

The RSVP Railroad

RSVP of Peoria and Tazewell Counties

Advisory

Committee:

- Barbara Hartnett
- Anne Lockhart
- Jennifer Lee
- Dave Seward
- Jennifer Simmons
- Phil Webber

Hear the Station Master!

A Letter from the Director



The three Rs of RSVP: RESPECT, RELIEF, and RENEWAL



As 2010 draws to a close, I am reminded of other challenging times in the 1980's and 90's when agencies were closing due to a terrible economy, people were losing their jobs, and the number of individuals needing assistance was staggering. During those times Illinois had tens of thousands of children in foster care, children were being locked up in adult correctional facilities, and neighborhood organizing was being heralded as the way to bring about positive change to communities. I was working at Catholic Charities, then known as Catholic Social Service, and all of us "Catholic" workers were trying to figure out ways to assist the hundreds of people coming through our doors.

I also remember the excitement in 1995 of participating in the visit of Mother Theresa to Peoria and hearing her speak at Saint Mary's Cathedral. I was able to meet her, very briefly, and shake her hand. I was in complete awe as to how this short, little woman had the most beautiful and compassionate eyes that smiled as if to simply say "Believe and things will be ok".

Her message was simple; "*Being unwanted, unloved, uncared for, forgotten by everybody, I think that is a much greater hunger, a much greater poverty than the person who has nothing to eat. If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.*"

I believe her statement exemplifies the spirit of

volunteerism shown by RSVP volunteers. We may not be able to solve all the problems, but we do what we can to make things better for people. I want our mission to be as simple and yet as compassionate as Mother Theresa's. We should promote and provide volunteer services that provide relief, respect, and

renewal.

Our volunteer work should give relief to those in need or are vulnerable; be done with respect for and by everyone; and encourage the renewal of the spirit of hope in every individual.

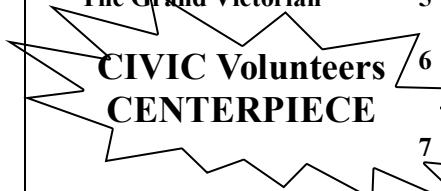
I truly believe RSVP volunteers, and all the volunteers helping in our communities, do wonderful work. To those volunteers at OSF who sit with patients so they have a hand to hold and aren't alone during their final moments, bless you. To those volunteers who rock and hold those new babies at Crittenton's Crisis Nursery, bless you. To those volunteers who read to children in Catholic Charities Foster Care, bless you. To those volunteers who send letters and care packages to our troops in harm's way, bless you.

Bless all of you who freely give of your time, talent, and yourselves so others have a better life. As Mother Theresa said, "Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; give the world the best you've got anyway". Happy Holidays everyone, thank you for what you do, and may 2011 bring you all joy, peace, and fulfillment.

Sincerely,
Jeff Turnbull

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Peoria County Stop

By Ashley Kinne, Peoria County Coordinator

In December's issue of Inter Business Magazine, I was quoted as saying 'volunteering gives seniors a reason to get up, dress up, and show up in an otherwise empty day'. I'd like to take this opportunity to embellish upon this trifecta for retirement.



Get up—We all have days when we don't feel like getting up. We'd rather stay in bed all morning and putts around the house all afternoon. When someone has a job, boss, and a few paid days off, it is a lot harder to stay home. On the other hand if you are retired with nowhere you have to be, it is easy to stay in bed. The risk however is that if you don't get up or get out of the house day after day isolation, depression, and loneliness can sneak up on you. Volunteering gives some seniors that motivation they need to start the day and get up.

Dress up—Since retirees have the unique situation of being able to tailor

their wardrobe to fit their lifestyle, the line between fashionable and frumpy can get blurred. Comfort and functionality are critical factors of senior fashion decisions, but practical does not have to mean unfashionable. Here are a few tips to keep retirees looking stylish after they have left the working world.

1. Update your closet—rid your closet of the cheap '90s skirt sets and ill-fitting '70s jumpsuits, and create room for your smart, new wardrobe.
2. Buy high-quality basics with multi-functional foundation pieces paired with freestanding items.
3. Try hats and oversized sunglasses - Not only do hats and sunglasses protect from damaging UV rays, they can add surprising style to your look or be worn to renew an outfit.
4. Keep a cardigan on hand-A warm cardigan sweater is a must for any senior. Cardigans with fun details like lace trim or decorative buttons

feel young without being inappropriate, and a simple cardigan in a natural color can be worn with any outfit.

5. Wear prints -Prints are a flattering way to spice up your wardrobe. Avoid dressing entirely in broad stripes or large prints that may make you look bulky, and wear prints with dark backgrounds to take full advantage of slimming effects. If a colorful patterned dress is too much, then start out with a printed scarf or top.
6. Try trends- Trends should not be reserved for 20-somethings. While a miniskirt or see-through top might be a little intimidating, there is no reason to shun trendy accessories. Accessories require little investment and can easily be removed if you decide they are not age-appropriate.

Show up— If you don't show up...a child misses you, a friend is saddened, an office staff feels your absence, or a food pantry remains in disarray. People need you. People miss you when you are gone. Volunteers are an integral part of our society, without them, without you, we can't deliver the services needed by so many people. Showing up is caring.

RSVP to Start Ambassador Program

by Jeff Turnbull, Director

As we move into 2011, we here at RSVP have been looking for new ways for people to volunteer their time and talents to benefit charitable and educational organizations in our community. We are starting the RSVP Ambassador Program for those individuals who want to promote RSVP and volunteerism through resource development and volunteer recruitment. As a RSVP Ambassador, an individual would agree to the following goal: increase volunteerism in non-profit organizations, schools, and agencies. This increase will occur through the use of Ambassadors promoting the benefits of volunteering, the worthiness in helping others, and the

pride in helping your neighborhood and community.

RSVP Ambassadors will:

- Recruit new RSVP volunteers to help in their communities
- Recruit contributors to RSVP for volunteer programming and recruitment
- Coordinate one event that supports a RSVP station's mission

Through this support, Ambassadors for RSVP of Peoria and Tazewell Counties will continue to shine as an ongoing example of the spirit of giving back to communities and supporting area charitable and educational organizations. Call RSVP and become an Ambassador today!



Tazewell County Stop

By Connie Gee, Tazewell County Coordinator

Persevere:

To persist in a state, enterprise, or undertaking, in spite of counterinfluences, oppositions, or discouragement.

With the new year already underway, most of you have at least *thought* about making changes to your life in the form of resolutions for 2011. As some of you may know, I have been on a journey of change in my own life during the last two years. I have been quite successful at weight loss, losing every week at my weigh-ins, until this last summer, when it started becoming mundane. The newness had worn off. The time had come when I lost my initial thrust of motivation. This is when most people give up and quit trying, going back to their old routines and habits. And believe me! I let myself go down that



road for about a month or so. But, that “perseverance” word kept running through the back of my mind. How could I let go of all that I had accomplished so far? I had to *persist* in the undertaking I had started in spite of my current discouragement and boredom with it all. I had to remember why I had started this journey to begin with – for my health and my joints! Calvin Coolidge said that “Satisfaction does not come from indulgence; it comes from achievement.” I decided that I didn’t want to trade in what I most wanted (weight loss) for what I wanted at the moment (unhealthy food).

Some of you may be saying to yourselves “Forget the health food! I need all the preservatives I can get!” For me, it is a matter of prevention. I want to prevent diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and knee replacement. So, I have to continue on my journey and not give up.

Author and international speaker, Kendra Smiley, teaches others how to make the next right choice on her daily

radio program *Live Life Intentionally*. I smile when she states her motto “Make the next right choice” on the radio, because it has become so engrained in my mind now. When I have made some unhealthy food choices or can’t seem to get out of a rut that I’ve gotten myself into, this mantra of “Make the *next* (not tomorrow) right choice” plays in the back of my mind, helping me to stay on track and make on-the-spot choices that are beneficial to my long-term goals. Every extra pound on my body came from something that I chose to put in my mouth. And every pound that slips away is the result of a right decision I make.

Right choices are not confined to weight loss or healthy eating. Good (and bad) decisions affect all areas of our lives, from what time we go to bed at night to how fast we drive our cars to where we’re going. The point is, no matter how you feel...get up, dress up, and show up for the day! Live your everyday life intentionally by making the next right choice. There is a lot of joy that follows when you do! And maybe by next quarter, I will be able to tell you that I’ve finally reached my goal!

14,000 Things to be Happy About.

The Happy Book by Barbara Ann Kipfer

During my weekly stroll through the Friendship House Thrift Shop (Thursday mornings), I came upon a book called *14,000 Things to be Happy About* by Barbara Ann Kipfer. I thought this might be a fun book to pull a list from every month. We sometimes take for granted the little things in life that should make us happy everyday. If you have things to be happy about that you would like to share, email peoria@rsvpvolunteers.org. Enjoy!

- Pajamas at breakfast
- Seeing the moon rise
- Old-time radio shows
- A rich spiced chocolate drink
- Babies who never cry
- A baby’s first tooth
- Brand new notebooks
- Picnic cooler colors
- Roast pork
- Driving under an overpass during a storm
- French toast, butter, and powdered sugar
- Eight hours of sleep
- Doing your own thing
- Jellyrolls
- Crocheted bedspreads
- Snorkeling
- Funny toes
- Dinner with laughter
- Cinnamon coffee cakes
- Cloudy days and sunny thoughts
- Food gifts
- Apple beer
- 50s music
- Spun glass
- True, lasting values
- Getting carried away
- Watching the winning touchdown
- Fish fries
- A suit made to order
- Butter-crumbled eggs
- Waterfront properties in Main
- Sauntering
- The pounding of a hammer
- Gramophones

Free Tax Preparation Sites and Times

AARP, IRS, and a Little Help from RSVP—

ALPHA PARK LIBRARY -BARTONVILLE
 WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2 - FRIDAY, APRIL 15
 WEDNESDAYS 1 PM – 5 PM
 THURSDAYS 1 PM – 5 PM
 FRIDAYS 1PM–5PM

CHILLICOTHE PUBLIC LIBRARY
 THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3– FRIDAY, APRIL 15
 THURSDAY 9AM – 1PM, FRIDAY 9AM – 1PM

FONDULAC DISTRICT LIBRARY ,EAST PEORIA
 WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2 - FRIDAY, APRIL 15
 WEDNESDAYS 8:30 AM – NOON ,
 FRIDAYS 8:30 AM – NOON

METAMORA PUBLIC LIBRARY
 THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3 - THURSDAY, APRIL 14
 THURSDAYS NOON – 2 PM

MILLER SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER -PEKIN
 MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7 – MONDAY, APRIL 18
 MONDAYS NOON – 4 PM

MORTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
 WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2– THURSDAY, APRIL 14
 WEDNESDAYS 9 AM -NOON
 THURSDAYS 9 AM -NOON

PEKIN PUBLIC LIBRARY
 THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3 - THURSDAY, APRIL 14
 THURSDAYS 9 AM – 1 PM

PEORIA HEIGHTS LIBRARY
 WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2-THURSDAY, APRIL 14
 WEDNESDAYS NOON – 4 PM
 THURSDAYS NOON – 4 PM

PEORIA LAKEVIEW LIBRARY
 TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1-WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13
 TUESDAYS 12 – 7:30 PM
 WEDNESDAYS 10 AM – 2 PM

WASHINGTON LIBRARY
 MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7 – MONDAY, APRIL 18
 MONDAYS 1PM–4PM

Volunteer Perspective—

Carolyn Goad—RSVP Member Since January 2007

By now most of you have received our volunteer survey along with a Happy Birthday card. Most of you have taken the time to complete these surveys and returned them to our office for review. One of the questions on the survey if you have any article ideas for the newsletter? Several of you mentioned that you would like to read about what other RSVP members are doing. In past newsletters we have had a Volunteer Perspective article which included a Q&A and short summary of the volunteers history as a RSVP member. The questions were general life questions, not specific to their RSVP volunteering, for example: Where do you see yourself in 5 years? More like job interview questions.



So from now on, based on your feedback, we will ask four (4) questions of our interviewees; Why do you volunteer?, How are you rewarded by your volunteering?, What do you say to someone who has the time that is not volunteering? The fourth question will be based on their specific volunteering.

With all that said, meet Carolyn Goad. Mrs. Goad volunteers at the Salvation Army in the soup kitchen, helping with mailings and other projects as they arise. She also volunteers with the STARS program through which she has helped with many special events.

1. Why do you volunteer? I enjoy helping others.

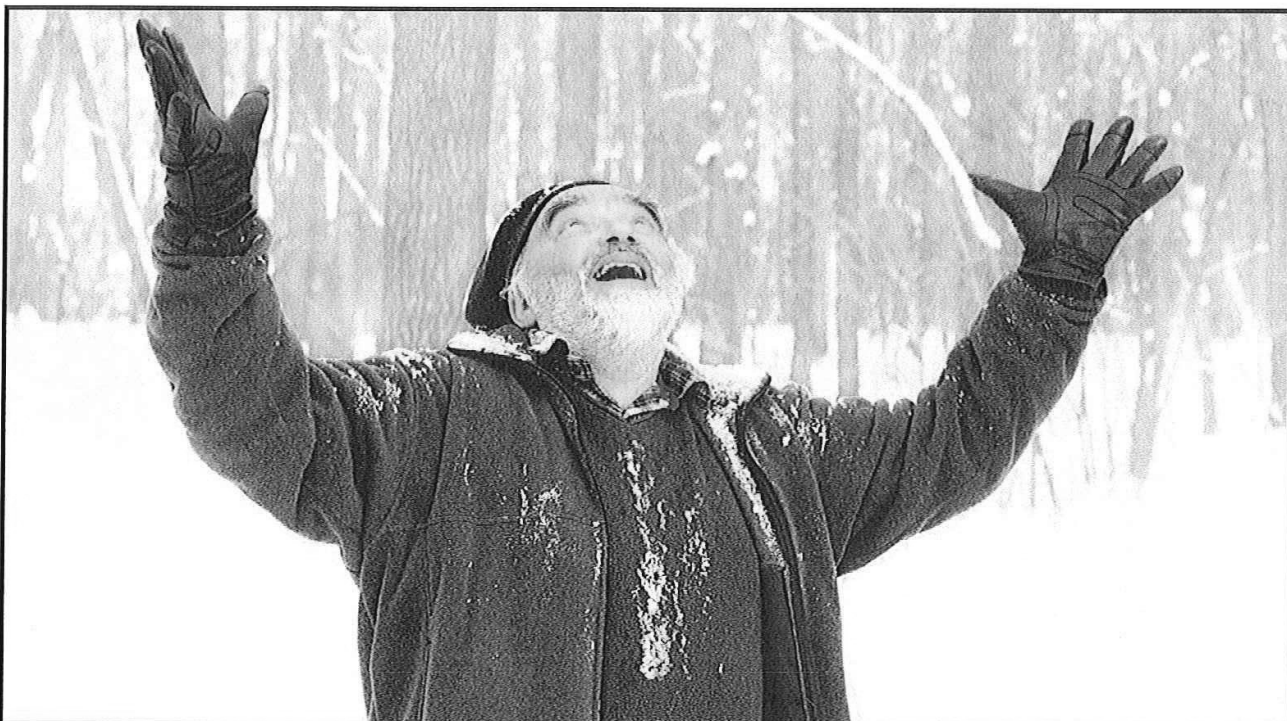
2. How are you rewarded by your volunteering? A sense of purpose and a good feeling.

3. What do you say to someone who has the time that is not volunteering? Anytime I hear someone say that they are lonely and don't have anything to do I tell them about RSVP and that there is plenty out there for them to do.

4. What made you decide to join RSVP? I attended a Sears Retirees meeting and learned about RSVP and I wanted to do more volunteering.

5. Your favorite kind of volunteering? The kind you can see results right away.

If you want to be our next volunteer interviewee call RSVP at 682-8521.



Try us out for the Winter!

Move In during the months of December or January, stay through April and you will receive:

- Access to our wellness programs to stay active during the long winter months
- Delicious & well-balanced meal plans
- Housewarming party for family & friends
- Community Fee waived

The Premier Provider of
Independent & Assisted Living for Seniors

The
GRAND VICTORIAN
of
PEKIN

To make a reservation today:
call Chris @ 309.346.1310

The
GRAND VICTORIAN
of
WASHINGTON

To make a reservation today:
call Leah @ 309.444.7400

Central Illinois Volunteer Information Center CIVIC

CIVIC Stop –Central Illinois Volunteer Information Center

By Marcell Hulbert, New CIVIC Coordinator—AmeriCorps VISTA

Hello, my name is Marcell Hulbert and I am the new Central Illinois Volunteer Information Center (CIVIC) Coordinator.

I work as an AmeriCorps VISTA. VISTA stands for “Volunteer In Service To America”. I have been with the AmeriCorps VISTA for one year, working on various activities. I have high hopes and dreams for CIVIC and I hope to learn great things over the next year with AmeriCorps VISTA and become the



best CIVIC Coordinator that I can be .

CIVIC is the little sister program to RSVP that recruits and places individuals between the ages of 14-54 into volunteer positions with all of our partner agencies.

Volunteering takes dedication. It does not matter if you are a young adult looking to gain experience through volunteering or an older adult looking to give back to your community through volunteering. Let RSVP/CIVIC be your one-stop-shop!

This coming year I plan to attend at least six student and health fairs. At these fairs I plan to recruit as many volunteers as I can. Currently we have 100 volunteers registered. With hard work and dedication, we WILL have 100 more. I will be contacting public and private schools in our community for help with volunteer recruitments. I also plan to contact different churches in our community for their help. One of my goals is to offer intergenerational volunteer opportunities that connect older volunteers our younger volunteers, which I think will be a great learning experience for all ages. I am be very willing to listen to ideas for intergenerational activities. Expect fun, new, and exciting things to come throughout this new year.

Farewell and Good Luck

by Lindsey Reck

First and foremost, I would like to say that my year of service as a VISTA member and the CIVIC Coordinator has been extraordinary. I was introduced to an array of dedicated individuals who willingly volunteer to make a difference in the community. Their hard work and perseverance shows in their service and support for local area non-profit agencies and the communities they serve. Also, the Peoria area has a large group of professional folks dedicating their daily work to helping volunteers serve. In the past year, I have met many of these local leaders and noticed that they all expressed thankfulness and generosity for their volunteers. My co-workers at the RSVP office have been a true testament to this. I have been blessed to have served

in this position and met all of those individuals that are beyond doubt making a difference in the community.

There is no doubt in my mind that CIVIC will continue to thrive and be even more effective in attracting volunteers between the ages of 14 and 54. The new CIVIC Coordinator will be Marcell Hulbert. She has been working alongside the RSVP staff and me for nearly a month and she has already been a great help to the CIVIC program. She has great ideas and will bring a new life into developing CIVIC to a higher level. In the past year,



CIVIC has accumulated 85 volunteers who have reported nearly 200 hours of service. I foresee CIVIC’s second year in operation highly exceeding this margin. I enjoyed developing the program and learning a lot about the non-profit sector. I will take these lessons learned with me on to my future endeavors. I look forward to hearing about what Marcell has planned for CIVIC. Again, thank

you all for making my year of service with the AmeriCorps a very unforgettable and enjoyable experience!

Helping People Help Communities

CENTERPIECE *Ages 14-54*

Young Volunteers An Inspiration to CIVIC

By Marcell Hulbert, New CIVIC Coordinator—AmeriCorps VISTA

Five CIVIC volunteers recently participated in the “Christmas Tree Lane” at the Peoria Friendship House on December 14th & December 15th. They had lots of fun and stayed very busy, gift wrapping, personal shopping and table-stocking. A few volunteers also participated in the Crittenton Centers “Stocking Stuffer” at the Northwoods Mall. December has been very busy for our volunteers and there will be more opportunities in the upcoming



The Effingham County 4-H Youth Ambassadors (ECYA), consisting of 22 youth, decided they wanted to help other youth have the opportunity to learn about leadership. Paige Logan, a 15-year-old from Altamont, IL and Haley Hahn, a 16

year. Through rain, sleet, and snow our volunteers are always ready to serve our community.

- year-old from Effingham, IL began grant writing so the ECYA could hold a leadership camp in their area. After writing four different grants, Paige was notified by Farm Credit System Foundation, Inc. that they were supporting ECYA and were awarded the Douglas D. Sims Fund for Rural Leadership grant for \$10,000 to host a leadership camp.

All ECYA members were thrilled and the planning began. Camp S.C.O.R.E. (Skills Created Together to Reach Excellence) was the name chosen for their Leadership Camp. Sixty-five area youth were delegates at Camp S.C.O.R.E. and are now better prepared to step up and demonstrate needed leadership skills in their community.

2009 Volunteer Rates Increase

From the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics-Division of Labor Force Statistics

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that both the number of volunteers and the volunteer rate rose the past year. For the period of September 2008 through September 2009:

- 63.4 million people volunteered, representing 26.8 percent of the population, up from 2008 numbers;
- The average hours spent volunteering was 52 hours for men and 50 for women;
- The volunteer rate of women increased from 20.1 percent in 2008 to 29.4 percent in 2009, while the volunteer rate for men (23.3 percent) was essentially unchanged;
- Persons aged 35 to 54 years of age were most likely to volunteer. The lowest volunteer rates found were for those in their early twenties, and those age 65 and older;
- Among major race and ethnicity groups, the volunteer rate of the blacks and whites rose in 2009. Among blacks, it rose by 1.1 percent driven largely by an increase in the volunteer rate of black women;
- Volunteer rates were higher among those married, parents, with children under 18 years old, and those with higher levels of educational attainment, than their counterparts;
- The organization for which volunteers worked the most hours was most frequently religious (34 percent of all volunteers), followed by educational or youth service-related organizations (26.1 percent);
- The main activity volunteers performed was fundraising, followed by collecting/preparing/distributing/serving food;
- Men who volunteered engaged in general labor, coach or supervise a sports team, or provide professional or managerial assistance. Female volunteers were more likely to fundraise, collect/prepare/distribute/serve food, or tutor;
- About 44 percent of volunteers became involved after being asked to volunteer, most often by someone within the organization.

Volunteer Opportunities—

RSVP now partners with over 125 non-profit agencies in Peoria and Tazewell Counties. For more information about specific jobs call RSVP at 682-8521.



Lakeview Museum is looking for volunteers to assist within the Development Department with various duties including light filing, assembling mailings, prep for special events, etc. Call RSVP for an application at 682-8521.

His Helping Hands, Inc. is a non-profit faith-based handyman service looking for office help for 10-15 hours/week to answer phones, greet clients/visitors, create documents in word/excel/quicken, general clerical, and other duties. Call RSVP for more information.

Tax Preparer Peoria Friendship House is looking for volunteers to complete taxes for low-income clients. Call RSVP for more information.

Goodwill Industries, Inc. is looking for volunteers to act as mentors to youth ages 12-17 years old and in need of positive adult role models. The time commitment is four(4) hours month for one(1) year. Call RSVP at 682-8521 for more information.

PARC is looking for volunteers to spend recreational and instructional time with their special clients. They also need help with light maintenance projects in and around the facility. Call RSVP for more information. The RSVP number is 682-8521.

SHIP (Senior Health Insurance Program) is looking for volunteers to serve as counselors to assist people seeking answers to questions regarding Medicare. Training is provided.

Radio Information Services: is looking for volunteers to be on a call list for substitutes when regular volunteers cannot make their time slot. Read aloud on the radio to visually impaired listeners.

Friendship House is looking for afterschool tutors K- 8th for homework assistance any day of the week between the hours of 3:00 – 5:00pm. Tutors need to be comfortable working with children either one-on-one or in a small group setting.

American Red Cross Heart of America need of Blood Drive Canteen Servers, Blood Mobile Greeters, and Drivers. Call RSVP for further details about these positions.

The Center for Prevention of Abuse in Peoria is looking for volunteers to assist with meal preparation and clean-up on Wednesdays from 4:30 – 6:30pm for the Safe From The Start program. They are also looking for volunteers to maintain the grounds during the spring and summer months. Please contact RSVP for more information.

Miller Senior Center in Pekin is looking for a reliable volunteer to man the front desk as a receptionist on Thursday or Friday morning for 3 to 4 hours. This is a busy place where your skills will be utilized.

Project Linus is an organization that makes, collects, and distributes handmade security blankets to area children in need. Sew, knit, or crochet in your home and drop off your blankets at area collection points. If interested, group sewing meets monthly at Jones Sewing in Peoria.

Planned Parenthood has a clerical position open in their Pekin office. You would be filing, making up patient packets, and completing various other office duties as needed.

Fon Du Lac Park District, in East Peoria, is looking for people to share their travel or life stories and/or hobbies with their active senior group; call BINGO; help set up for their many monthly activities throughout the month; or start a hand-bell choir.

First United Methodist Church in East Peoria has an active quilting group that gathers on Monday mornings. They are always looking for new hands to join in their latest project. Quilt-finishing proceeds support various mission projects around the world.

Passengers Volunteering 50 hours or More!

In either July, August, September, October

Beth Alt	Judy Ernst	William Jones	Martha Schaefer
Marjorie Anderson	David Evans	Jan Keach	Nelson Schierbeck
Randal Braun	Gail Fee	Barbara Kenny	Luella Shawhan
Norma Brinker	Larry Fitch	Mary Ellen Kent	Deborah Stubbs
Wayne Brodkorb	James Foy	Mary Kerby	Marilyn Sturtevant
Edna Bulman	Barbara Garber	Alfred Kilbey	Diane Tanner
Jan Busche	Hazel Geyer	Lois Maile	Suzan Taylor
Denis Claiborne	Louise Grawey	Esther Marrs	Dorothy Mae Topel
Lois Clausen	Dennis Gregory	Lou Ann Mathews	Joan Trotter
Clarence Colson	Mary Gustafson	Michael Mathews	Tom Trotter
Dale Cook	Leona Hallahan	Christine McAfee	Barbara Wagenbach
Sharon Cook	Ed Hardman	Marie Menold	Ora Walker
Jo Cramer	Vi Heinz	Philip Minear	Jeanne Ward
Diane Dalton	Gerald Hill	Joyce Mitchell	Peter Weber
Ellen DeManche	Barbara Hines	Donald Murphy	Ivogene Wheeler
Patricia Donahoe	Max Hoerr	Alice Nash	Betty Whittington
Bill DuBois	Leona Ivie	William Nolden	Eileen Wissell
John Durdle	Kevin Johnson	Joanne Oltman	Victor Zamora
William Edwards	Thelma Johnson	Glenna Pflederer	Ronald Ziemba
David Ehnle	Mildred Jonas	Betty Powers	
Ronald England	Kay Jones	Elena Rivas	

Passengers Volunteering 100 hours or More!

In either July, August, September, October

Lucille Bevis	Donna Gillham	John Lewis	Barbara Shiverdecker
Fred Bliss	Maria Golden	Steve Lindstrom	Milo Streitmatter
Loraine Cullen	Joe Hand	Edna Mae Smith	Phil Webber
Lois DeGolyer	Lucille Herman	Adele Martin	Ivogene Wheeler
Melody Delzell	Elizabeth Kimble	Kenneth Matousek	
John Fendrich	Ken Kline	Roberta Montgomery	
Mei Gen Wong	Edward Knobloch	Patricia Rockwood	

New Passengers Getting On Board!

July—October

Steve Bickel	LaVerne Hoffman
Diane Brown	Beverly Jackson
Judy Chance	Nancy Kantner
Beth Colgan	Phyllis Knobloch
Beverly Cremer	Gail Kruse
Ed Cunningham	Linda Lakin
Kay Doubet	Elizabeth Pehm
Harold Edwards	Christine Schmidgall
William Goad	Sheryl Swanson
Dorothy Grayson	Ellen Walker
Helen Hanelt	Bonnie Welker
Jack Hathaway	Ann Wilcox

Congratulations! RSVP Volunteers Receive Awards

Around 100 volunteers attended WTVP's Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner in December. Several RSVP volunteers were presented awards, including:

Katheryn Kennedy (first from left) Karl Stach (second from left), Jo Cramer (sixth from left), and Jim Miller



We are very proud of all the wonderful services our volunteers provide.

Top 10 Social Security Questions

by: Stan Hinden | from: [AARP Bulletin](#) | December 1, 2010

1. I am about to turn 62 and plan to file for Social Security. How do I get started?

You should apply three months before you want to start collecting. [Sign up online](#) or call 1-800-772-1213. Here are some documents you may have to produce: your [Social Security card](#) or a record of the number; your birth certificate; proof of U.S. citizenship or lawful alien status; military discharge papers if you served before 1968; and last year's W-2 tax form or tax return if you're [self-employed](#).

2. How is my Social Security benefit calculated?

Benefits are based on the amount of money you earned during your lifetime – with an emphasis on the 35 years in which you earned the most. Plus, lower-paid workers get a bigger percentage of their preretirement income than higher-paid workers. In 2010, the average monthly benefit for retirees is \$1,172.

3. If I remarry, can I still collect Social Security benefits based on my deceased first husband's record?

You can — subject to several rules. In general, you cannot receive survivor benefits if you remarry before age 60

unless that marriage ends, too, whether by annulment, divorce or death of your new husband. If you remarry after age 60 (50 if disabled), you can still collect benefits on your former spouse's record. After you reach 62, you may get retirement benefits on the record of your new spouse if they are higher.

4. Why won't retirees get a cost-of-living adjustment for 2011? Many of us count on this for food, medicine and other bills.

COLAs are based on the consumer price index, which tracks inflation. Because inflation has been flat, according to the CPI, there will be no benefit increase — for the second year in a row. [AARP is calling on Congress](#) to provide beneficiaries with financial relief.

5. I am 56 and receive Social Security disability benefits. At what point will I switch to regular Social Security? Will the monthly amount change?

When you reach full retirement age, your disability benefits will automatically convert to retirement benefits. The amount will [remain the same](#).

6. My friend died at 66. She worked full time and had not applied for benefits. What happens to the money she

contributed to Social Security? Can her children claim benefits?

The money people contribute goes into a fund from which benefits are paid to eligible workers and their families. These include a widower, a surviving divorced husband, dependent parents, disabled children, and children if they have not aged out.

7. My husband and I are getting a divorce. He wants the settlement agreement to say I will not get his Social Security benefits. Can he do that?

No, he has no control over your future benefits. You can qualify for a [divorced spouse's benefits](#) if you were married at least 10 years, are now unmarried, are 62 or older, and if any benefit from your own work record would be less than the divorced spouse's benefit.

8. Cleaning out my mother's home after her death, we found Social Security checks from the 1980s. Can we cash them?

No. The checks are negotiable for only 12 months after issue.

9. My man and I have lived together for over seven years. If he dies, can I collect his Social Security benefits?

If your state recognizes your common-law marriage, then you'll likely be eligible for survivor benefits. But you'll have to provide evidence that includes sworn statements, mortgage or rent receipts, or insurance policies.

10. Do my Social Security contributions go into a personal retirement account for me and earn interest?

Although many people think so, the answer is no. Social Security operates under a pay-as-you-go system, which means that today's workers pay for current retirees and other beneficiaries. Workers pay 6.2 percent of their wages up to a cap of \$106,800; employers pay the same. The money that younger people contribute will pay for our benefits when we retire.



Things weren't always so complicated.

Unfortunately, today everything's more complicated. Medicare doesn't have to be.

S.H.I.P. counselors, trained by the Illinois Department of Insurance, will answer your health insurance questions for free.

Call: 309-682-8521

For help with questions about Medicare, the Medicare prescription drug coverage or Illinois Cares Rx

Call 1-800-548-9034



Supporting Our Soldiers— MLK Day, January 17th

A 'Day On' Writing Letters of Support

On Monday, January 17th, in honor of Martin Luther King Day, RSVP and CIVIC will host a support letter writing campaign from 10am—4pm at our office (814 NE Madison Avenue). We are looking for volunteers to come join us in writing letters of support to Illinois veterans and military service men and women. We will provide the paper, pens, sample letters, craft paper, stickers, markers, and other tools used to make cards and letters. We will also have hot chocolate and cookies for inspiration!

Our goal is to write 100 letters and deliver them to the Peoria VA Clinic the next day. The letters will be delivered through an organization called "Operation Support Our Troops Illi-

nois". If you cannot join on us on January 17th, you can email your letters to us at rsvp@rsvpvolunteers.org; snail-mail the letters to us at RSVP, 814 N.E. Madison Avenue, Peoria, Illinois, 61603 or if a number of letters can be completed at another location, RSVP staff can come and collect the letters.

Letters and cards should not be any larger than a regular-sized piece of paper (8 1/2" x 11").

NO GLITTER! The presence of any type of shimmery material could seriously threaten our soldiers' safety as night vision goggles can expose the glittery substance and ultimately put our soldiers at risk by exposing their location. (Besides that, it tends to shake loose during ship-

ping and make a big mess when packages are opened.)

Letters and cards can be purchased or handmade.

Keep your messages positive! The more positive the message, the better! Care should be taken not to refer to anything that may cause grief or uneasiness to the military reader who may be serving active duty. (i.e. DON'T SAY "I hope you don't get hurt" or "Do you miss your family?")

These letters/cards do not need to be fancy. Please just write from your heart.

If you have any questions, contact us at (309) 682-8521 or rsvp@rsvpvolunteers.org.

Shooting STARS—

Special Events Give RSVP Volunteers a Great Time and Agencies Great Help!



Gertrude Wiebler in a sea of stuffed toys at Christmas Tree Lane at Peoria Friendship House

Since August 2, 2010, when our last newsletter was sent, our STAR volunteers have been involved in some very exciting, fun, and worthwhile activities such as:

- Get Motivated Seminar
- MS Walk
- Jubilee Colonial Faire
- Wildlife Prairie State Park Adventure Trek
- Peoria Heights Library Book Sale
- American Heart Association Heart Walk
- Peoria Humane Society Bark in the Park
- Mental Health Association of Illinois Valley Hearts of Hope Fundraiser
- Goodwill Veterans Stand Down
- Celebrate Lebanon,
- Friendship House Stuff-a-Bus
- Neighborhood House Santa for Seniors
- Christmastime Gospel Fest
- Friendship House Christmas Tree Lane

The cumulative volunteer impact on these events include a savings of more than \$222,750. Nearly eighty volunteer

time slots were filled by RSVP volunteers. This is what one happy person had to say:

"Hearts of Hope went so smoothly and that is in no small part due to the hard work and reliability of the RSVP volunteers. I had several Board members come up to me to say that they have never seen it run so smoothly (this is the 11th Annual.)" ...All to say that we could not have done this without your wonderful volunteers. They were a joy to work with and I would very much like to send them each a thank you note. ... I would appreciate it if you would pass on my sincerest gratitude".
Truly, Jamie

We are so proud of the wonderful help our volunteers provide to our partner agencies at their special events and day to day.

If you are interested in being on our STARS call list, please contact RSVP at 309-682-8521.

Peoria Friendship House of Christian Service
800 NE Madison Avenue
Peoria, IL 61603

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RSVP...Responding with Service. Volunteering with Pride!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

RSVP

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Peoria and Tazewell Counties recruits, supports, and provides volunteer opportunities and experiences for persons over 55 years of age. RSVP offers these services to non-profit agencies and organizations throughout the community allowing our volunteers to utilize their own talents and interests in fulfilling the needs of others.

814 N.E. Madison Avenue
Peoria, IL 61603

Phone: 309-682-8521 Fax: 309-682-8524

Email: rsvp@rsvpvolunteers.org Website: www.rsvpvolunteers.org

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