

RSVP QUARTERLY

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98 South Main Street, Norwalk, CT 06854-3126

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Sarah Mann, Director

Teri's Corner

Two hundred volunteers were honored at the Annual Recognition Luncheon held at Giovanni's II in Darien. The Hoot Owls, the glee club of the Y's Men of Westport and Weston, entertained us and over 100 door prizes were distributed thanks in large part to Anna Young who solicited gifts from over ninety local establishments. Romero Cherry, state director of the Corporation for National and Community Service, recognized Anna for her work as an RSVP volunteer. Robert Burgess, executive director of Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now was also honored. Burgess who has been director of NEON for 30 years retired in June

Madeline Iacovacci an RSVP volunteer and resident at the Murray Hill Long Term Care Facility received an award from Mayor Alex Knopp at the recognition reception sponsored by the Voluntary Action Center of Mid-Fairfield County.

RSVP community volunteer activities will be highlighted in a video program produced by Stanley Benham, advisory council member. Programs showcased include: Tourism, Reach Out and Read, Head Start, Knitting Programs, Carver Foundation, Norwalk Housing and volunteers from the Mailing Teams. The production will be aired on channel 77. All RSVP volunteers will be notified of the date and time by post card so you can tune in and watch yourself on TV.

A special thank-you to two of our funding sources, The State Department of Social Services and the United Way of Norwalk & Wilton who funded us for the year 2003-4.

A warm welcome to Teri's two new grandchildren, Iris Ruth and Rebecca Iris born to her daughters, Karen and Laura

NEW RSVP OPPORTUNITIES

I'm O.K. Program for Seniors

RSVP and the American Red Cross Mid-Fairfield County Chapter are coordinating a well-being program for seniors living in a Housing Complex. The purpose of the program is to ensure that residents who live in a senior living complex will have someone to check on them each day. RSVP will provide the I'm OK door tags which participating residents will place on their doors to let others know they are O.K. Participation is voluntary.

This is a unique opportunity for neighbors to help neighbors. Volunteers are needed to serve as hall monitors to check tags.. If the OK tag is not on the door and there is no response to a knock, monitors will notify management who will enter the apartment to give help where it is needed. The Red Cross will also provide materials which have been developed for and by seniors to aid in general safety preparedness.

The program will be initiated at Kingsway Apartments. Seniors living in this complex, who wish to participate in

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the training as hall monitors or assistant monitors please contact RSVP.

Community Disaster Preparedness Program

RSVP in cooperation with the Volunteer Center of Norwalk is planning to develop a disaster preparedness program. The focus of the program will be on training people how to help themselves in an emergency situation. Having a plan in place will help everyone know what to do if a crisis arises.

Overtime a database will be developed of people with special skills which will be useful in time of a crisis. For example a retired nurse with experience treating infectious disease, or a man who can operate heavy machinery would be included. More information will be forthcoming as the plan evolves.

Carver Reading Crew

The Carver Reading Crew is a weekly group that gathers to help young children (2nd and 3rd grade) who are falling behind grade level in reading. Volunteers (mostly one-on-one) read to children, and help them with phonetics and spelling. The program will meet 4:00-5:30 p.m. on Tuesdays at the Carver in Norwalk. Sessions will run one hour and a half a week for a ten-week session October through December. Training will be provided

Naramake School Resource Center

Naramake School is looking for volunteers for an early literacy program. The children are in the age range of K-3 and the volunteer would be working one to one with the student either before school 7:30 – 8:30.a.m. or after 3-4 p.m.

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 "pas-

sionate 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.

Christian Community Action

Volunteers are needed to distribute food at the NEON food pantry one morning a week from 9:30 – 12:00.

CONTINUING RSVP OPPORTUNITIES

Mentoring Programs in SW Connecticut

Work with Children

Project Friendship is a community based mentoring program that serves children ages 6 to 14 in the Towns of Norwalk, Wilton, Westport, Weston, New Canaan and Darien. The program matches children who would benefit from a positive one-to-one relationship with a caring adult. Mentors meet with their "Little Friends" once a week for 3 hours for a minimum of one year.

The Norwalk Mentor Program, of the Norwalk Public Schools is a school-based, self-esteem building program that matches students with adult mentors. Mentor volunteers are matched with identified students in grades K-12. Mentoring meetings are held at the school site during the school day for one hour a week throughout the school year. Similar programs take place in the public schools in the other SW CT school systems. Choose the town that is nearest to you.

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Kidline is an intergenerational telephone-mentoring program matching children between the ages of 6-13 with an adult for an after-school or evening telephone relationship.

Kidline mentors may be homebound, blind or live in isolation and lack the connection with children, yet want to help a child over the telephone. Mentors make weekly telephone calls to a child during the school year. Training and ongoing support is provided.

Reach Out and Read

The Norwalk Community Health Center is seeking volunteers to read to children ages 6 months to 5 years in the pediatric waiting rooms at the Norwalk Community Health Center on Water Street or the Health Department on East Avenue. The volunteers will be demonstrating reading aloud skills to the parents that show both children and parents that reading is fun for kids. This is a twice a month commitment for at least one hour. Bilingual volunteers welcome!

Neon - Head Start. Volunteers are needed to read approximately an hour a week to pre-school children either one-on-one or in small groups. Hours at the Norwalk Head Start Site are flexible - anytime from 8 a.m. to 5.p.m.

Norwalk Housing Authority is looking for dedicated volunteers to assist in their learning centers, specifically, Homework Heroes. Children need help with homework, reading, math, and other subjects. Tutoring time is available after school hours.

Work with Adults

Norwalk Tree Alliance

Help inventory street trees in Norwalk. Volunteers work in teams of three. Training is provided at the volunteer's con-

venience. This project will assist the city with implementing a more effective and efficient management of Norwalk's "urban forest". Groups are already meeting every other Saturday at the Tree Alliance office at 2 Maple Street.

Call us for the dates.899-2442

Wildlife Care and Rehabilitation Program: Provides treatment and supportive care to injured or orphaned wild creatures with the goal of returning these animals to their natural habitat. Harbor Watch/River Watch Program: Assist with monitoring the rivers, harbors and watershed areas in lower Fairfield County. Help analyze the data at the Earth Place laboratory. Attendance at up-coming training sessions is a prerequisite for volunteering in each of the programs.

Save the Sound is dedicated to the restoration, protection and appreciation of Long Island Sound and its watershed through advocacy, education and research. A variety of volunteer opportunities include: Administrative support, Advocacy, Legislative Alerts and Water Quality Monitoring Program.

Tourism

The Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development and RSVP offer those fifty-five and over the opportunity to volunteer as travel counselors. This is a four-hour a week commitment at either the Darien or Greenwich Welcome Centers. Darien is open year round and the Greenwich site is seasonal (May-October). There is a generous mileage reimbursement offered. The Darien Welcome Center is the busiest in the nation boasting four thousand visitors a week during the summer vacation season.

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Norwalk City Hall

Meet the Mayor!! This position may be of particular interest to the RSVP members that reside in Norwalk. RSVP volunteers staff the information desk at Norwalk City Hall. The volunteers will offer directions to visitors to City Hall as well as pointing out some of Norwalk's heritage through the lovely murals that are throughout the building.

Mailing Teams

If you like to socialize and meet new people while helping out a local not for profit this may be just the placement for you! RSVP volunteers stuff, label, seal and zip code bulk mailings. The sites change so it's not the same old thing. Go as often as your schedule permits. Lunch is provided if you stay until three. Teams are based in Norwalk and Wilton

RSVP Volunteer Highlight Susan Mahar

For over 15 years Susan has worked with Community Services at the Westport Woman's Club. She is the co-organizer and facilitator of the RSVP knitting group, which meets regularly at the Westport Woman's Club. This group contributes a large variety of handcrafted hats, mittens and scarves for Project Head Start as well as beautiful sweater sets and afghans for economically disadvantaged children in Southwestern Connecticut. The Community Services Department also vol-

unteers at the Health Clinics of the Westport/Weston Health Department. Susan is active in the Gourmet group at the Club, which sponsors the Bake Sale at the popular Yankee Doodle Fair. Currently she is helping a group co-ordinate the history of the Westport Woman's Club, which is over 90 years old.

She has been an active volunteer at the Mid-Fairfield Chapter of the American Red Cross serving as Co-Chairman of the Canteen at Blood Drives for the past fifteen years and now as a Chairman-of-the-Day. Susan is also active in Greens Farms Congregational Church.

Susan likes the feeling of being a help in some way. When asked if she had a word of advice to volunteers she says:

"Just Do It! You'll keep busy and feel good. You're never too old to volunteer. There is a job for everyone".

Good Advice Susan, Thanks for being an outstanding role model for RSVP.

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