volunteers. Please pass this newsletter on to a friend or neighbor and tell them what RSVP means to you!

Nellie Adams
 Laura Adell
 Gregg A. Amick
 Howard Bixby
 Roger D. Brooks
 Jeremiah L. Camphor
 Lynn Caravello
 Pat Carroll
 Hayden T. Caskey
 Mercedes Cauffman
 Abraham G. Chavez
 Nora G. Christensen
 Janet S. Clear
 Tara Curtis
 Toria Devoe
 Deni M. Dobson
 America (Mary) Domingo
 Rainer Dronzek
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Sophie C. Fossum
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 Amy L. Hollenberger
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 Susan K. Klawes
 Marilyn Kocis
 Sandy Lacy
 Macy N. Lamboley
 Anne Larson
 Khylee J. Lietz
 Shirley L. Mahoney
 Catherine L. May
 Kara E. McClintock

Marjorie Glee Morgan
 Barbara B. Morris
 Dean G. Mosiman
 Kamla Mukherjee
 Wendy D. Myers
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 Jeannie Piper
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 Rhonda F. Ruitter
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 Shree P. Shetty
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 Robert (Bob) Smith
 Shannon R. Smith
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 Evan R. Stangel
 Jane Steiner
 Patricia Stockdale
 Mary Sullivan
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 Molly Vanderlin
 Kathy J. Vincent
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 Jackie A. Watkins
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DRIVE CHANGE, ONE RIDE AT A TIME
 Join the RSVP of Dane County Team of Volunteer Drivers!

- Take seniors & veterans to essential medical appointments
 - Receive reimbursement at 70 cents/mile
 - Set your own schedule, weekdays only
 - Get covered with extra liability insurance

Visit www.rsvpdane.org
 or call 608-441-7896

committed to our
community

Invested in the growth, health and success of those we serve.

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Group Projects Volunteer Jeanne Edmunds

by Julia Pierstorff, RSVP Group Projects Program Coordinator

The RSVP Group Projects/Homeworkers Program would like to introduce one of our volunteers. In featuring a volunteer, we hope to inspire YOU to make a positive difference in our community in your own special way. Here is Jeanne Edmunds in her own words.

“Just before I retired in June of 2018, I thought I’d put a list together of things I could do after I retire. I wanted to include items that would help or benefit others in my community. I started by getting the newsletter from our Monona Senior Center, which mentioned a monthly meeting of the RSVP local craft group. At each of our RSVP meetings, we get to see cards and notes from those we’ve helped, expressing their thanks and gratitude for the items RSVP gives them. I feel great knowing that I’m helping others, especially children. I’ve made baby hats for the newborns at the hospital, baby blankets for some daycare centers, and sets of hats, mittens, and scarves for the school-aged kids. I’ve also made twin-sized quilts, sets of hats, mittens and scarves, lap quilts and knitted blankets, dish cloths, and totes for adults as well. If you are a person who wants meaning to your life in your older years, RSVP is a great way to give back.”



Jeanne Edmunds

What skills or inclinations do you have that you would be willing to share with our communities through volunteering? Contact RSVP of Dane County to find your perfect fit! If you are interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer contact program coordinator Julia Pierstorff at jpierstorff@rsvpdane.org.



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to the surface without the use of a Davis lung, or DSEA (Davis Submerged Escape Apparatus, an oxygen rebreather designed for submarine crews.) Overall, there were 50 Wisconsinites who took part in D-Day, 20 of whom died. Bravery and survivorship were abundantly displayed that day. There was so much to be thankful for and so much to remember and commemorate.

RSVP of Dane County thanks all those Veterans who served and everyone who joined our Veterans Day gathering. A total of 44 participants, including staff, attended this celebration to honor and thank our Veteran Volunteers.

If you would like to be part of RSVP as a passenger or a volunteer, please call Lorrie Hylkema, RSVP Vets Helping Vets Coordinator, at 608.238.7901. You are always welcome to join in and be part of this community where volunteers do make a difference.

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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Coordinator*
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lhylkema@rsvpdane.org or
vetshelpingvets@rsvpdane.org
Debbie Vogt, *Driver Services Administrative
Assistant and Bus Buddy Program
Assistant*
608.310.7281,
dvogt@rsvpdane.org

Keep active to prevent falls.

Better balance is the key.



Fitness classes and home exercises are popular ways to maintain health and fitness—and your independence—as an older adult.

There are many fun activities that can improve balance and prevent falls, such as:

- Dancing
- Yoga
- Tai Chi



Find community classes with the Balance Stamp of Approval



Scan the QR code or visit safercommunity.net/falls-prevention/#classes

UW Health Adult Trauma Injury Prevention and Geriatrics is a proud partner of Safe Communities and member of the Falls Free Dane Coalition.



CN-1941800-24



Increase Your Home's Comfort This Winter

From Madison Gas and Electric Company (MGE)

Dreading the cold winter months? Increase your home's comfort by starting with an energy assessment. Done either by a professional or online, an energy assessment can identify areas for improvement—and their recommended fixes.

How to Get Started

FOCUS ON ENERGY[®], MGE's partner in energy efficiency, can help you find a qualified trade ally contractor or assessor to perform the assessment. During your home energy assessment, they will evaluate how your home interacts as a system. The building shell, mechanical and ventilation systems, and even your habits will be taken into consideration.

After the assessment, you will receive a customized report with energy-saving recommendations tailored to your home. The report will help identify and prioritize projects. Discuss your needs with a few contractors to understand scope and cost. Visit focusonenergy.com/services/energy-assessments to learn more.

DIY Online Assessment

Focus on Energy also offers a free online assessment option that uses basic information you provide about your home to recommend energy-saving improvements. It takes only about ten minutes to get results. Find energy-saving opportunities and rebates through this free online tool at focusonenergy.com/home-assessment.

Incentives for Upgrades

An assessment may be a necessary step to take advantage of some state or federal incentives. Your energy report will highlight which upgrades are the best value and investment for your home and what incentives are available to help you save. Visit focusonenergy.com/homeenergyassessment to get started.

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.

Leadership Circle-\$2,000+

Diane Corey
James and Kathy Esser
Mary Odell

Builders \$1,000-\$1,999

Jack and Donna Anderson
Trudy Brule
James Jenkins
Robert Smith

Facilitators \$500-\$999

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Richard T. Dewitt
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Frederick Kruger
Georgiana Luecker
John and Donna Montgomery
Tim and Lori Stadelman
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Jim Weber

Sustainers \$250-\$499

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Thomas and Susan Seal
Deborah Ann Speckmann
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Kathleen Heimann
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Alison Koelsch
Kelly Krein
Greg and Ann Landry
Jay and Gina Lengfeld
James E. Lescohier
Jack Meyer
Jennifer O'Neal
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Ellyn Thompson
Mary and Earl Updike
Margaret Urban
Victor and Barbara Vaade
Len Van Ess
Darlene Vervoort
Carol Weidel
Dennis and Pat Wood
Darlene (Dee) Wylie

Friends \$1-\$99

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Brian and Mary Andreas

Anonymous
Kathryn S. Arndt
Susan E. Bauer
Agnes Beckwith
Timothy and Tamara Benishek
Gerald and Lois Born
Eileen Callahan
Mary J. Chamberlin
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Marion Pirozzoli
Susan Porter
Tom Rapa
Karl and Jan Raymond
Ron and Paula Reif
Victoria Ross
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Jobelle A. Shands
Debra Sitkiewitz
David and Diane Smidt
Donna Smith
Harvey and Judith Sokolow

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Friends \$1-\$99

Rodney and Phyllis Spangler
 Brenda K. Stewart
 Mary Stormer
 Linda Struck
 David and Judy Suchman

Laurie Swimm
 Kathleen Sykes
 Dave and Helen Tetzlaff
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 Joanna Thompson
 Mike and Catalina Thomsen
 Lois Tyler
 Roger Utermark

Elizabeth M. VanKampen
 Kim Veith
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 Debbie Wayne
 Larry Weber
 Henry Wertheimer
 Jeanette Williams
 Judith Wilson

Rita Wilson

In-Kind

Maureen Griffin
 Janet Johnson
 Shelby Orcutt
 Kate Seal



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:

Virginia Adler, Elizabeth “Betty” Amacker, Audrey Boushon, Wayne Davis, Bernadette Diericks, Tony Farina, Diana Fjelstad, Thomas J. Frank, Mary M. Gjermo, Lorraine Hoffman, Sue Jenkins, Doris Klassy, Stephen E. Marshall, Phyllis Pierce, Trudy Pieterick, Frederick and Marion Pirozzoli, Dean Ross, Bob Skilton, Dave Stucki, Mary Updike, Ed Vervoort, and Laura Werner

CONTRIBUTIONS WERE MADE TO RSVP IN HONOR OF:

All RSVP Volunteers, Margaret Jensen, Mt. Horeb Seniors, Jayne Pollele, and Kate and Robb Seal



RSVP VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

...where volunteers make a difference

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

MID-WINTER OPPORTUNITIES

You can be the light in someone's day!

RSVP has a new **PHONE PALS** program, and we are partnering with NewBridge and Goodman Community Center to recruit callers to call an isolated senior once a week to check in and chat for a few minutes. Volunteers will be matched with someone in the community who needs some connection and a friendly voice!

BADGER PRAIRIE NEEDS NETWORK is a resource center in Verona, totally run by volunteers, that provides not only a food pantry but many other social services and resources in Dane County. Volunteers are needed to help with tasks in the food pantry and picking up and delivering donated food from stores and businesses in the area.

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.

Donation Processing at ReStore East

- Help at our ReStores, which are critical to raising funds that allow Habitat to build affordable housing. This work includes: unloading the donation truck, sorting through donated items, assembling/repairing small items, and merchandising the store floor. Shifts are 9am-1pm or 1pm-5pm, offered Tuesdays-Saturdays.
- Location: 4207 Monona Dr, Madison, WI

Construction in Oregon, WI

- Build homes with us! No experience is needed. All tools and training will be provided on site. This work includes a range of construction tasks! Be sure to dress for the weather! We welcome volunteers to help build duplexes in Oregon, Thursdays-Saturdays, 8:15am-3:30pm.
- Location: 557 Kay Ct, Oregon WI

SOCIAL JUSTICE CENTER on Williamson St. connects people with needed resources like food, housing, and other essential living services. They need volunteers to help with their food pantry and information desk.

BRILLE LIBRARY AND TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES is gearing up for their *Fall* volunteer transcriber training. 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.

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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 to perform administrative tasks. Weekday and weekend shifts are available!

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

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!

ST VINCENT'S FOOD PANTRY needs more volunteers to help sort and shelve produce in the mornings from 8:00am – 10:00am. Help make food available for shoppers who need it.

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 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.

NEWBRIDGE is also looking for volunteers to help combat social isolation and loneliness by being friendly visitors in the Madison/Monona area. Spend a couple of hours just simply being present with an older adult at home as a Bridge Buddy.

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

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.

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

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.

Please contact Jan Karst, RSVP Volunteer Programs Community Connections Coordinator, at jkarst@rsvpdane.org or 608.441.7898 for more information about these volunteer opportunities.

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Our team is committed to staying in touch with both volunteers and the organizations they serve. By understanding the needs of both the volunteers and the communities they support, we ensure that placements are successful for everyone involved. One RSVP staff member says, “It’s essential to stay in touch with as many volunteers as possible” and “I want them to be happy with what they’re doing and feel truly connected.”

One of the highlights each year is our Annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon. This event provides another opportunity to meet our volunteers in person, share conversations and laughs, and celebrate their invaluable contributions to our community.

As the senior population continues to grow, so does the risk of social isolation and loneliness. RSVP plays a key role in alleviating this loneliness by connecting individuals to their community and staying in touch with them. Sometimes, a simple phone call is all it takes to brighten someone's day.

The author concludes the article by urging us to “place more emphasis on creating and maintaining genuine, in-person connections through meaningful conversations.” I am confident that RSVP’s staff and volunteers are more than capable of meeting this challenge.

Third, 2025 will be a year of celebration as RSVP marks two significant milestones! Our **Driver Services program** will celebrate its 50th anniversary. Volunteer drivers are crucial in helping seniors maintain their independence by providing rides to medical and other essential appointments. Drivers deliver noon-hour hot meals to seniors and veterans in Dane County and can be paired with a senior in Madison or Monona who is low-income and homebound to shop for and deliver groceries from local food pantries.

The **Foster Grandparent Program** will mark its 35th anniversary. This program supports low-income seniors who volunteer as tutors and mentors to children. By providing a small stipend and other benefits, we make it possible for seniors to volunteer while helping them make a meaningful impact in students' lives. Foster Grandparents are essential in improving academic performance, social skills, school readiness, and student success. **We look forward to celebrating these two amazing programs throughout 2025!"**

They're out there!
Watch for RSVP's message on the back of Madison Metro buses!



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 \$

In honor of _____ In memory of _____
Personal tribute _____

Check payable to RSVP of Dane County Credit Card: MasterCard VISA

PayPal (Pay online with PayPal at www.rsvpdane.org/donateonline.html)

Card # _____ Exp. Date ____ / ____ 3 Digit Security Code _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

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If you would like, we will send an acknowledgement of your contribution to the person(s) below
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RSVP Calendar

February

February 17, Board Meeting, 1:30pm - 3:00pm
February 26, February Zoom Event: Doug Brown Tai Chi Class, 1:00 pm

March

March 9, Daylight Savings Time begins.

March (date tbd), March Zoom Event: Lisa Johnson, Horticulture Outreach Specialist from UW Extension Dane County. The presentation will be about container gardening, just in time for spring!
Stay tuned.

April

April 23, RSVP's Annual Open House! Stay tuned for more information.