

NEWS NOTES

Winter 2022

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

RSVP of Dane County Celebrates 50 Years!

For 50 years RSVP of Dane County has been helping volunteers make a difference in Dane County communities, and we feel the volunteer spirit is as strong today as it was in 1972—maybe stronger!

How it all started

In 1969 the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) was created as a national volunteer program under the Older American's Act. Its goal was two-fold 1) utilize the energy and experience of older Americans to serve their communities; and 2) provide a sense of purpose and social connection for seniors. RSVP of Dane County was launched in 1972 and incorporated as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. We have been matching volunteers (primarily age 55+) with service opportunities in Dane County ever since.

Today, RSVP of Dane County is one of the largest RSVP programs in the nation. In a typical year our 1,400+ volunteers provide over 177,000 hours of service—the equivalent to an 85-person workforce. Volunteer service through RSVP enriches the lives of the volunteers and supports people in need.

Throughout the past 50 years, RSVP has added programs to help meet community needs such as Driver Escort (rides to medical appointments) and Home Delivered Meals, helping over 2,000 older adults and veterans stay independent and in their own homes. Our Foster Grandparent program helps low-income seniors who tutor children, by providing a small stipend and other benefits to make volunteering affordable.

There have been challenges, but the volunteer spirit has prevailed

Through the years there have been challenges. One of the biggest has been the impact of COVID-19 on our programs, because our senior volunteers are in the most vulnerable age group. COVID may have changed some



priorities, but it hasn't slowed us down. Despite the pandemic, over 900 RSVP volunteers and 16 Foster Grandparents are currently serving Dane County residents. Volunteers are providing rides for veterans and seniors to medical appointments, delivering meals and groceries to homebound seniors, helping children with reading using remote learning platforms, and making face masks, warm caps, mittens, and blankets.

We attributed our longevity and success to our people—volunteers, board and committee members, and staff who are committed to serving others. Staff meet with potential volunteers and discuss their

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RSVP Board Notes

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Seasons Greetings everyone. I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays with family and friends.



Well, RSVP continues to work very hard to accomplish our goals, even as the virus situation continues to provide obstacles for us. In 2022, we are busy continuing our mission. In a way, the virus situation has strengthened us as never before. We appreciate everyone's efforts in helping us through this. We are very thankful to all who made financial donations to our programs throughout 2021. Our staff and volunteers have been providing support and guidance for all we serve. I can't express my gratitude enough to all of them.

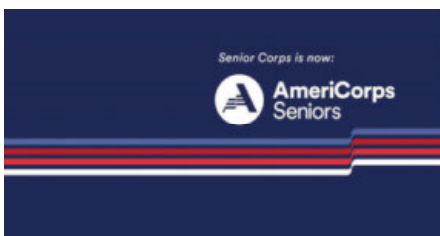
New Year's Resolution suggestions:

Contact RSVP to volunteer for any one of our programs.
 Check on friends and neighbors who may need comforting.
 Recruit new volunteers.

I have great expectations for 2022. Last but not least, a BIG thank you to our Board of Directors for their steadfast leadership and commitment this year.

Please stay safe and healthy!

Richard Hoffman
 President, RSVP Board of Directors



From the Desk of...

*Margie Zutter
Executive Director*

Everyone knows about “the bucket list”—things you would like to see, do, or accomplish while you are able. I learned recently about another “bucket list”—things to be thankful for and reflect back on when you are feeling low. It was suggested that as positive things happen, write them down. Put one thing you are thankful for in a “bucket” and then when something negative happens, reach in and grab a slip to help you remember a better day. Looking back at 2021, my RSVP Thankful Bucket includes:

- Our RSVP Board and committee members who have stayed with us throughout the pandemic with strong shoulders to lean on for good advice, ideas, and support.
- Our RSVP staff members who work hard to support our mission including long-serving staff members like Jack Guzman (30 years) and Jan Karst (20 years).
- Our long-serving volunteers who received the Governor’s Service Award for AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers with 20+ years of



Krishna Sijapati

service! The award ceremony in August was inspiring, and delivering awards to those who couldn’t attend was heart warming.

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<p>MOVING <u>or</u> Overwhelmed by Too Much Clutter?</p>  <p>SEGRES</p> <p><i>Senior Move Specialists</i></p> <p>608-345-1942 262-442-4200</p>	<p>AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME!</p> <p>ADVERTISE HERE NOW!</p> <p>Contact Jeff Parkinson to place an ad today! jparkinson@lpicommunities.com or (800) 950-9952 x5887</p>		
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- All RSVP volunteers who continued to volunteer, despite the pandemic, and have found new ways to serve or made adaptations to make their service safer. And, those who have not been able to volunteer but tell me that they will be back as soon as they can!
- Volunteers dropping by our office, in person, to say “Hello”. It’s so nice to see people again!
- Our partners in service to older adults including all the senior centers/focal points, and NewBridge who continue to help RSVP and our volunteers.
- Our funders including AmeriCorps, State of Wisconsin, Dane County, City of Madison, City of Monona, foundations, business sponsors, and individual contributors.
- Technology like Zoom that has helped us continue RSVP meetings in person and via Zoom for those unable to join us in the conference room. And, our monthly Zoom events have been educational while helping us stay connected. I always learn something new. Please join us in 2022!

What’s in your RSVP Thankful Bucket?

Meet Jen Roth, RSVP’s New Intergenerational Program Coordinator

Greetings, Current and Prospective RSVP Volunteers and Friends,

It would take an extraordinary cause to call me from retirement—my period of earned freedom to learn, explore, create, volunteer, love my loved ones, and just plain enjoy life “in its infinite variety”. But called I was, by the extraordinary RSVP. As the new Intergenerational Program Coordinator, I now have the honor of helping other older adults share their time and talents with children in Dane County. Imagine: you might become a tutor, or mentor, or Computer Buddy, corresponding with elementary school students via a blog. It’s fun, and a great way to give back!

Here is a snapshot of me, the “Jen” in “Intergenerational”! From the minute the first of my four grandchildren came along, 13 years ago, I have been fully engaged “Intergenerationally”. Little did I know...how the heart could expand, the mind sharpen, the character build (and the feet run faster and faster!). Here is continuing education at its best, and it’s a two-way street. Just yesterday, for example, my 13-year-old taught me some computer tricks to help me manage the Computer Buddy program. And I read and responded to my 10-year-old’s short story on her school web site and told her about my new job. We said to one another, “You’ve got this, Girl!”

The other words in my job title are “Program Coordinator” and for that, too, I am well-suited. My nearly thirty years’ experience managing public radio stations and non-profit arts centers (including Monroe Street Arts Center) prepared me for my new position, especially as relates to program development and volunteer recruitment and supervision (and recognition!). Volunteers were the “sugar and spice” of our organizations, helping us function effectively and keeping us connected to the communities we served. Blessings upon volunteers!

To all the wonderful volunteers at RSVP, a resounding Thank You! And to all prospective volunteers, care to join us? We look forward to welcoming you on board! - Jen



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.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Margie Zutter, *Executive Director*
608-663-7536, mzutter@rsvpdane.org
Diana Jost, *Assistant Director*
608-441-1393, djost@rsvpdane.org
Jack Guzman, *Office Support Administrator*
608-238-7933,
jguzman@rsvpdane.org
Krishna Sijapati, *Accountant*
608-441-7899, ksijapati@rsvpdane.org

PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Jan Karst, *Community Connections Coordinator*
608-441-7891, jkarst@rsvpdane.org
Jennifer Roth, *Intergenerational Program Coordinator*
608-661-4271, jroth@rsvpdane.org
Dick Russell, *Foster Grandparent Program Coordinator*
608-441-7894, drussell@rsvpdane.org
Kate Seal, *Group Projects/Homeworkers Program Coordinator*
608-310-7280, kseal@rsvpdane.org

Mike Thomsen, *Triad Coordinator*
608-441-7897,
mthomsen@rsvpdane.org

DRIVER SERVICES PROGRAM

Mary Schmelzer, *Driver Services Co-Manager*
608 441-7896,
mschmelzer@rsvpdane.org
Steve Jaeschke, *Driver Services Co-Manager*
608-441-7892,
sjaeschke@rsvpdane.org
Robin Heilprin, *Madison/Monona Ride Coordinator*
608-441-7898,
rheilprin@rsvpdane.org
Vacant, *Driver Services Program Assistant*
608-310-7281
Lorrie Hylkema, *Vets Helping Vets Coordinator*
608-238-7901,
lhylkema@rsvpdane.org
vetshelpingvets@rsvpdane.org



Meet Dick Russell, RSVP's New Foster Grandparent Program Coordinator

Hello! I'm Dick Russell, and I am the new Foster Grandparent Program Coordinator and will do some work with Bus Buddies in the spring. My wife and I have lived in the Madison area since 1997, and we have two teenagers and two crazy dogs. I graduated from the University of Dubuque in 1995 with an English degree and secondary teaching license. Until now, I have been a middle school and high school English teacher and coach. While teaching, I completed a Master's Degree in Education at Edgewood College. I enjoy walking and hiking, watching movies, reading, dabbling with writing, and being a huge baseball fan -- *Go Cubs!* While interviewing for this position, I was amazed at the number and quality of services that RSVP employees and volunteers devotedly offer to Dane County. Each person relayed their enjoyment and commitment in RSVP's Mission and that inspired me too. I am excited to use my organizational skills and educational background to support the excellent community services in the Foster Grandparent Program and RSVP!



Meet Dave Mahoney

By Mary Schmelzer

For almost 40 years, Dave Mahoney has been giving back to his community in a variety of volunteer roles! Longevity is his trademark with 12 years at the Veterans Administration, and 16 years as an Emergency Medical Technician for Sun Prairie Emergency Medical Service. He has also spread his volunteer wings assisting veterans with their benefits at the Department of Military Affairs Retiree Activity Office, helping with his 7th Honor Flight as a member of the Telephone Pioneers (an organization of retired telephone workers), and in publishing the Sun Prairie VFW newsletter for the third consecutive year.

Dave heard that the Sun Prairie Home Delivered Meals program needed drivers from a friend and former co-worker who delivers meals there. He has enjoyed his experience so far and plans to continue as long as he can. "I love putting a smile on peoples' faces and letting them know that someone cares," Dave said. As a boy he watched his father help others and feels this value was instilled in him from early on. Dave often goes above and beyond and never wants anything in return -- just helping others makes him feel good and that he is making a difference.

Dave grew up in Eau Claire and went on to serve our country in the military for 40 years including service in Vietnam and the Navy reserves for a combined total of 40 years. After returning from Vietnam, he attended technical school and worked as a directory assistance operator where he met his wife of 44 years, Shirley. Dave worked as a repair technician for 35 years and retired 12 years ago. He and his wife have three grown daughters and four grandchildren who live close by and with whom he enjoys weekly family dinners where Dave enjoys doing the cooking. In his "spare" time, Dave and his wife enjoy camping and traveling.

If you would like to give back like Dave and help to provide healthy meals to seniors, the Colonial Club is in need of volunteer drivers. This is a no-contact volunteer job where meals are dropped off at the recipient's door and mileage reimbursement is available. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Mary Schmelzer, Driver Services Co-Manager, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, 608-441-7896 or mschmelzer@rsvpdane.org.



Dave with three of his military service caps (L to R): Navy Seabee (1968 - 1973 - served in Vietnam from July, 1969 - March, 1970); U.S. Army Reserve (1973 - 1996); WI Air National Guard (1996 - 2008)



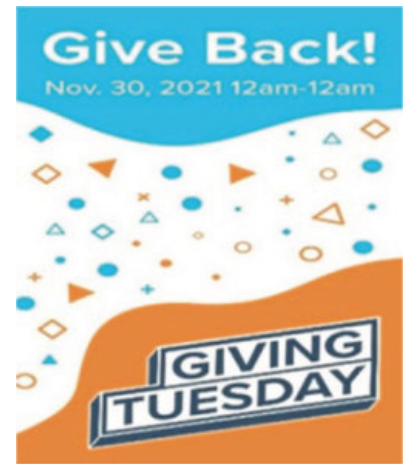
WE DID IT! GivingTuesday was a big success! THANK YOU!

This is the fifth year that RSVP has participated in the GivingTuesday Campaign, and each year we have surpassed our goal. Due to generous donations this year, RSVP was able to raise over \$11,000.00 to help engage and support seniors who volunteer to assist people of all ages throughout Dane County.

A big thank you to our five donors who contributed the match this year. Matching funds are the key to the success of the campaign. Donors are more likely to give when they know that their donation will be matched. The Pandemic has changed many aspects of our lives. Despite this RSVP volunteers and donors continue to have a positive impact on the community.

Next year #GivingTuesday will be on Tuesday November 29th 2022, and it is never too early to start planning. If you would like to be a part of next year's planning committee, please contact Diana Jost at Djost@rsvpdane.org or call (608) 441-1393. We are looking for people who can contribute matching funds for next year's campaign. If you would like to help, please let us know.

Thank you to all that donated to our campaign!





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This project was supported, in part by grant number 90MPPG0041-01-00, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201.

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Middleton Couple Embraces Volunteerism

By Mary Schmelzer

Many couples embrace a common interest to pursue; for Bob and Sue Miller it is serving as volunteers! With over 15 years of combined volunteering as home delivered meal drivers for Middleton Senior Center, the couple has made a strong commitment to their community. Both started out as substitute drivers and loved it so much they decided to expand their role to become regular drivers. Sue actually started driving while she was still working, delivering meals on her lunch break, and Bob started when he retired six years ago.

They agree that a couple of the benefits of volunteering are getting to have the one-on-one interaction with other seniors and being able to build relationships with those they serve. “I feel like we are making a difference and helping seniors to stay in their homes,” Sue said. “I encourage people to get involved before they retire, because meal delivery is very flexible.” Bob believes that often they are the only people some of the seniors see regularly. “I feel this contact is very important to their well-being,” he adds.

The pair likes to stay active and enjoy many hobbies including traveling, hiking, biking, neighborhood walks, and exercise classes. Church is another outlet for their volunteer energy, where they both serve on the Senior Planning Committee and volunteer with the Feed My Lambs program that provides food for children on weekends who otherwise may not have enough to eat.

As if that isn’t a full enough plate, Sue and Bob are both involved in their condo association and Bob also volunteers at the Middleton Outreach Ministry assisting with food distribution. Their involvement in various nonprofits is long-standing: years ago their love of movies inspired them to volunteer for the Wisconsin Film Festival, and 15 years ago, Bob also started and ran the Middleton Good Neighbor Festival 5K race which is still going strong today (although it was virtual in 2020).

Sue grew up in Chicago and attended the University of Illinois, while Bob grew up in Iowa and

attended the University of Iowa. They met in Chicago when they were both working as CPAs and lived in the Minneapolis area for many years before coming to Madison in 1993. Bob and Sue have two sons who live in the Madison area and who have followed in their parents’ footsteps as accountants. After their retirement in 2014, they made a conscious decision to stay active in the community and have had a great experience volunteering through RSVP over the years.

Senior Centers across Dane County use home delivered meal drivers to help ensure area seniors receive the nutrition that they need to maintain their independence. This is a no-contact volunteer position where meals are dropped off at the recipient’s door. Hours are flexible and mileage reimbursement is available. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Mary Schmelzer, Driver Services Co-Manager, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, 608-441-7896 or mschmelzer@rsvpdane.org.



Sue and Bob Miller of Middleton

RSVP of Dane County Celebrates 50 Years!

(continued from cover page)

interests and schedules before recommending a placement from dozens of options. Many of our wonderful volunteers have served twenty or more years in volunteer roles they love. Our community partners, businesses, senior centers, and other nonprofits have helped us promote volunteerism. Our public funders, foundations, private donors, and business sponsors have helped to provide the financial stability we need to further our mission.

Today, the need is growing

The senior population and its needs, including the risk of social isolation, continue to grow. According to a recent study, over forty percent of seniors regularly feel lonely, which can be associated with a higher risk of dementia and shortened life. RSVP eases loneliness by connecting volunteers with people in need in our community, and we hope to continue to do so for another fifty years!

"I believe most people have talents that they can use to contribute to the community. Volunteers address real needs and volunteer service also leads to other RSVP friendships. RSVP allows us to be active and visible." - RSVP volunteer serving twenty years



WELCOME New Volunteers

We enrolled 57 new volunteers from September, 2021, through November 2021, 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!

Madelyn A. Alt	Joann E. Gunderson	Rose M. Ohlert	Brenda K. Stewart
Dana Barre	Kathleen Held	Jane A. Payne	Anne Strauss
Susan Barthel	Mark S. Hoffman	Barry Peebles	Anthony J. Supanich
Hannah L. Bassetti	Marvin Homewood	Lois Peebles	Deborah Tompkins
Odille R. Bastistao Mezzetto	Lorna Kniaz	Paul H. Pitas	Phillip J. Van Kampen
Daniel W. Bush	Connie K. Kraus	Cinda Quinn	Jeannie Venzke
Candace Carrier	Patricia H. Krueger	Kathleen D. Rause	Phillip S. Villejos
Cindy Cary	Erin Kuehn-Schettler	Martin H. Renz	Debra Wagner
Lynn A. Christiansen	Laura LeCaptain	Bev Schaefer	Erin Weller
Loretta Dichraff	Virginia M. (Ginny) Marsh	Margaret A. Schmelzer	Nicole A. Willfahrt
Dorothy Esser	Carolyn A. Mitchell Podehl	Matthew W. Schreiner	Joy Zhou
Phillip C. Fransen	Nicole Monzon	Dennis R. Sherraden	Margaret Zutter
Ellie Freeman	David Norby	Virginia (Ginny) Sleigh	
Cheri Fuller-Olson	Ruth Odell	Marcia M. Smith	
Dwight E. Gribble	Michael J. Ohlert	Sharon Smith	

Veterans' Music: A Meaningful Way to Celebrate Veterans Day

By Lorrie Hylkema

RSVP staff and volunteers celebrated Veterans Day in style with live music performed by veterans for veterans via Zoom on Wednesday, November 10, 2021.

LaFollette High School band members commemorated Vietnam veteran and musician Bill Withers with a tremendous rendition of his song, "Lean On Me." Withers passed away near the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Subsequently, the band's video performance was compiled during the pandemic, when student instruction was "distanced learning" only. Each band member played their part over Zoom. Using new technology, they were able to coordinate the different instruments into one song. Jamie R. Kember, the LaFollette High School Band Director, narrated and provided background on Withers' life. Kember graciously explained how students adapted to in-person learning in the school setting by using different protective masks for each instrument to prevent the spread of the COVID virus.

The second performance was by Wisconsin-based Iraq War Veteran Jason Moon, who soulfully sang and played guitar, live from his home in Phoenix, AZ. Moon, who founded and is the executive director of Warrior Songs, Inc., performed a total of five songs, depicting his life before, during, and after his return from Iraq, where he served as a Combat Engineer in the US military from 2003 to 2004. While suffering from PTSD after his return, Jason shared that he himself had almost taken his own life in 2008, and finally received help following an overdose. From this experience, he has traveled the country to help other veterans tell their stories by writing songs through the Warrior Songs' Creative Arts Program. Jason has distributed over 50,000 copies of his CDs and has estimated saving 22 lives from active suicide through his work and his song-writing skills. Please see <https://www.warriorsongs.org/> for further information about Jason Moon's CDs and the Warrior Songs' Creative Arts program.

Finally, and most importantly, to celebrate and honor all active veteran volunteers with RSVP, a mailing of the Warrior Songs CD called "The Last Thing I Ever Do" was sent, which focuses on the music of the Vietnam era. This CD is well worth a listen and features veteran musicians from all walks of life, including musicians from Vietnam. A copy of this CD can be found on the Warrior Songs website. This CD, the music of veterans for veterans, Warrior Songs Inc, and RSVP Vets Helping Vets program aspire to a belief of helping fellow veterans during difficult times. If you know of anyone, especially a veteran, who needs someone to talk to, please contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. Help is only a call away.



Jason Moon



LaFollette High School Band Members

RSVP Calendar

January

The RSVP office will be closed on Monday January 17th for Martin Luther King Day
Thursday, January 27, 1:00 - 2:30 PM. Volunteer Zoom Event Program
Volunteer Mary Odell will discuss Rail Fanning Adventures. .

February

Monday, February 21, 1:30 - 3:00 PM. RSVP Board Meeting.
Volunteer Zoom Event Program in February, celebrating Black History Month. Date and Time TBD.

March

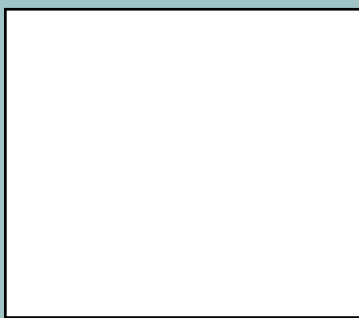
Thursday, March 24th, 1:00 - 2:30 PM Volunteer Zoom Event,
Volunteer Richard Kalnicky will discuss his book; *Global Warming Wisconsin Style*.

"They were wonderful!"



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From Our Hands To Your Hearts: Groups “Special” Projects

By Kate Seal

The volunteers who knit, crochet, and sew items for donation in the RSVP Group Projects Program typically adhere to crafting items that are on our ‘Request for Handmade Items’ form. This form is virtually a menu from which local nonprofits make their requests for volunteer-crafted creations from. But on occasion, we get a request from a local nonprofit agency for something ‘off menu’, something ‘ad hoc’, out of the ordinary and very specific to current needs within their organization. It is always a welcomed challenge to attempt something new, in any quantity. Luckily, when we get ‘Special Requests’, at least a handful or two of volunteers step up to the plate, accept the challenge of trying something new and let inspiration and compassion drive these requests into fruition. Volunteers often offer patterns, ideas, suggestions (based on experience) to help each special request come to life, with efficiency, beauty and competency.

Some examples of ‘Special Requests’ for the RSVP Group Projects Program in 2021: Eye Shades & Chemo Caps for the UW Neuro Department; Hospital Gowns (soft and colorful!) and Patriotic Quilts for Heartland Hospice; Weighted Shawls for HELP (Hospital Elderly Life Program) at UPH/Meriter; Catheter Carrying Bags and a Fidget Wall Quilt for Agrace Hospice; Curtain Tie Backs for 5 Door Recovery; Fleece Blankets for Good Shepherd Clothing Closet; Baby Mitts with matching Baby Hats also for Good Shepherd Clothing Closet.

‘Special Requests’ keep us on our toes, they broaden our repertoire, and inspire us to think outside of the box. Making creations that are out of OUR ordinary reminds us that we serve a VERY diverse population and that there is a strong need for sharing our gifts with the community. Handcrafting items to help people in our community feel safer, warmer, supported, and more comfortable is an honest and meaningful way to spend our time and we are honored to do this work.



Ginny Sleigh and her 2 grandchildren, Violet & Dash, help her SO much with her volunteer work. They even come into the storeroom on occasion to help pick out materials! We are grateful for Ginny and her family’s kindness and creativity.

Lastly, I am happy to announce that 2021 was a record year for the Group Projects Program. 15,024 volunteer-crafted donations were distributed to local nonprofit agencies! This was a remarkable volunteer effort and an inspiring silver-lining that arose from 2021. THANK YOU Group Projects Volunteers for helping our community feel warm, safe, supported, and respected.



RSVP Group Projects Coordinator, Kate Seal, holds a Fidget Wall Quilt.



Save Energy This Winter with These Tips

From Madison Gas and Electric Company

Heating is one of the largest energy users in our homes. By making smart choices and practicing simple tips, you can manage your energy use and costs. MGE has no- and low-cost ways for you to stay comfortable and save energy this winter:

Set your thermostat for one temperature when you're home and another when you're away to maximize energy savings.

1. If you haven't already, consider installing a programmable or smart thermostat. Smart thermostats can be controlled remotely, learn your preferred settings and automatically schedule temperature changes. Eligible MGE customers can take advantage of a cash-back incentive from Wisconsin's FOCUS ON ENERGY® program for purchasing a qualified smart thermostat. There are a variety of models at a number of pricing options. Get more details at focusonenergy.com/smart.
2. Turn your furnace fan to "auto" rather than "on." If you leave it switched on, it will run continuously, which isn't necessary and, depending on your type of furnace, could cost about \$25 a month.
3. Some people believe that turning down your thermostat and using an electric space heater will save money. A space heater can be one of the most expensive ways to heat your home. At today's prices, electric heat costs at least eight times as much per BTU as natural gas. Running a typical 1,500-watt electric space heater four hours each day for a month would cost \$25. Instead, consider some low- or no-cost ways to warm:
 - o Use a heated blanket or heating pad.
 - o Put on a sweater.
 - o Get up and move around.
 - o Let the sun in during the day to warm a room and close your window treatments at night to keep out the colder night air.
4. Lock up. Don't just shut your windows, lock them as well. This step can be overlooked but is important. The locking mechanism activates a seal that helps to keep the air you heated or cooled inside your home.
5. Keep your water heater temperature set at 120 degrees Fahrenheit and use cold water to wash clothes. Also, remember to run your washer on full loads! If you go on vacation, switch your water heater to vacation mode.

There's a lot to understand about managing heating costs in your home. MGE is available to provide tips and answer your questions about saving energy and money. Contact MGE's energy experts by email at AskExperts@mge.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.

Leadership Circle-\$1000+

Jack and Donna Anderson
Kevin Gould and Nancy Baillies
Margaret Jensen
Thomas and Margie Krauskopf
Robert Lenz
Mary Odell
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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

WINTER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

GOODMAN COMMUNITY CENTER Senior Meal Program is back in action and needs volunteers to help create a warm and friendly experience for seniors to enjoy delicious food and community. Shifts are available Monday – Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., and 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Register participants, fill salt and pepper shakers, run the dish washer in a safe and clean space!

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK needs lots of hands to help sort and pack food boxes to be distributed to many food pantries! Work together with other volunteers in a safe environment at the Madison warehouse or the Stoughton warehouse. Must be able to stand for lengths of time and may need to lift products weighing anywhere between 10 -40 lbs. No one will be asked to lift more than they are comfortable with.

COMMUNITY ACTION COALITION needs help in their warehouse sorting food, cleaning, and assisting pantry shoppers with shopping and check-out procedures. **COMMUNITY ACTION COALITION GLEANERS** also need volunteer drivers to pick up donated food from various places and deliver it to several food pantries and community centers around Madison and Dane County.

UNITY POINT MERITER HOSPITAL is now ready to welcome back volunteers for several assignments including: **At Your Service** – welcoming patients and visitors, delivering flowers and mail; **Volunteer Office Support** – greet and welcome volunteers, answer phones, and assist with data entry.

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.

RSVP DRIVER SERVICES urgently needs drivers for seniors, veterans/vet family members, meal delivery and grocery delivery in communities across Dane County, Mon.-Fri., between 8:00am and 4:00pm. Drivers/passenger must be masked and vaccinated. Meals and grocery delivery volunteers deliver at a distance. Volunteers receive mileage reimbursement at .56cents/mile and help seniors/veterans live independently. Scheduling is flexible! Contact Mary Schmelzer at 608-441-7896 or mschmelzer@rsvpdane.org.

Volunteer Drivers needed for Seniors & Veterans

- * Drive to medical & other important appts.
- * Receive reimbursement at 56 cents/mile
- * Set your own schedule, weekdays only
- * Receive extra liability insurance

"I could not afford taxi service to Madison, where my primary doctor & specialists have their offices. If not for RSVP, I would have to move to a facility in Madison."

— RSVP passenger

Pay it Forward Now

So it's there for you tomorrow!

For information on driving seniors: Mary Schmelzer, 441-7896 or mschmelzer@rsvpdane.org

For information on driving veterans: Lorrie Hylkema, 238-7901 or lhylkema@rsvpdane.org



Fitchburg Volunteer Driver Paying It Forward

By Mary Schmelzer

Television's Fred Rogers said, "Often when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else." Many retirees come to this crossroad and find a rich, fulfilling life after work. After a 38-year career serving as an executive assistant to the same man, first at a law firm and then at Alliant Energy, volunteer driver Sandy Turk reached that crossroad and turned onto a path of service to others.

During her time at Alliant Energy, "I was involved in several community events which gave me an opportunity to learn about various local charities," Turk reported. "I was looking for something to do after I retired, saw an article in Fitchburg's Senior Center newsletter and called RSVP. I liked what I heard and started driving in 2015."



"I enjoy the mix of riders I've had over the years, all of whom are so appreciative of the volunteers who help them remain independent in their homes," she added. "I get satisfaction knowing it takes so little on my part to make a big difference in their day. And a bonus for me, one of my frequent riders mentioned she used to teach piano lessons. She agreed to help me take a few refresher lessons after a long hiatus from the keyboard. We both enjoyed the time we spent together."

Aside from the volunteering done through the annual Day of Caring at work, Turk helped coordinate an annual golf outing, raising funds for Second Harvest Food Bank, and she helped raise over a million dollars over the years she was involved.

The Prairie du Sac native 'likes to keep busy . . . it's better than housecleaning,' she said. Her good sense of humor is likely welcomed at her card club, where they play a game called 'Hand and Foot' (a game she describes as similar to canasta) and on bi-annual outings with her longtime group of girlfriends who called themselves 'The Prairie Dog Girls' (which originated along the same lines as a Deer Hunter Widows weekend, except the hunters involved were hunting prairie dogs instead!). Road trips with this group are to places within driving distance and usually incorporate boutique shopping, winery tours, and kicking back to share laughs. They also enjoy monthly lunches with one another.

While waiting for a passenger to get out of an appointment, Turk's admits she indulges in her 'guilty pleasure'—to listen to audio books! A nice silver lining to the volunteer job! She is also passionate about how this program "offers such a great service to get seniors to much-needed medical appointments. When I first started there were about 15-20 drivers for our area but that number dropped a lot after in-person appointments were once again permitted," she said. "We need more volunteers. RSVP has made sure there are safety precautions for both the driver and rider. There is flexibility in how often you drive so that you can work any rides around your personal calendar and still provide a needed community service to a grateful senior. I like to think I'm paying it forward to the day when I may need the same service I'm providing now."



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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.

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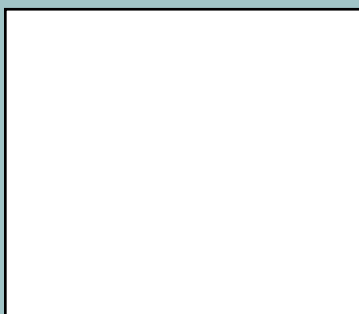
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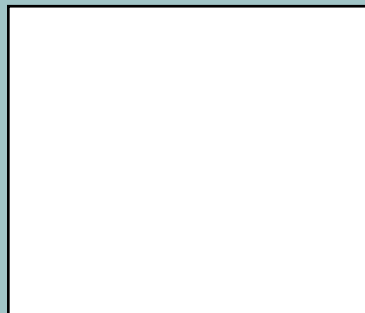


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News Notes (Winter, 2022, edition, Vol. 49, No. 1) is the official publication of RSVP of Dane County, Inc. It is published quarterly and sent to Volunteers and Friends of RSVP. **RSVP seeks to improve the quality of life for all Dane County citizens through significant volunteer service.** Membership is voluntary. We are located at 6501 Watts Road, Suite 250, Madison, WI 53719-1397, Telephone: (608) 238-7787, Fax: (608) 238-7931, Email: info@rsvpdane.org, Web site: www.rsvpdane.org. News Notes Editor – Margie Zutter; Editorial Assistant – Carroll Heideman. Creative design by Jack Guzman. Bulk mailing permit #2372.

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MISSION

To make a positive impact in the community by recruiting volunteers 55 and older to help deliver priority services to people of all ages, providing Dane County with a valuable resource.

VISION

RSVP aspires to build and expand a community-wide network of volunteers and organizations that unites compassionate, experienced adults with meaningful and fulfilling service opportunities, which enrich the lives of the volunteers while enhancing support for people in need.

INCLUSION STATEMENT

RSVP is committed to a culture of inclusion and connectedness. RSVP volunteers and staff come from many backgrounds, and this makes us stronger. Individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, innovation, self-expression, and talent that our volunteers contribute, represent the service and compassion we offer our community.