

RSVP Advisory Council

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RSVP

News

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You Say You Want A Revolution?

Well, you know...we all want to change the world.



But change doesn't just happen on its own. Back in the day, we took to the streets and shouted for change. And in fact we did make some real advancements.

Today, there are new and pressing needs just about everywhere you look. So...want to do something about it? We've got a real solution.

Take some action.
Get involved. Call RSVP.
Your invitation to serve.



RSVP

News



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

Why Do We Do It? Because WE CARE.

Many volunteer caregivers serve through an organization that documents their efforts like Faith In Action Caregivers or Meals On Wheels and More. But many informally help their family, friends or neighbors directly, though few others are aware of their contributions to the community.

Folks have been caring for family members, friends and neighbors since the beginning of civilization. RSVP didn't invent the idea of volunteer caregiving, but we did create a program that supports volunteers who help older people remain independent. We call it WE CARE.



Benja Easley

The WE CARE Program tracks informal caregiving services and recognizes volunteers who provide those services. If you are driving an elderly friend to the grocery store, taking a neighbor to medical appointments, visiting homebound congregation members, etc, we encourage you to participate in the WE CARE Program. When you tell us about the

work you do, it allows RSVP to more accurately tell the story of the impact senior volunteers have in our community.

Caregiving takes as many shapes as there are needs. **Benja Easley** (below, left) takes care of her brother who is developmentally disabled. She also helps an elderly lady friend who is confined to a wheelchair. For both, Benja does grocery shopping, puts away the groceries, cooks, cleans, changes the bed, gets the mail...whatever needs to be done. "My husband is deceased," she explains, "and I really like having something to do." Benja reports her hours to RSVP and gets partial reimbursement for car expenses she incurs. "It helps," she says.

Fayetta Smith (below) serves lunches every day at the St. John Neighborhood Center. She delivers food to home-bound seniors and spends time chatting with them. She's usually transporting a couple



Fayetta Smith

of seniors to the Center, too. "I started doing these kinds of things with my husband," says Fayetta. "Being a Pastor's wife motivated me to help people. It's just a little I can do to help other people get along."



Paul Birdsall

Paul Birdsall (above) drives a passenger van for the Veterans Administration, taking vets from the VA's Austin Clinic to the Central Texas VA Medical Center in Temple. He does this drive three or four times each month. "I think the vets deserve all the help they can get," he says. "And this service might not be there if it weren't for volunteers."

If you're helping people in your community on a regular basis, tell us about it. We'd like to recognize the work you do, and support you as an important member of the volunteer community. Because WE CARE.

As always, Travis County RSVP thanks you for all you do to make our community a better place.

BookSpring, recently created from the merger of Reading Is Fundamental of Austin and Capital Area Reach Out and Read, instills children with 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 on, 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.

Camp Fire USA Balcones Council is a not-for-profit coeducational youth organization that serves 10 central Texas counties. We provide youth ages three to eighteen opportunities to learn in small groups with peers and adults, explore the natural world in our outdoor programs and take on leadership opportunities within the community and world at large. Camp Fire USA is looking for a variety of volunteers for various volunteer positions from club leaders, special event coordinators, program assistants, teacher's assistants, office assistants, to guest speakers. Training and orientation is provided for all positions.

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 lbs. and work with clients from varied backgrounds.

Volunteers are needed to assist **Communities in Schools** with their Tech Tots program. This program provides volunteer mentors, home computers, internet access, lab training and educational software to selected low-income families with preschool-age children in an effort to bridge the "digital divide" -- the widening gap between those with access to new technologies and those without. The project focuses on computer and technology mentoring of parents in order to enhance children's school readiness skills. Tech Tots provides mentors with family-friendly software that teaches basic math, science, language and geography skills. Volunteers should have basic computer experience and the ability to communicate with diverse populations; they should be patient, friendly and eager to work with families; and they should be able to pass a criminal background check. Spanish helpful but not required.

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. The time commitment is flexible. Learn more by calling RSVP.

Harbor Hospice of Austin is accepting applications for volunteers. If your talents and interests are in the areas of administrative support, special events, fundraising, music, pet care or companionship, you can help the terminally ill and their families. Training is offered to those compassionate volunteers who have time to share.

Meet interesting people from around the world and support a great cause! The Gift Store at the **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** needs your help! They are interviewing people who would enjoy working during the week or on weekends either every week or every other week. Technical and product training will be provided. Three hour shifts are requested of volunteers on Tuesdays through Sundays. Contact RSVP for details.

The **Next to New Shop** is looking for grant-writing volunteers. The beauty of this assignment is that you can work in the privacy of your own home at any hour day or night and never have to experience the intense summer heat. If you can research those foundations that would fund a non-profit store that raises money for truly worthwhile programs throughout the community, please let us know. Check out the Shop's website at www.next2new.org.

Your Randalls Remarkable Card Can Help Support Volunteerism In Central Texas



If you shop at Randalls and use the Randalls Remarkable card, please consider linking your card to the RSVP account. The RSVP Good Neighbor Account Number is 8801. Randalls makes a small contribution to our program based on purchases linked to our account, so please be sure to use your card every time you shop. By using our card, you will also be eligible for exclusive discounts, giveaways and other rewards from Randalls. Thank you!

Volunteer Opportunities, cont'd

Are you someone who enjoys organizing things and helping people? **Open Door Preschool** serves families with a range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and provides a quality, inclusive environment for children with special needs. They are in great need of administrative assistance! Help organize the office, answer the phone and allow them to more efficiently meet the needs of the families they serve. Volunteers who are interested in working with the children are also welcome, but you must first complete a background check before being placed. Call RSVP today to get started.

Do you have any extra yarn for crocheting that you are not using anymore? The **South Austin Neighborhood Center** has recently started a crochet club for their members and hats are being knit and donated to the American Cancer Society. If you are able to donate any extra material for them to help the American Cancer Society, please contact our office today!

If you are able to organize the space around you (and marvel that others

can't seem to), working with the files in the **Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services** has the volunteer opportunity for you. Located at 51st and Lamar, these DADS Community Services Contract files need your skill and talent. Call today to learn more about training for this responsibility.

The **University Medical Center Brackenridge** is looking for some help in their Volunteer Service Office with data entry and other administrative support. Basic computer proficiency is required, although the systems used are fairly simple. They are looking for a volunteer who is available Monday, Thursday or Friday. A three-hour to four-hour shift is typical but they are flexible. Your service will give much needed relief to the Volunteer Coordinator who has many other responsibilities. This is a very dynamic group with lots of perks! For more information, please contact the RSVP office.

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

Harry Greene, Jr.
Larry Jinks
Lawrence Walker



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.



BACK TO SCHOOL!



Volunteers are needed in a wide range of tutoring and mentoring roles. Make a huge difference in someone's life. Contact the RSVP office for more details.

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