



RSVP

The Volunteer Voice

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www.rsvpc.org

Volume IX, Issue 2
March & April 2012

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Washington County, Ohio

Thanks for Participating in our RSVP Survey!

RSVP volunteer Sandie Wilson will be treating a friend to lunch at Bob Evans Restaurant. Her survey was pulled in a random drawing of Volunteer Satisfaction Surveys that were turned in by the February 17 deadline.

Many volunteers shared why they volunteer. Some of our favorites were, "I enjoy all the clients of Franciscan Meals." Another volunteer said, "I'm a people person and love meeting new people." Echoing that sentiment, another gentleman said, "I enjoy the interaction with the people I meet."

Almost all respondents left their volunteer station with a feeling of accomplishment. One volunteer said she loved



serving at one of her stations, but really struggled to enjoy the other.

All of you feel like RSVP matched you with stations that used your talents. One third of you said you were ready to be called for new volunteer opportunities and we really appreciate all of you who took the time to let us know what days you might be available.

The top three reasons why you volunteers were no surprise. The number one reason was to make a difference. Number two was to use my talents and number three was to meet new people.

Thanks to everyone who participated!



Healthy U

Led by RSVP Volunteer Lay Leaders
O'Neill Center • March 20
12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

- Do you want to put a little spring in your step?
- Do you or someone you know suffer from a chronic illness like asthma, arthritis, diabetes, heart problems or any other?
- **Healthy U** can help you take control of your life with ideas you may have never considered.
- **Healthy U** is a program offered by the Area Agency on Aging and is free.

This program is open to the public so please call quickly to reserve your place as the size of the class is limited. Call 740-373-3107 and ask for Susan to register.

Walking School Bus

At RSVP we are looking for new ways to make an impact on our community and we are working very closely with Court Witschey, the Healthy Communities Coordinator at the Washington County Health Department. One area of great concern is childhood obesity. On March 15th the Marietta office of ODOT is offering a program for "Walking School Bus" training.

The RSVP staff will be attending this training and learning more about the program and how we can get involved. We are currently speaking to local schools and their PTO programs. Our goal is to partner with the schools who have children who currently walk to school and begin the "Walking School Bus" program here in Washington County. Helping children get healthy exercise and get them to school safely also.

If you live near a school with children walking every day and would like to participate in a "Walking School Bus" program near you, we would love to hear from you!



RSVP

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program of Washington County

Sponsored by:

The Corporation for National & Community Service
Ohio Department on Aging
Washington County Commissioners
The Senior Levy
The Friends of RSVP

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The Volunteer Voice is printed bimonthly. Articles must be submitted by the 22nd of the month to be considered for publication in next issue.

Send submissions to the attention of Susan:

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hello again...

by Lisa Valentine, Director

So many changes... I have been trying to figure out how to maintain our program as it stands and still meet the guidelines set by the Corporation for National and Community Service. It's like fitting a square peg into a round hole; it just won't fit.

This process has been difficult. My biggest question was how do I tell a dedicated volunteer that their service is no longer considered important? The answer is that I don't. Even though RSVP can no longer count the volunteer hours for certain jobs, every *second* of volunteer service is still vitally important to Washington County. The challenge is that we are living in a different world today than we were just three short years ago. The age of fiscal accountability is dawning, not just in the United States, but around the globe.

The wisdom I have come to accept is that if RSVP is to survive, there has to be a limit to what our grant money can adequately support. I now also see past my initial misgivings to accept that there are great things that RSVP can do if we draw back from the big picture and focus on doing a few things really well. By focusing our energy, we can change lives.

We can fight childhood obesity by partnering with schools to develop the volunteer-led Walking School Bus. Children in every community without local bus service will reap the benefits of exercising twice each day during the school year.

We can keep seniors living in their own homes by providing them with transportation assistance. And we can stretch food dollars by facilitating the Commodity Box distribution. We can dedicate more time to recruiting new volunteers to help at the Food Pantry or Franciscan Meals.

I keep coming back to something that was repeated at every meeting and conference call: Volunteers will continue to volunteer. It's who they are, it's what they do. People are not going to quit serving in their clubs and churches because RSVP no longer counts their hours. Seniors at the hospital are still going to volunteer because they know how important their service is to the people who visit there.

Many Washington County organizations have a rich volunteer base and they are making our community a better place to live through the opportunities they provide. These groups will continue to thrive without RSVP.

Our new charge is to identify the critical problems that face our residents. We must locate community partners, recruit volunteers and find the resources to put up a really good fight.

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Change is Inevitable, Though Not Always Easy

As our nation's leaders struggle to create a balanced budget, accountability has become the focus of all volunteer programs receiving federal grant funds. Congress wants to be assured that the most pressing challenges that face America are being addressed.

Those challenges of critical concern have been outlined in the Corporation for National and Community Service Strategic Plan for 2011 – 2015 which can be accessed at http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/focus_areas/index.asp.

In the fall of 2011 while the House and Senate worked through the budget process, RSVP came under close scrutiny, and at one point, was eliminated from the 2012 federal budget. Proponents of senior service spoke to the many contributions of Senior Corps projects and RSVP was funded through April of 2013 albeit with a 20% reduction in funds.

As the battle to rein in the federal deficit rages on in Washington D.C., it becomes increasingly important to be good stewards of public funds. In 2013, for the first time, RSVP will face competition when applying for federal funds. Grant applications will be judged to a standard more stringent than ever before. Failure to meet the standard could result in the loss of our program.

Currently, the standard requires that 50% of our volunteers be engaged in impact-based activities, leaving us free to place the balance of those serving into community based assignments.

When our grant is submitted next year, according to the Congressional Budget Justification for Fiscal Year 2013, the new policy requires that 75% of volunteer activities must be within the scope of the Strategic Plan and 25% can be community based.

For clarification, a few examples of impact-based jobs would include serving at the food pantry, delivering meals, teaching tai chi, providing senior transportation, tutoring children and preparing taxes. What sets these jobs apart is that their contribution addresses human needs of critical concern in our community. The results of impact-based services are measurable: shut-ins received a hot meal, a family received groceries, a child learned to read, a senior received expertly prepared tax returns. Impact jobs are often life changing for those receiving services.

Some examples of community based service include fundraising, festivals, office work, board leadership, club service, and faith based volunteering. The community

benefits, and ultimately becomes a better place to live as a result of the volunteer service, but the outcome cannot be measured in terms of addressing critical human needs.

In January, Commissioner Tim Irvine met with a special committee from the Advisory Council. Using guidelines provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a plan was formulated to begin transitioning into compliance of the new policy which takes effect in one year – April of 2013.

Initially, starting this April, RSVP will no longer accept hours from twenty stations. We are now in the process of notifying stations, and the station manager will share the information with volunteers. RSVP will also follow up with a letter to the volunteer.

The reduction process was difficult, and in all honesty, just the beginning. With only 25% of our volunteer activity allowed to be in community based jobs, it is important to focus on the areas that impact Washington County the most. Your input is critical in indentifying these jobs. With only one year to meet the standard, we will also be asking volunteer stations how important RSVP is to their organization. This could result in stations choosing to move away from RSVP as well.

We are sure that volunteers will continue to serve regardless of whether the site is an RSVP station or not. Our hope is that volunteers will stretch themselves to add a day or two a month at one of the new programs of impact.

While this new shift in service presents its challenges, it also enables RSVP to expand into areas that address critical needs, and to more fully support the volunteers who choose to do this important work. Any time a person gives freely of themselves, the world benefits. Our job at RSVP is to make sure that the federal funds we receive are used for the purposes for which they were intended.

Immediate focus will be on three new impact based projects. The Transportation Program to help seniors maintain their independence, the Commodity Box Program to help seniors stretch their food dollars, and Ohio Benefit Bank to reach out to seniors who may be eligible for services. We will continue our recruiting efforts to support our longstanding impact based stations.

We hope that you embrace this new direction that will enable RSVP volunteers to make powerful, positive changes for the people in our community.

Please contact the RSVP office with your comments and concerns; our door is always open.



Making A Difference For Generations

SENIOR CORPS WEEK May 7-11, 2012

- **SAVE the date ~ Monday, May 7, 2012**
- **Time: 4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.**
- **Place: O'Neill Senior Center, 333 Fourth St, Marietta, OH**
- **Come and join us to Celebrate the impact RSVP volunteers have on our community**
- **Be there when the new Senior transportation program logo is unveiled**
- **Meet the logo contest winner from Wash. Co. Career Center, Graphic Arts program**
- **Find out how the Commodity Box Distribution program and Senior Transportation programs are doing**
- **Enjoy the reception with cake following the program and mingle with friends**

Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** 

Senior Corps is administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering.



AARP Tax Aide continues thru April

AARP Tax aide program is busy helping low and moderate income taxpayers to file their 2011 income taxes. These three sites are available thru mid-April.

- **Barlow Branch Library** is open Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will stay open thru April 11th. Walk-ins welcome.
- **Beverly Public Library** site is open on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and will be open thru April 9th. Call 984-4060 for appt.
- **Knights of Columbus** building in Harmer/Marietta is open on Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. thru April 12th. Walk-ins welcome.

Taxpayers are asked to bring photo ID, Social Security cards for themselves and any dependents, all W-2, 1099's, brokerage reports, last year's income tax report (if available) and itemized expenses (if you plan to itemize). All of the volunteers are trained and certified by the IRS. The returns are prepared on computers and e-filed unless the situation requires paper filing. You do not have to be a senior citizen to be helped and this service is entirely free.

Volunteer Opportunities

URGENT NEED!

The O'Neill Center Adult Day Care is looking for 1 volunteer to work on Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

- assist staff
- prepare the drink cart
- serve snacks and meals
- tidy the kitchen
- interact in an environment that gives seniors the support that keeps them living in their own homes.
- see what a difference just three hours a week of your time can make.

Franciscan Meals - 3 Volunteers

- Driver to deliver meals in the Marietta area. Need to drive 2-3 days per month and the average route takes approximately 1 to 1-1/2 hours.
- Office Volunteer on Tuesday from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. to do weekly billing for Franciscan meals.
- Scheduler for drivers (can be performed from your home or on site) Must have access to telephone, and computer with Excel program if working from home. Need to attend 1 meeting a month at Shoney's ~ ~ ~

Please call the office at 373-3107 and ask for Susan to express your interest for any of these volunteer opportunities.

News from the TIC!

Volunteer with the Marietta-Washington County Convention & Visitors Bureau. The CVB is a non-profit organization and our mission is to promote Marietta-Washington County as a distinctive destination. We are dedicated to bringing leisure, business and group tour travel to the area.

In 2011, our RSVP volunteers logged more than 1,600 hours and greeted nearly 2,700 visitors. Our volunteers help with a variety of tasks including operating the Tourist Information Center on Pike Street, welcoming and providing information to our visitors, folding brochures, and preparing for bulk mailings. Without the assistance of our volunteers, none of this would have been possible.

For more information, call Susan at RSVP at 373-3107.

Ohio Benefit Bank News

The Ohio Benefit Bank Counselors are gearing up for the First Commodity Senior Food Program distribution days in early April. During the distribution days, Penny, Mary, & Sara will be onsite and will offer to conduct Ohio Benefit Bank "Quick Checks" for folks to let them know if they may qualify for benefits or programs such as food assistance, help with prescription expenses, medicare premium expenses, and utility bills. If seniors appear to qualify, we can schedule appointments to help them complete the appropriate applications.

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As the year goes on, I will be working very closely with Commissioner Irvine and the Advisory Council. We will be looking at our community based volunteer jobs to figure out where the allowable 25% of our volunteers can have the most impact. Those stations would include the Tourist Information Center, various festivals, clerical positions and museums that do not meet the State Academic Content Standards.

Your input is valuable... Together, we can build a new, stronger RSVP.



RSVP offices will be closed on Monday, April 23rd & Tuesday, April 24th while RSVP staff attend training in Columbus.

The Volunteer Voice
RSVP of Washington County
333 Fourth Street • Marietta OH • 45750

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Tai Chi schedule

O'Neill Center:

Learning Forms	Mondays	10:00 a.m.
Practicing Forms	Tuesdays	10:30 a.m.
6 Adv. Movements	Thursdays	5:15 p.m.

All forms taught at these locations:

Marietta YMCA:	Tues. & Thurs.	12:30 p.m.
Belpre Center:	Mondays	11:00 a.m.
		12:30 p.m.
	Wednesdays	12:00 p.m.
Lighthouse Baptist:	Wednesdays	10:00 a.m.
Lower Salem:	Fridays	6:00 p.m.
Cutler Community:	Thursdays	7:00 p.m.

April Showers



Bring May Flowers!



REMINDER !

Volunteer Program
Computer Software
Upgrade



Coming in April 2012, please be aware that a new software upgrade for the volunteer program will be loaded into our computers. Any outstanding hours up thru March of 2012 must be turned in to the Volunteer Coordinator by **no later than April 10th** in order to receive credit for them.