

RSVP QUARTERLY

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program

Volume 4 No.1

October 2004

98 South Main Street, Norwalk, CT 06854-3126

Tel. (203) 899-2443

Teri Klein, Director

Message From the Director

I am very pleased to be appointed as the Director of RSVP of SW CT. As many of you know, I have served RSVP previously as Outreach Coordinator and as a member of the Advisory Council. I look forward to continuing to work with our dedicated volunteers and the many valuable programs that provide services which impact our communities.

I welcome suggestions and ideas that you may have to strengthen RSVP's programs and recruitment efforts. Please feel free to call 899-2443 or e-mail tklein@neon-norwalk.org. Thanks to everyone for your ongoing support. Together we can continue to make a positive difference in SW CT.

Over 200 volunteers were honored at our 30th annual Recognition Luncheon held at Giovanni's II in Darien. Eight volunteers received certificates of achievement for contributing more than 700 hours of service. Those cited were Doris Allegrini of Greenwich, Eleanor Hart and Betty Johnson of Wilton, Joseph Padula of Norwalk, Phyllis Ryan of Darien, Molly Small of Westport and Mary Tanner and Elise Vasale of Wilton. A special recognition went to Anna Young, who in addition to contributing more than 700 hours of service, obtained over 100 gift certificates from area businesses and organizations for the luncheon prizes. A special appreciation goes to all the Community Organizations which made this annual event possible.

Edythe Ritchie, a tourism counselor at the Darien Welcome Center since its beginning 13 years ago, received an honorary award from the Voluntary Action Center of Mid-Fairfield for her work welcoming visitors to Connecticut. Edythe also plans, schedules and coordinates all the trips for seniors at the Norwalk Senior Center. Congratulations Edythe for all of your many contributions.

A special thank you to three of our funding sources, the State Department of Social Services, the Town of Wilton and the United Way of Norwalk & Wilton who have funded us for the year 2004-05.

WELCOME TO NEW ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Sister Mary Jane Card of Our Lady of Fatima, Wilton, is our newest member. She has done graduate work in gerontology and is a state certified therapeutic recreation director of nursing homes in CT. Presently she is serving the elderly in the Parish of Our Lady of Fatima and others in need in the community.

Ruthie Brown, retired Director of The Family Support Center will be re-joining the Council. We look forward to working with you both.

NEW RSVP OPPORTUNITIES

Stepping Stones Museum for Children

Volunteer opportunities to work with children ages ten and under include: a tour facilitator who guides groups through their interactive experience at the museum, a program presenter who leads art and science-based activities within the galleries, and a resource center interpreter who supports museum staff welcoming visitors and introduces them to the variety of resources available. Volunteer Orientation and on-the-job training is provided by the staff for all positions which vary in time commitments from one to two hour shifts on a weekly or monthly basis.

Emergency Response Team

The Westport-Weston Health District is recruiting both professional and non-medical volunteers to help people move through health clinics efficiently, effectively and safely.

Volunteers will be on hand in case of an emergency and will also be available to assist with regular upcoming health clinics. The Health District will provide training.

The Wildlife Orphanage

This program is dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and release of injured and orphaned wildlife and educating the community on how to peacefully coexist with our native wildlife. Volunteers are needed to assist with marketing and educational presentations. Training is provided

Intergenerational Programs

Interested in sharing your stories with the younger set? A new program is beginning which will offer an opportunity for seniors to meet with high school students to share ideas and stories. Time and place to be decided.

Make a Difference Day

An opportunity for RSVP volunteers to participate in this annual community-wide annual event of volunteerism and outreach. The national program will take place locally October 17-24. There are many projects to choose from. We will focus on a few programs of interest and feasible for RSVP volunteers. Let's make RSVP a presence this year in this nationally recognized program. Call for project details.

Irving Freese Community Center

Volunteers are needed to host at this community lunch program.

Parent (and grandparent) Leadership Training

This program enables parents and grandparents to become effective advocates for children. A course of study is offered at Norwalk Hospital integrating child development and leadership skills. Volunteers are selected through a competitive application process

Junior Achievement.

This program focuses on teaching life skills to children. An age-appropriate activity curriculum is provided for grades K-12. Volunteers are currently needed to help teach the curriculum in the 2nd grade schools in Westport, once a week for 5 weeks. Training at all levels is provided.

CONTINUING RSVP OPPORTUNITIES

Child Literacy and Tutoring Programs

There are many opportunities to read to or tutor children varying according to the ages of the children, and the location of the program. Most programs require **only an hour or so of your time once a week.**

Pre-School Age Children – NEON- Head Start Child Development Program. Volunteers are needed to read approximately an hour a week to pre-school children either one-on-one or in small groups. Hours are flexible- anytime from 8a.m. to 5 p.m.

Pediatric Waiting Rooms at the Norwalk Community Health Center and the Norwalk Health Department. Read to children ages 6 months to 5 years while the child attends a well child visit with a parent or guardian. . This is part of a national program “Reach out and Read” demonstrating reading aloud skills to parents to show both children and parents that reading is fun.

School Age Children

Norwalk Housing Authority – Opportunities are available to help children with reading, math, computers and other subjects after school hours at Norwalk Housing Community Centers. Specific reading program for children grades 1-3, 4-5 and 6-9 at the newly opened headquarters of “Norwalk Reads” at the King Kennedy Center.

NEON After School Recreational Program – Volunteers are needed to assist the librarian, reading, and providing tutoring for children ages 5-11 after school at Nathaniel Eli.

Naramake School Family Resource Center – An early literacy program for children K-3. Volunteers will work with one child either before or after school.

Child Mentoring Programs

A school based “friendship” program that matches children who would benefit from a positive one-to-one relationships with a caring adult.. Mentor volunteers are matched with identified students in grades K-12. Meetings are held at the school site, one hour a week through the school year. These often result in long-term satisfying relationships between students and volunteers. Programs take place in most SW CT school systems.

WORK WITH ADULTS

The Norwalk Tree Alliance

Volunteers are needed to help inventory Norwalk’s City Trees. Information is gathered for the city to establish a long-term comprehensive plan for the maintenance and planting of Norwalk’s city trees. Notable, Historic and Memorial Trees are also identified. Volunteers meet on Saturday

mornings at 9:00 A.M. at the Tree Alliance Headquarters, 215 East Ave., Norwalk through October. Planning meetings are held on Thursday afternoons at 4:30 P.M.

Tourism

Tourism “counselors” provide information and hospitality services to travelers at the Darien Welcome Center. Travel assistance varies from simple routing questions to specialty computer searches. Day trips to places of interest in CT are provided to volunteer counselors in addition to travel reimbursements. The Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism provides on-site training. The time commitment is one four-hour morning or afternoon shift during the week or on weekends

Friendly Connections

Telephone group facilitators lead specialized group conference calls and classes for seniors by phone from their own home or office. Leaders choose their own topic, a subject they are “passionate about”. Facilitators may conduct one session, or a series of sessions of about an hour each. Leaders prepare about 30 minutes of material and allow seniors to discuss the topic the balance of the time.

Opportunities are also available to make phone calls to seniors for a friendly chat. These programs are coordinated through the Family Centers Inc., which provides training as needed

City Hall

Volunteers are needed to staff the information desks at both Norwalk and Westport City Halls.

Mailing Teams

A popular RSVP program gives volunteers an opportunity to socialize and meet new people while helping local agencies get their message out to the community. Sites vary. You may volunteer as often as your schedule permits.

Greenwich Chapter of the American Red Cross. Volunteers are needed in all areas of service and training is provided. Presently there is an urgent need of receptionist volunteers for the front desk and volunteer drivers for transportation services.

Wilton Community Team and Project Table Volunteers are always welcome in the Wilton Area to assist the team with mailings and special programs. People interested in creating handcrafted items are encouraged to join the project table.

The Norwalk Senior Center. The Senior Net Computer Learning Center has a need for volunteer coaches, instructors and administrative assistants. **The Norwalk Meals on Wheels Program** needs volunteers to deliver meals and pay a friendly visit to our meal recipients. Meals are delivered 6 days per week (Mon. – Sat.) between 10 am and 2:30pm.

Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now
98 South Main Street
Norwalk CT 06853