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What talents do YOU have that are waiting to be expressed through volunteer service?



RSVP News



Your invitation to serve.

RSVP PUTS EXPERIENCE TO WORK BY CONNECTING VOLUNTEERS WITH REWARDING OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE IN TRAVIS COUNTY • FEBRUARY 2010

Strengthen Your Heart Through Volunteerism

As you may already know, medical studies have shown that volunteerism is good for you and can extend your life expectancy. While donating your time helps those in need, it also provides help to the person who is doing the volunteer work. Since February is American Heart Month and also hosts Valentine's Day, this month we highlight four RSVP volunteers who exercise their hearts in different ways!

One of the most obvious ways to strengthen your heart is through physical exercise. But ask anyone who participates in the Line Dance classes taught by **Joan Cox** (right) and they will tell you that it's not just good for the body, but also for the mind and spirit. On the day we visited class, over 100 line dancers from novice to expert joined together for this fun, low-impact class. Why? Many told us that remembering all the steps helps keep the mind sharp and focused. Others said it was for

the social benefit. "You get to meet all kinds of people who are very kind and supportive. People help out when you forget a step or make a mistake, they encourage one another", said one participant. Finally, almost everyone admitted that the main reason they are there is because it's FUN! Joan has been teaching line dance at the South Austin Senior Activity Center for over 8 years. She not only instructs class, she coordinates every aspect from beginning to end. Her passion for



Lee "Mama B" Bernfeld

David never dated "seniors" until he met Maria because he felt they "never did anything." But anyone who knows Maria and David knows that neither of them is the type who "doesn't do anything." Quite the opposite, they do many things and most of them are done as a couple. In addition to participating in sports like bike riding, tennis, kayaking, Tai Chi and Line Dance classes and playing pool, they volunteer together. David wasn't keen on volunteering because of a negative experience he had in the past, but a couple of years ago he joined Maria as a volunteer at a fundraising event for KMFA and was hooked. Both volunteer for special events of all types, and they work with the Capital Area Food Bank, have assisted with the Zach Scott Theater and have recently started organizing and leading a Pickle Ball class at Conley Guerrero Senior Activity Center more than 3 years ago.



Joan Cox

line dancing helped bring the State-wide Texas Line Dance Jamboree to Austin. Joan and many of her classmates spearheaded the event's coordination held over a three day period with nearly 400 state-wide participants.

Maria Sosa-Stephen and David Stephen (left) met in the pool room at Conley Guerrero Senior Activity Center more than 3 years ago.



David and Maria Sosa-Stephen



P.O. Box 1748
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The ARC of the Capital Area seeks an intern. Arc of the Arts is a program offered by the Arc of the Capital Area. They run an art studio and gallery where people with and without intellectual disabilities spend time each day creating artwork together. This position will require a commitment of 20 hours each week, have computer skills, experience working with people with development and intellectual disabilities and an interest in art. Contact us to find out how to apply for this educational and fun opportunity.

Come be a part of blood drive team! The Blood and Tissue Center of Central Texas needs volunteers to greet donors at the blood drives, welcoming and directing them as needed; answer basic questions about the donation process; tend to donors at the conclusion of the donation process by offering refreshments; and thank donors for their time and contribution, encouraging their return. Volunteers should be friendly, outgoing and possess good communication skills, and have an ability to provide a comfortable atmosphere in which donors can recuperate. Excellent customer service skills and ability to work independently as well as in a team environment are also helpful. Proper training will be provided. Reliable, punctual, and flexible availability for maximum coverage as well as Bilingual (English/Spanish) skills are a plus but not required.

Created from the merger of Reading Is Fundamental of Austin and Capital Area Reach Out and Read, BookSpring instills in children a love of reading and promotes books as a means to success. By offering a range of programs that support early childhood literacy, BookSpring

champions the value of reading and encourages parents to read to their children from birth forward, resulting in stronger families and increased lifelong opportunities for every child. Volunteers are needed to help with administrative duties and special projects, such as filing, sorting, and labeling; developing forms, processes, and procedures; developing a BookSpring photo archive; stuffing envelopes for special event invitations and fundraising campaigns. Learn about next generation techniques to build reading skills in groups that include our youngest and most disadvantaged families. Help open the world to children through reading! Volunteers should be able to communicate well in oral and written format, be able to work well with others or to work independently, and have excellent organizational and analytical skills.

Do you want to do something this winter that will help make a real difference in the lives of Caritas clients with little effort? You can conduct your own food drive. Collect canned goods, beans and rice, hygiene kit and other non-perishable items from your family, friends, neighbors, businesses or with anyone else that you know. For more information on how to do your own food drive – contact us today. You CAN make a difference with very little time or energy.

Dell Children's Medical Center needs more "At Your Request" Service Volunteers. Occupying one of the Center's most important positions, these volunteers are the Center's first contact with family and visitors. Volunteers need to be kind, smiling, patient, and willing to give directions. Working along with a paid staff person, volunteers escort patients and families to areas within

the hospital, assist families with errand running, and provide companionship for lonely or scared patients. This position is best for those who are good listeners and communicate well with others. The time commitment is flexible.

Help older adults by putting your clerical and administrative skills to good use. Helping the Aging, Needy and Disabled has recently moved to a new downtown Austin location and needs Administrative Specialists to assist them on a rotating basis. Training is provided by a fun, friendly staff in a warm environment. Find out how to get started by getting in touch with RSVP.

The LifeWorks Literacy Program seeks tutors to work with our Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Classes meet two days a week and tutors may teach both weekly sessions or opt to "co-tutor" and teach one day per week. Sessions meet either at their Center in East Austin or at various locations throughout the community. They offer morning, afternoon, and evening sessions. Tutors are asked to make a 6-month minimum commitment and are provided with an orientation and 12 hours of pre-service training. No prior experience is required, and knowledge of a language other than English is not necessary. The only required skills are motivation, energy, and patience!

Marbridge Foundation provides a unique spectrum of residential care, education, and training for adults with various cognitive challenges. The gift of your time will help Marbridge residents achieve their full potential. There are many ways you

Volunteer Opportunities, cont'd

can volunteer; from companionship to horticulture therapy, they have a place for you. Volunteer shift times and days can be flexible and can even be incorporated into what you already do during your free time (for example, going to church or a movie with a resident). Marbridge can put your time, talents and services to great use to benefit residents — and you will have fun at the same time! Contact RSVP today to learn more about this wonderful opportunity!

Project Transitions is in need of volunteers at Doug's House, a 5-bedroom residential hospice run by Project Transitions that provides hospice and housing care for people with HIV and AIDS. Volunteers within the hospice help with any and all tasks that are within their own comfort level. Those tasks can include providing companionship, cooking meals, providing direct care for the clients, landscaping, general housekeeping. Volunteers are asked to commit to a weekly commitment of a 3-4 hour shift and must attend a three part training. The shift times are flexible and can work with your schedule.

RSVP can help your agency recruit volunteers. Please contact RSVP to learn how. For more details on these and other volunteer jobs, please call Travis County RSVP at 512-854-7787.

Connect with RSVP

If you are on facebook, send us an email and we'll gladly add you as a fan of RSVP.

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Hands & Hearts, cont'd from Page 1

love to have fun and strive to live life to it's fullest. Last year they tied their heart strings together in marriage.

No matter when or where you find Lee Bernfeld (page 1, top right), she will always have a smile on her face and a joke on the tip of her tongue. Known to most as "Mama B", Lee constantly shares her heart by giving her time, her wonderful sense of humor, and her love to many organizations. She volunteers each week with the Capital Area Food Bank, assists the residents at Marbridge Foundation, and gathers clothing from her neighbors to donate to Safeplace. Lee also serves on the Board for the South Austin Senior Activity Center and volunteers with AARP and the National Letter Carriers group. If that wasn't enough, Lee also donates blood platelets to the Blood & Tissue Center of Central Texas. She has been donating blood since the 1940's in every state she's lived in and enjoys donating platelets because it allows her to donate more frequently. When asked what her motivation is for volunteering, Lee says "When I focus on something, something good happens. To me, it's like payback." She truly enjoys volunteering and giving back to the community. As she told us, "You're there for them and they are there for you." Lee also enjoys dropping off cookies to good folks in the community like her local Fire Department and the employees at Half Price Books.

So take the time to strengthen your heart. Find what it is that you are passionate about and what you truly love and get out there and do it. It can be physical, mental, or just for the love of it. Do you need help figuring out how to find an agency that offers what you love to do? Then call RSVP. We can help you find just the right match for what you love. Exercise your heart strings today; there's no better time than right now to get involved!



Small Change Makes A Big Difference

Due to a recent policy change, the Travis County Auditor's office has asked RSVP to hold a volunteer's mileage reimbursement until the total exceeds \$5.00.

For example, if you request reimbursement totaling \$3.40, your reimbursement will be held until the total is greater than \$5.00. As soon as the five dollar minimum is exceeded, the Auditor's office will process and mail your check. Thank you.

THANK YOU

to the 30 RSVP Volunteers who participated in the 2010 MLK Day of Service at the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas. Together you helped process 9,614 pounds of food, which will translate into 7,691 meals to nourish hungry people. Well done!



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