



NORFOLK COUNTY RSVP VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Your Invitation to Respond to Your Community

614 High Street

P.O. Box 310

Dedham, MA 02027



Dec 2014



Cedar Hill Health Care Center and Weymouth Health Care Center are 2014-15 Leadership Sponsors of RSVP

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Needham Traveling Meals

Help to pack meals 8:45-11:15 weekdays at the Beth Israel Needham campus, weekday substitutes needed. No help needed weekends, holidays, or summers

Meals on Wheels and Ombudsmen

Meals on Wheels programs need drivers throughout Norfolk County. Ombudsman receive training to visit nursing home residents and resolve conflicts between residents/families and staff. Call RSVP for details.

Receptionists at Quincy Community Action

QCAP seeks volunteers for their Community Cares for Kids and Fuel Assistance Programs, 1509 Hancock St.



RSVP volunteers Bill Begley and Patricia McDonald host Bingo at the Whipple Center in Weymouth.

RSVP staff and volunteers wish Camille Collins, Weymouth Elder Services volunteer coordinator, a happy retirement!

RSVP Year in Review

The Norfolk County Commissioners' Office hosts the RSVP Volunteer Program to assist communities in providing elementary school reading, food pantry, meals on wheels, and veterans' programs. Volunteers age 55+ in these programs can receive mileage reimbursement, supplemental insurance, monthly communications, and recognition with free RSVP membership. RSVP also assists in recruitment of new volunteers for partner schools and organizations as needed.

In FY2014, 300 RSVP members provided over 35,000 hours of volunteer service to local public and nonprofit partners. Tracking the outcomes of their work, RSVP found that volunteers served over 280 school children through its reading tutor program, 86% of whom improved their reading level over the course of the year. 645 families received food assistance, improving their food security, nutrition and ability to live independently.



RSVP seeks volunteers year-round to place in partner agencies based on volunteers' skills and interests. Please contact Lillian Hartman at 781-234-3447 with questions or comments.

Elementary School Volunteer Workshop

Claire Brady, reading specialist at the Donald Ross School in Braintree, spoke with us last month about literacy teaching strategies. Many classrooms use a "station" model with groups of children doing different activities at the same time. The most important message was that **teachers appreciate the time volunteers spend giving students one-on-one attention.**



Claire encouraged volunteers to:

- Ask your teacher how you can be most helpful
- Encourage children to take time to think and to solve problems for themselves, including sounding out words with clues from the pictures of words around them
- Listen and ask questions of kids before instructing. You may not need to know teaching lingo or math problem-solving methods. When kids show you how they've been taught to do things, it's a great way of learning and gaining confidence.

When reading, DISCUSS books with kids:

- Who are the characters, what are they like?
- Ask the student to RETELL the story in sequence using words like *then*, *next*, and *last*.
- Encourage the student to look back and show you what they are thinking about in the book. Listen for connections they make to the real world or other books.

SCHOOL VOLUNTEER POSITIONS ARE STILL AVAILABLE IN NORFOLK, RANDOLPH AND WEYMOUTH. Contact Lillian at lhartman@norfolkcounty.org or 781-234-3447 to sign up!

RSVP is funded in part by a national Senior Corps grant and sponsored by the Norfolk County Commissioners:

- Peter H. Collins of Milton, Commissioner
- John M. Gillis of Quincy, Commissioner
- Francis W. O'Brien of Dedham, Chairman



Bill Topham and his wheels after an interview with Norfolk County RSVP Outreach Coordinator, Robert Pierson

RSVP Rides for Veterans Program

Bill Topham is a man who wears many hats and is dedicated to helping vets. He has been through Vietnam, Desert Shield and Desert Storm, with 27 years in the Marine Corps and retiring as a Master Sergeant. Bill became an RSVP Rides for Vets driver over a year ago, and averages at least one ride a week. He drives a veteran in Norfolk County, from home, to one of the VA hospitals in Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury or Brockton for a medical appointment and back home again. Bill says that “there is one vet I take from Needham to chemotherapy at the J.P. VA hospital every other week. He is usually there for an hour so I hang out. If someone has a longer session, I’ll go home or transport someone else, then come back and pick them up when they are ready to go.”

“Some guys do not have any family or friends to drive them to important medical appointments,” Bill reflects. He feels that this program makes a big difference for vets in need. Having graduated from Bentley, Bill has a strong accounting background. He helps vets who he knows with their tax returns and also is Veterans Keeper of the Graves and Master of Ceremonies for the Town of Needham. When asked why he volunteers as much as he does he replies: “For the sake of doing good... it gives you meaning.”

Norfolk County RSVP continues to expand its Rides for Veterans program. Well over 20 dedicated and generous volunteers like Bill have signed up. Volunteers drive local veterans to and from medical appointments and other necessary trips, using their own vehicle with supplemental liability insurance from RSVP, and \$0.30/mile reimbursement. Trips may be local or to one of the Boston area VA hospitals. Drivers are called as needed, usually one to two times per month and can opt in or out for any given trip request. For more info please contact RSVP Outreach Coordinator Robert Pierson at rpilson@norfolkcounty.org or call 781-234-3445.

Sanger Center Food Pantry Makes Deliveries

The Sanger Center for Compassion in Quincy offers a unique service to people who cannot access traditional food pantries. Volunteer teams pick up groceries from the Sanger Center and deliver them to individual homes.

RSVP volunteer Jim Coffey tried out this volunteer opportunity a few years ago before Thanksgiving, and was hooked on his first day. Seeing the difference in the lives of people who need deliveries and hearing their thanks is gratifying. After knowing about the program for a while and having excuses why it wouldn’t work, Jim says that once started, “you always find the time between things to do it.” In fact, whenever he has a weekend off, “it feels like I’m missing something.”



RSVP volunteer Jim Coffey and his daughter Ava deliver food for families from the Sanger Center for Compassion.

Sanger Center volunteers work in teams of two making deliveries. Jim and Paul (not pictured) drove to 4 homes together in one afternoon in November. A typical route covers 3-4 homes in 1-1.5 hours, although there may be more stops around the holidays. Many routes are within Quincy but Jim has been to Weymouth, Braintree, Holbrook, Randolph, and Hull on different occasions. Jim described one team of siblings who live apart, but meet in Quincy each weekend to deliver groceries together. Regular weekday and weekend routes are available.

Jim often brings his daughter Ava on deliveries. She likes to help out, and is in charge of collecting signatures when people accept deliveries. She also makes sure no bags are missed—families on the route got up to 7 bags each. Joining in her dad’s service, Ava has growing awareness and compassion for people who can’t get enough food on their own. Deliveries are often made to elderly or disabled people who are homebound. But there are many reasons why people might need help, and there is hunger in every town. Jim hopes that Ava will learn to take care of her community, and encourage her friends to give their time to people in need. “If everyone in the Commonwealth gave 1-2 hours per week,” he begins, you can imagine what a difference that would make!

If you would like to learn more about serving at the Sanger Center or other food distribution sites in Norfolk County, please contact Lillian Hartman at Norfolk County RSVP, hartman@norfolkcounty.org or 781-234-3447.