

## RSVP Advisory Council

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	<b>Alice Latino</b> Emeritus Corporation	<b>John Thomas</b> Community Volunteer
	<b>John McKetta, Ph.D.</b> University of T	

## How To Contact RSVP

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## Agencies, Tell Us What You Need

If you work with a nonprofit or public agency, tell us how RSVP can help your organization. Do you need volunteers? Tell us. Do you need professional training opportunities? Let us know. We're here for you.

Please take a moment to write us a letter, send an email, or give us a call today.

Our email address is [RSVP@co.travis.tx.us](mailto:RSVP@co.travis.tx.us) and our mailing address is PO Box 1748, Austin TX 78767. Or you can phone us at (512) 854-5872.

We'd love to hear your story. We're listening!



# RSVP

*News*

P.O. Box 1748  
Austin, Texas 78767

# RSVP

*News*



RSVP PUTS EXPERIENCE TO WORK BY CONNECTING VOLUNTEERS WITH REWARDING OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE IN TRAVIS COUNTY • OCTOBER 2009

## "Not being able to read is like being in prison. Because if you can't read, you're not free."

*LifeWorks Literacy Student*

Be thankful you can read this article.

According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL, 2005), about 30% of all adults (63 million) read at the Basic or Below Basic level. They can't read a newspaper article and answer questions about it. Nor can they fill out an application, read a food label, or read a simple story to a child.

U.S. Department of Education statistics reveal that 60% of prison inmates are illiterate, and 85% of all juvenile offenders have reading problems. Illiteracy leads to low self-esteem, unemployment, poverty, and crime.

Illiteracy is an unseen problem yet it profoundly impacts our every community, and is not limited to any region, race, or socioeconomic class.

LifeWorks, one of our community's most innovative nonprofit organizations, offers a number of programs designed to break the cycle of illiteracy. In addition to an array of housing and counseling programs for youth and families, LifeWorks offers GED classes, Adult Basic Education classes and English as a Second

Language (ESL) classes for youth and adults.

**Susan McDowell** (below, left) is the Executive Director of LifeWorks. She noted that the agency serves more than 800 literacy students each year.

"Students can attend either small group classes or one-on-one tutoring sessions. Many of our classes are held at our Education Center on Rosewood Avenue," she says. "Off-site tutoring is also available at numerous locations in the Austin area, many of which are in public schools, housing complexes, or libraries."



Susan McDowell,  
LifeWorks Executive Director

LifeWorks also offers a Life Skills class for young adults wishing to develop job skills. Lesson topics include writing a resume, completing a job application, and answering questions in a job interview. Students get help with mock job interviews, com-

puter skills, and volunteer or apprentice work to gain marketable skills.

**Kris Levenhagen** (below, right) loves her volunteer assignments at LifeWorks. "I recently retired from the US State Department, and before starting a new career I'm taking a year off to volunteer. Volunteering allows me to explore potential new directions and build new skills," says Kris. "Plus, tutoring with LifeWorks is exciting, challenging and truly rewarding!"



Kris Levenhagen,  
LifeWorks Volunteer

Kris learned of the need for tutors when she was researching new career directions. "I started with Literacy Austin, which later merged with LifeWorks. Now I tutor three classes," she said.

LifeWorks offers many ways volunteers can leverage their life experience to help others live more successful lives. Teaching experience is not required; training is provided.

Please look inside for more tutor, mentor and teacher opportunities. If you'd like to help, contact RSVP. As always, RSVP is thankful for and celebrates all the good work you do.

*Current Volunteer Opportunities: Contact RSVP For Details*

**Austin Independent School District's 21st Century Program** invites you to be a tutor and help young students with their homework. Work one-on-one with students at Hart Elementary School Mondays thru Thursdays from 3PM to 4:30PM. Please be able to commit to at least one afternoon per week. Watch these students gain confidence and have a little fun yourself!

Become a Classroom Coach with **Austin Partners in Education's** effort to strengthen our schools, support our teachers. Choose a program/location/schedule that work best for you. You will volunteer for 45 minutes once a week for about 25 weeks, working with the same group of 2-3 students each week to build important mentoring relationships. Classroom Coaching programs help students at key points in their education, such as 2nd grade Reading, 8th grade Math, and College Readiness programs. Visit ClassroomCoaching.org or contact the RSVP office for more details.

Find the best fit for you! Volunteers are needed to assist the **Austin Travis County Mental Health Mental Retardation** (ATCMHMR) department in several ways. Short term needs include assisting with their Outpatient Mental Health Clinic from November 15 to December 31. Job responsibilities involve working directly with patients as they change Medicare-D plans and also the completion of a yearly update for "extra help" for low income clients. Long term needs include helping once or twice a month with the deep cleaning of homes occupied by clients with severe developmental disabilities located in South Austin and/or to assist with the completion of a Consumer Satisfaction Phone survey

once or twice a month at the ATCMHMR offices. Call today to find out more details about which volunteer activity is the perfect match for you!

**The Capital Area Food Bank** seeks volunteers who can assist with the organization of clients, etc. at their facility. Responsibilities include greeting clients and ensuring proper intake paperwork is on file; assisting with food selection from pantry; carrying food to clients' vehicles; restocking shelves; and help with break down and clean up after food is distributed. You should be able to lift 30 pounds and work with clients from varied backgrounds.

**Emancipet** has chosen to advocate for and provide free and low-cost spay/neuter services since day one because they believe it is one of the most efficient and effective methods of reducing the homeless pet population. They provide spay/neuter services throughout the Central Texas area via both mobile and stationary clinics, and serve between 1,200 and 2,000 pets each month. Emancipet is looking for Ambassadors to help with the mobile clinics in the early morning hours. The Ambassadors arrive at the East Austin locations at 6AM to establish and maintain a sign-in sheet for clients. They also hand out paperwork and answer client questions about how the day works. There is a lot of interaction with the clients, so Spanish speakers are helpful but not required. Volunteers are trained and given an orientation about the program.

It's that time of year again! **Foundation Communities** is gearing up for the 2010 tax season and is looking

for individuals to assist with the preparation of taxes for the next calendar year. Community Tax Centers offers free tax preparation and much more to Central Texans with low to moderate incomes, helping them avoid hundreds of dollars in tax preparation fees. Training will be provided, but volunteers should have experience in classroom instruction (professional teaching not required), the ability to clearly explain tax law issues, and have a knowledge of basic knowledge of how to use a computer and tax software packages. You must also be available to attend their 3 hour training session in October/November and be able to commit to at least one 3 hour shift per week from January to April for or a total of 36 hours over a 12 week season. Contact us to find out how to get started with this wonderful program!

**Lakeside Senior Residential Complex** is looking for a few good men and women! Are you someone who is concerned about the safety and well being of seniors? Their need for a Front Desk Security volunteer may be just right for you! Responsibilities include greeting visitors, processing visitor identifications, assisting visitors in signing in and out of the complex, distributing information security packets/brochures, interacting with seniors while helping to facilitate premises safety under the direction of on-call law enforcement and senior security director. Prefer the quiet environment of a library? If so, their Library Assistant position would be a great opportunity! Responsibilities include greeting visitors, assisting visitors in signing in and out of the library computer, distribution of informational library packets and brochures, interacting with seniors while helping facilitate patron's library and computer usage

**Volunteer Opportunities, cont'd**

and other duties while under the direction of an on-call interim library director. All volunteers are given a background check and previous experience in each area is preferred.

**LifeWorks** is seeking Literacy Programs tutors to work with their Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Classes meet twice per week and tutors may teach both weekly sessions or opt to "co-tutor" and teach one day per week. Groups range in size from one to ten students. Sessions meet either at LifeWorks Education Center in East Austin or at various locations throughout the community. Morning, afternoon and evening sessions are available. Tutors are asked to make a 6 month minimum commitment. The only required skills are motivation, energy, and patience. Because all tutors are provided with an orientation and 12 hours of pre-service training, no prior experience is required. Knowledge of a language other than English is not necessary. Orientations and trainings are held monthly. Please contact RSVP for more details.

**SafePlace** is seeking volunteers to prepare and deliver an evening meal for their Life Skills clients. These formerly homeless clients attend a weekly class with their children to learn skills to prepare themselves for independent living. Typical class size is 10 adults and 15 children and meets on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Volunteer for this project once or more, whatever works for your schedule. There are class dates in October, November and December which do not yet have volunteers. For more information please contact RSVP.

Calling all NUTTY volunteers! You are needed to crack pecans and/or sell nuts from November 2 through

**Connect with RSVP on facebook!**

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



February 26 at the **Senior Activity Center** on Shoal Crest Ave. Shifts are available Monday through Friday in four hour shifts from 8 AM to 12 PM and 12 to 4 PM. Volunteer jobs include: nut crackers who will move sacks of pecans weighing up to 30 lbs, operate and clean the pecan cracking machine, prepare receipts for customers, and collect money for nut cracking; "nut house" volunteers will accept pecans brought in for cracking and will lift and weigh pecans brought in, prepare receipts for customers, and collect money for nut cracking; substitute volunteers are also needed in both areas to fill in for shifts lacking support. Go nuts and offer your help today!

Jump on the saddle and join a wonderful cause that promotes youth education while preserving our shared western heritage. Although the **Star of Texas Fair and Rodeo** is several months away, planning is already in the works. Volunteers are needed to serve on various committees. The rodeo offers a wide variety of committees and opportunities, so you are sure to find something that is right for you! Some volunteer roles do require a membership fee. Many volunteer jobs will close on November 1, so contact RSVP to find out more and sign up today!

**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.**

**Please Welcome Our Newest Travis County RSVP Volunteers**

- Donna Abbott
- Jerry Cooper
- Marjorie Craig
- Doris Dixon
- Edward Doyle
- Bertha Fields
- Gladys Givens-Robinson
- Gloria Gomez
- Delwin Godd
- Jimmie Jones
- David Mann
- George McDonald
- Barbara Pete
- Xi-Quan Wang
- Mary Watson
- Veta Winick



**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.



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