



of Madison County

Volunteer Impact Newsletter

December 2009



RSVP of Madison County

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From our Director....

Dear Volunteers and Volunteer Station leaders,

When cleaning out my files recently, I came across a folder on altruism. It contained articles I have collected over the years on altruism and volunteering. One of the earliest was a piece on an *Altruistic Spirit Program* published in the *Noetic Sciences Review* in the Autumn of 1989.

The article defined altruism as an ethic of caring for friends, family, and a larger humanity. Altruism affirms the ultimate value of the existence, or being of other persons. In essence, the article shows how having a large world view benefits our community and ourselves. One example described the dedication it took to create and produce a major book of photos of Earth from space complete with text from astronauts from many countries. Among the many factors that contributed to its success was how the staff of the publishing house all worked together to create the book.

Now those Earth pictures seem ubiquitous, even ordinary. But remember seeing those first images? For many of us, it made the planet seem a little smaller, with a 'we're all in this together' feeling. Maybe it was an idealistic time, the time when VISTA – (Volunteers in Service to America) was conceived by President Kennedy and we sent a man to the moon. The article tells us *'What is important about idealism, ethics, justice, morality, caring and altruism is that they draw from the very core of our being,*

from the center of what is most human.'

Well, it's almost 2010, and here we are still volunteering, lending a helping hand. There have been many articles and research done on altruism and, more specifically, volunteering in the past 20 years. We can now say with complete certainty that our efforts as volunteers have a positive impact on ourselves as well as the community as a whole.

Keep reading this issue to see an article on the positive impact of volunteering and opportunities to **Get Involved!** in our community through volunteering.

Sincerely,

Mary Bartlett



Caroline Begler
Judy Brown
Al Campanie
Donald Collins
Wanda Collins
Sylvia Connolly
Gail Engelbrecht
Josephine Forbes
Marilyn Fuess
Gladys Graham
William Kablack
Frank Kaylor
Bob Kuiper

Nancy Landers
Doug Lippert
Jane McCarthy
Joanne Morgan
Dorothy Mullett
Susan O'Herien
Beulah Reed
Mark Sichertman
Kathleen Skelly
Judy Sweet
Arlene Symonds
Nancy Whiting
Lynn Wimmer

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring all of which have the potential...

To turn a life around.

Dr. Felice Leonardo Buscaglia

Thank You RSVP Volunteers!!

You have contributed 9,482 hours from September 1 to December 1, 2009!!

LTC OMBUDSMAN CORNER

Recent Events:

September... Ombudsmen attended the 9 County Ombudsman to Ombudsman Learning & Sharing Day in Cortland. The main purpose of this annual gathering is for all to learn from each other.

35 attended this energetic and informative session. Some of the topics covered were: Sexuality in the Aging, Avoiding Conflict of Interest, Advance Directives, and Dealing with Stress.

Evaluation comments were very positive, such as: "a touchy subject was handled with great ease and was extremely thought provoking", "It was a friendly and informative gathering", "Brings up different points of view to share.", "This was in many ways an eye opener.", and "I am so pleased to share with the 'pros'."

October... RSVP Ombudsmen attended the NY State Long Term Care Ombudsman Training Conference "Advocating for Quality" that was held in Syracuse this year. Some topics offered: "Civic Engagement", "Conflict Resolution", "What's New in Assisted Living & Nursing Homes", and "Empowerment for Real Change"

Madison County Ombudsmen are offered a wealth of training opportunities. If you enjoy learning and sharing with others, you are encouraged to explore the Ombudsman/Advocate Team experience. If you would like to discuss this volunteer opportunity, please call
RSVP at 684-3001 Ext. 115.



RSVP's Ombudsmen, certified advocates, contribute a wealth of time and talents to help improve the quality of life of individuals who live in long term care facilities. RSVP sends heartfelt Thanks to these volunteers who help those in need throughout the year.

Positive Impact of Volunteering

Traditionally, the focus of the impact of volunteer work is on the recipients of service. How many learned to read, were driven to



medical appointments, attended an exercise program? Were skills improved, are people more independent as a result of our volunteer work? All important outcomes!! Yet, what about the impact of volunteering on **YOU**, the volunteer?

Here are some reasons people say they volunteer and the positive impact it can have on our lives.

Learn or develop a new skill: Volunteering is the perfect vehicle to discover something you are really good at and develop a new skill. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." It is never too late to learn new skills and no reason why you should stop adding to your knowledge.

Motivation and sense of achievement: It may be true that no one person can solve all the world's problems, but what you *can* do is make that little corner of the world where you live just a little bit better.

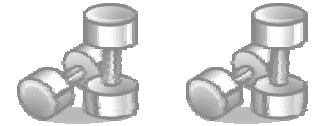
Meet a diverse range of people: Volunteering brings together a diverse range of people from all backgrounds and walks of life. Both the recipients of your volunteer efforts and your co-workers can be a rich source of inspiration and an excellent way to develop your interpersonal skills.

Experience greater life satisfaction and meet new friends: Evidence indicates that volunteering has a positive effect on social psychological factors, such as a personal sense of purpose and accomplishment, and enhances a person's social networks to buffer stress and reduce the risk of disease.

Prevent poor health in the future: A number of studies demonstrate that those individuals who volunteer at an earlier point in life experience greater functional ability and better health outcomes later in life.

Adapted from www.worldvolunteerweb.org

Bone Builders Buzz



**New Bone Builders Leaders
= New Energy**

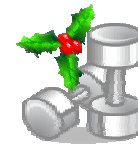
14 volunteers were trained as new Bone Builders Leaders/Helpers at a Workshop which took place on November 6th, 2009 at the RSVP office in Morrisville. The day-long workshop prepared all those attending to help support the weekly Bone Builders exercise sessions in their community. Four experienced Bone Builders leaders supported the training with their enthusiasm and knowledge. The positive energy of the whole group made the day a real pleasure!

Some of the topics covered at the Workshop were: a Program Overview, Tufts Research, the Bone Builders workbook and forms, Demonstration of exercises and equipment, Exercise safety, progression & intensity, and Program Evaluations.

If you are interested in staying active and healthy, you can join a future training for Bone Builders volunteers, please call Eileen at RSVP 684-3001 ext 115 for more details.

The pro-active Bone Builders Exercise Program can only continue with the help of trained volunteers. RSVP welcomes all our new Bone Builder volunteers.

SINCERE THANKS



Best Wishes to Bone Builders leaders and helpers for a warm and wonderful Holiday Season.

RSVP Celebrates Martin Luther King Day



On January 18th RSVP Volunteers and 4-H members will gather to assemble emergency preparedness kits to be delivered to selected citizens who access the Madison County Home Health program. Kits will be delivered the week of January 18th.

Featured Program... Medical Transportation

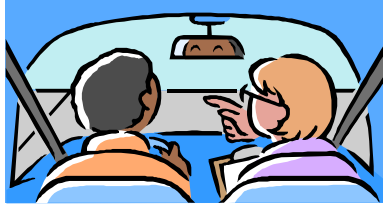
Madison County Office for the Aging Volunteer Medical Transportation for the Elderly Program

A call came in to the Office for the Aging Medical Transportation Program from a senior who was scheduled for cataract surgery. She would be able to drive herself to pre-testing but with no family nearby she had no ride to the hospital or for the follow up appointment. Before asking for a ride she thought about putting off the surgery but now she wouldn't have to. Connie Brown, Transportation Program Coordinator at Office for the Aging arranged for an RSVP volunteer to help. The volunteer driver helped her get to the surgery and afterwards made sure she was comfortably inside her home before leaving. Another volunteer took her to the follow up appointment the next morning. The Volunteer Medical Transportation program gives people the opportunity to help others remain independent.

In Madison County, access to medical care utilizing public transport is lacking due to limited bus routes and schedules and the fact that many medical facilities are located in cities outside of the county with no connecting public transport available. Therefore, the Madison County Office for the Aging Senior Transportation Program provides a crucial service for accessing health care. No other agency provides this service. The need for this program is great, last year 250 seniors throughout Madison County were able to get to more than 1,900 needed medical appointments.

The transportation program depends on volunteers recruited by RSVP to keep up with the demand for the service.

We asked Connie Brown, OFA Medical Transportation Program Coordinator some questions about the program...



What do you see as the unique strengths of the program?

Each area of Madison County is served by volunteers who live in that area. It is neighbors helping

neighbors. RSVP Volunteers are important because seniors who use our service feel most comfortable being helped by older more experienced drivers.

How about the challenges?

Oneida and Canastota have large populations of seniors asking for assistance. Often there are not enough volunteers available to get everyone where they need to go.

Weather can be a challenge, but it's surprising how many trips we do in the winter since the bulk of trips are scheduled at mid-day when the roads have had a chance to clear. If the volunteer isn't comfortable going out they don't have to, they're the boss. Appointments can always be rescheduled. We don't take chances by going out during bad weather.

And recently the economy has made some people who like to volunteer think twice. But the Office for the Aging is able to offer mileage reimbursement which helps volunteers with the high cost of fuel.

What are the special requirements for people who need rides?

Our program is funded to help Madison County residents, age 60+ to medical appointments. Since volunteers use their own vehicles the people we help need to be able to get in and out of the vehicle by themselves.

If someone needs a ride what should they do?

Call me at 315-697-5743 as soon as they know they'll need a ride, even if it's a month in advance. I need at least 3 days notice -

volunteers are busy people, it can take a couple days to catch up with them.

What do drivers say about the program?

Drivers say they enjoy getting out and meeting new people and doing this rewarding work. Here at OFA we say volunteer drivers are the best people in the world! I've worked at the office for 18 years and we've maintained a corps of 35 - 80 volunteers. Many people will begin using our service after a surgery or a health event that forced them to stop driving, an awful time in their lives. But one trip with a volunteer driver and they've met a new friend.

If someone wants to be a driver what should they do?

Call me at 315-697-5743 or e-mail transportation@ofamadco.org. Volunteer drivers are always free to accept or decline a trip, I will work with you so you can volunteer when it's convenient for you.

I appreciate what RSVP of Madison County does to recruit volunteers for Office for the Aging.



Tax Counselors Needed

The 2010 tax season will be upon us in no time. RSVP is gearing up to service senior citizens who need their taxes prepared. We are looking for volunteers who want to help. RSVP volunteers tax counselors assist Madison County seniors (age 60+) with preparation of federal and state income tax forms and related documents. Computer skills necessary. Tax counselors also provide information and referral services on other identified issues. Training provided.

Call us at RSVP if you are interested in becoming a tax counselor at 684-3001.

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Morrisville, NY 13408
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RSVP of Madison County

is part of the Senior Service Corps within the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal domestic volunteer agency and is sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Madison County. Also supported by: NYSOFA, the United Way of Greater Oneida, and the Community Chests of Canastota, Hamilton, Town of Sullivan, and the United Community Chest of the Towns of Cazenovia, Fenner, & Nelson, The Central NY Community Foundation and other contributors.



Safe Pill Drop-Off Successful

Madison County held its first collection day for expired and unneeded medications on September 12, 2009. More than 75 pounds of expired and unused medications were collected. Madison County residents brought unused prescriptions, vitamins and over-the-counter medications by the bagful to the county landfill on Buyea Road. The drugs included more than 2,560 prescription medication, 238 over-the-counter medications and 64 controlled substances.

Jeff Paul of the Madison County's Sheriff's Department and Stop DWI Coordinator Stephen Goodfriend transported the material to an incinerator in Fulton for proper disposal.

Assemblyman Bill Magee presented a New York State Assembly Citation to coalition members for design and implementation of the program. The coalition was comprised of representatives from the Madison County Department of Solid Waste and Sanitation, Morrisville State College Environmental Training Center, Madison County Stop-DWI program, BRIDGES and RSVP. Two main goals of the program are to reduce availability of prescription medications that can be misused and to remove these substances from the waste stream. The event was so successful that organizers are planning to hold two similar collections next year. RSVP plans to increase involvement in 2010 by doing outreach presentations and helping at the event. Please contact Mary Bartlett at RSVP 684-3001 Ext. 103 to get involved.

