THE INVOLVEMENT
RSVP – Your Invitation to Volunteer

RSVP is a program of Senior Services of Southwest Michigan

July/August/September 2014

From the Director

Volunteer Insurance Change
Senior Services provides RSVP volunteers with no cost excess accident medical, and volunteer and automobile liability coverage. CIMA, our insurance provider, is changing when coverage applies for excess volunteer and automobile liability (bolded below). A CIMA Summary of Coverages sheet is included in this newsletter. Call RSVP with questions. Effective July 1, RSVP volunteers will have the following coverage:

Excess Accident Medical: Coverage for medical treatment, hospitalization, licensed nursing care required as the result of a covered accident. Applies while the volunteer is traveling directly to and from, and while participating in volunteer activities with an RSVP partner agency.

Excess Volunteer Liability: Protection for bodily injury or property damage claims arising out of the performance of the volunteer’s duties during their volunteer activity with an RSVP partner agency (not while the volunteer is driving). Covers claims that occur during the volunteer activity with an RSVP partner agency, but not while on the way to or from the volunteer activity.

Excess Automobile Liability: Protection for bodily injury or property damage claims arising out of the volunteer’s operation of his/her own vehicle during their volunteer activity with an RSVP partner agency. Covers claims that occur during the volunteer activity with an RSVP partner agency, but not while on the way to or from the volunteer activity.

2013 Impact Summary Now Available
We appreciate what you do for the community!
Here are some highlights from 2013.

• 458 RSVP volunteers served 75,443 hours at 84 nonprofits, schools or health care organizations.
• Mentor Academic Success volunteers helped 227 students improve behaviors, and reading and math skills for academic success.
• Volunteers 4 Seniors volunteers gave 870 hours helping seniors live independently by assisting with rides to the doctor and errands, grocery shopping, social visits, and sorting and reading mail.
• Peer Prevention Players performed comedic healthy aging skits and poems at 14 locations for 335 people.
• Triad kept older adults informed of safety concerns by giving 9 presentations to 180 people, and distributing 9,000 newsletters.
• Helping Hands Happy People volunteers made over 900 handmade items including baby hats, winter hats, scarves and mittens, lap robes and blankets and stuffed animals.
• Bulk Mail volunteers processed 58 mail projects totaling nearly 193,000 pieces of mail for 11 nonprofits.
• Volunteers gave 11,136 hours helping older adults live independently by delivering meals, assisting lunch time meal sites, making home repairs and safety modifications, giving rides, offering social support, and counseling on insurance benefits.

You can read more of the RSVP Impact Summary by visiting www.seniorservices1.org. Click on ‘RSVP—Your Invitation to Volunteer’ in menu on the left. Look for the red ‘Click Here’ link for the 2013 RSVP Impact Summary.

Tracie Wheeler, Traci Furman & Kathy Cox
Volunteers 4 Seniors Responds to a Growing Need

As an RSVP member, you’re part of the one in three Americans that is now age 50 or older. And as you age, you will most likely be one of the vast majority of seniors who want to live in their own home for as long as possible. According to AARP®, by 2030 one in five adults in the United States will be 65 plus. (That’s more than 70 million people.) In fact, Baby Boomers are turning 65 at a rate of 10,000 per day and one in five of them do not drive. While 2030 sounds like light years away, it is a mere 15 years from now! Volunteers 4 Seniors responds to the needs of the aging population by arranging for volunteers to give rides to medical appointments, assist with shopping, read and sort mail or provide companionship to frail seniors. These services help seniors live independently at home where they want to be and keeps them connected to the community. Volunteers report that they receive much satisfaction from helping others and many of them become longtime friends. Unfortunately, we have more seniors in need than volunteers to provide assistance. That gap will only widen as the population ages. If you’d like to help close the gap by becoming part of the Volunteers 4 Seniors team, call me at 269-382-0515 ext. 127.

Kathy Cox

Opportunities to Help

Friendly Visiting for a:
- Woman near Borgess Hospital
- Woman in Scotts
- Woman in Vicksburg

Transportation for a:
- Woman in E. Portage
- Many One Time, Short Term Needs in Kalamazoo County

Shopping Assistance for a:
- Man with vision impairment near downtown Kalamazoo

Reading & Paperwork Assistance for a:
- Man with vision impairment near Borgess Hospital

Call Kathy Cox at 269-382-0515 ext. 127 if you have an hour or two to spare to help someone.

Awards & Kudos

Volunteering—Spark
- Maggie Bresz
- Ellie Heacock
- Anita Lawson & her dogs Bailey & Darby

Volunteer of the Month—Senior Times
- Sally Beck
- Helen Petersen
- John Block

STAR Award Recipients
- Art Nichols
- Gary Bigelow
- Tuesday Toolmen

Communities In Schools Kalamazoo Champs Recipient
- RSVP—Your Invitation to Volunteer

Senior Services of Southwest Michigan Award Recipients
- Scott & Mary Aldrich
- RSVP Advisory Council

Governor’s Service Awards Finalist
- RSVP—Your Invitation to Volunteer

Hands On Battle Creek Volunteer Award Nominee
- Dave Wright

Helping Hands Needs Your Help!

If you have ever been given a handmade knitted or crocheted item, you can appreciate the love, care and long hours that were invested in this gift. Our talented crafters, Helping Hands Happy People, put the same love and care into beautiful caps, scarves, mittens, etc. Made from donated yarn, the items are given to area nonprofits for those in need. In 2013, we donated 924 items. With our group doubled in size for 2014, we could possibly create upwards of 2,000 items! So why do we need help? Our yarn supplies are dwindling! Specifically, we need full 1 lb. skeins of 4-ply worsted acrylic yarn in “baby” colors. Variegated or bright primary colors, and black, are also needed. Many of our donations come from estates or former crafters. If you are wondering what to do with Aunt Sally’s yarn collection, we may be able to take them. We also accept cash donations. For more information, call me at 269-382-0515 ext. 127.

Kathy Cox
THE INVOLVEMENT

Mentor Academic Success

Kalamazoo Violence, Children & Volunteers Who Make A Difference

Project PERK, Partnering Effectively to Reduce the impact of violence in Kalamazoo, is working on increasing awareness and research on the effects of violence on children in our community. Project PERK is designed to help caregivers identify if children have been exposed to violence in their neighborhood, schools and/or homes and to equip caregivers with tools to help reduce the impact of that violence exposure. Tutors and mentors volunteering in schools and afterschool programs are helping kids succeed academically, but they are also caregivers to children in need. As you may know, 35.5% of people in Kalamazoo are below the poverty level (American Community Survey, 2011). You probably don’t know that Kalamazoo is #3 in Michigan for gang violence (FBI/MIOC, 2008) and in 2011, 802 youth were admitted to Kalamazoo Juvenile Home (Kalamazoo County Court Report, 2011). The National Crime Victimization survey reveals the majority (58%) of serious violent crimes committed by youth are not reported to police. The WMU Children’s Trauma Assessment Center, New Genesis, and Boys & Girls Club are Project PERK Partners. If you are interested in learning more about effectively reducing the impact of violence on children, the number to call is 387-7269. Spring is the time to watch things grow and to sign up to be a mentor or tutor for the next school year. Please contact me at tfurman@seniorservices1.org or 269-382-0515 ext. 123.

Traci Furman

RSVP Report

Volunteer Statistics (Feb. — Apr.)

- New Volunteers: 16
- Volunteers Reporting Hours: 346
- Volunteer Hours: 18,310.75
- Value*: $412,907 ($22.55/hour)

*Source: www.independentsector.org.

Triad

Did you report your time?
Help us reach 18,000 hours for 3 months.
See RSVP Calendar in this newsletter for easy ways to report.

AARP Seeks Income Tax Volunteers

“Our volunteers serve because they enjoy helping people”, says Tony Nelson, Kalamazoo’s tax aide volunteer coordinator. “Many of our clients cannot afford to go to a paid tax preparation service and almost all of them abundantly express their thanks when we complete their return. Many are widows whose husband prepared the family return. When the husband passes away, the widow doesn’t know where to begin and their anxiety is palpable. You can see the weight lifted when we are done and they tell us the relief they feel.” Tony volunteers year round to recruit and train AAPR Tax Aides and he sees the enormous impact volunteers make. “One client I remember lived in a group home for people with disabilities”, he says. “When we were done and I told him he would be getting a refund of $85, he lit up and said, ‘Do you know what I’m going to do with the money?’ I said ‘No’ expecting him to say something about going out to dinner or something similar. He told me ‘Now I can go buy another set of clothes, I only have one set now.’” Tax Aide volunteers assist seniors and lower income taxpayers in the preparation and filing of tax returns at no cost at 8 locations in the area. Volunteers help once or twice a week from February 1 to April 15. New volunteer training begins in October 2014. All materials, equipment and training are provided. You do not have to be an accountant or know tax laws, but you do have to be willing to attend training and want to help others. If you are not able to commit to the training, you may volunteer to be a Client Facilitator to assure that people have the proper paperwork and forms before they see the tax aide. The Tax Aide Program is 100% volunteer operated. If you are interested contact me at 269-382-0515 ext. 123 or Tony at mtnelson1@chartermi.net.

Traci Furman
Volunteer Opportunities

**AARP Tax Aide:** Tax assistance. Experience not required. Training provided in the fall & January.

**Air Zoo:** Greeters, docents. Training provided.

**American Cancer Society:** Discovery Shop thrift store assistant. Give information at Resource Centers, training provided. Medical drivers.

**American Red Cross:** Receptionist, phones, typing, data entry, mail.

**Area Agency on Aging IIIA:** Conduct workshops on fall prevention or living with an ongoing condition. Certification training provided.

**Big Brothers Big Sisters:** Mentor youth ages 5–18.

**Community Homeworks:** Receptionist, home repair workshop instructors/assistants, office support & more.

**Communities In Schools Kalamazoo:** Mentors or tutors, classroom help.

**Comstock Learning Center (Comstock):** After school reading or math tutors, homework help.

**Curious Kids:** Assist with activities & care for infants to 2 year olds.

**Ecumenical Senior Center:** Transport seniors in Center’s van & typing.

**Friendship Center Meal Sites:** Lunch time meal set-up, serving, clean-up.

**Friendship Village:** Companions, resident escort, writing class instructor, computer tutor, special events, gardening, grounds help.

**Goodwill Industries:** Customer service greeter & to review shopper receipts. Donation & store assistant.

**Helping Hands Happy People:** Knit or crochet items for those in need.

**Heartland Hospice:** Visitors for patients & families.

**Home Repair for Seniors:** Minor plumbing. Calhoun County: Home repairs, cleaning for seniors.

**Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan:** Companions, meal servers, lead children’s grief group, light laundry. Training provided.

**Kalamazoo County Sheriff’s Department:** Records scanning, front desk phone receptionist. Flexible schedule.

**Kalamazoo Drop-In Child Care:** Help care for kids 6 weeks to 5 years.

**Kalamazoo Gospel Mission:** Serve meals. Interact with kids in daycare or afterschool.

**Kalamazoo Literacy Council:** Adult literacy tutors, office help. Training provided.

**Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes:** Food commodities registration, grocery pantry call center, receptionists.

**Kalamazoo Township Police Department:** Fingerprint technicians, office assistants. Training provided.

**Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity:** Help find lots & homes for rehab. Flexible schedule. Stock, help Restore shoppers & donors.

**Kfirst Community Garden:** Garden tending, replanting, harvesting.

**Lending Hands:** Data entry, phones.

**MMAP:** Counsel older adults on Medicare, Medicaid, long term care insurance. Training provided.

**Meals on Wheels:** Substitute and regular drivers & hoppers in Kalamazoo & Calhoun counties.

**Mentor Academic Success—RSVP:** Reading or math tutors, mentors.

**Michigan Blood:** Donor aftercare.

**Nazareth Center:** Assist with acupuncture. Visitors, wheelchair assistants, drivers.

**Open Doors:** Light home repair help.

**Portage Community Center:** Food pantry help & receptionist.

**Portage Police Dept.:** Traffic control, emergency response, crime prevention, parking enforcement.

**Poverty Reduction Initiative:** Educate people on poverty by role playing at workshops. Training provided.

**Prime Time Players:** Director for rehearsal, create programs. Singers to perform 2-3 times a month.

**Red Arrow Golf Course:** Clubhouse attendants, game coaches, social media operator, grounds maintenance.

**Salvation Army:** Food pantry assistants, grounds & facility maintenance, receptionists.

**Senior Services:** Greet guests & connect to services, one-to-one case aide for behavioral health consumers. Clerical assistance.

**Specialized Language Development Center:** Reading tutors for 1st, 2nd, 3rd graders.

**VA Medical Center:** Visit or mentor Veterans, activity & meal help.

**Volunteers 4 Seniors—RSVP:** Social visits, give rides to doctor or store.

**West Michigan Cancer Center:** Greet, escort patients, non-medical companion, assist with security.

**West Michigan Glass Art Center:** Gallery assistance, cash register clerk.

Interested or want to know more? Call RSVP at 269-382-0515. Please share with your family and friends.
RSVP Calendar

RSVP Time Sheets
Due monthly on the 5th.
- Drop off, mail or fax 269-382-3189
- If not requesting reimbursement you may call in your time to RSVP at 269-382-0515, or email time to TWheeler@seniorservices1.org
- Visit www.seniorservices1.org, click on RSVP—Your Invitation to Volunteer in the menu on the left. Use the time sheet link near the bottom of the page.

New Volunteer Orientation
July 18, August 15, September 19 at 1:30 p.m.

Holiday Closings
Senior Services will be closed Fri., July 4 and Mon., September 1.

Volunteer Celebration
Our volunteer celebration is scheduled for September. Watch your mail for an invitation.

New Volunteers
- Sharon Bassett
- Charlene Cekander
- Kim Douglas
- Charlotte Kemp
- Nancy Kimble
- Jan Minges
- David Pollard
- Lynn Pruitt-Timko
- Judy Reitenour
- Teresa Resnick
- Jan Robertson
- Shirley Rodgers
- Joyce Schau
- Ellen Stein
- Diane Trader
- John Wiessner

Peer Prevention Players

Positive Aging with a Smile
Lectures, brochures, and books are ways to gain knowledge about how to make good decisions as you get older. The Peer Prevention Players however, think funny skits, poems and songs are other fabulous ways to learn about healthy aging. To make positive change in our lives it has to resonate and make sense for you. When audiences watch the Players they see a group of people, like themselves, who are energetic and vibrant, providing examples of “positive aging”. The Players desire to inspire, teach and make you laugh. Call me at 269-382-0515 ext. 123 to book a show for your church group, apartment complex or club. “We always enjoy the poems, skits and songs. The performers are having fun, and we have fun watching them,” said one audience member.

Traci Furman

Community Garden Needs Your Green Thumb
The Kfirst Community Garden at 5550 Oakland Dr. in Portage is beginning its third year of feeding the under served in the Kalamazoo area with locally grown, high-quality produce. The harvest is donated to area nonprofits for distribution to those in need. In its first two years 7,600 pounds of fresh food has been shared in the community. Volunteers are needed June to October for planting, routine tending, replanting and harvesting. You don't need to have gardening experience to participate. Contact Mona Ruse at 269-344-4378 or visit www.kfirst.org for garden information or to sign up to volunteer. Look for the Community Garden link under Connect section at the top of the page. You’ll find the 2014 Schedule with details about volunteering to plant, tend, harvest and deliver.

Traci Furman

Pet Food Bank at Senior Services
RSVP has pet food available for seniors, age 55 and better, who are struggling to keep their pets due to financial challenges.

- **How to Get Help:** If you are a senior in need, Senior Services can provide bags of dry dog and cat food (average 5 lb bags) while supplies are available. Once a month requests are welcomed. For assistance or questions, call 269-382-0515 and ask for Traci Furman (ext. 123) or Kathy Cox (ext. 127).

- **How to Give Help:** If you would like to donate, please drop off small unopened bags (weighing 10 lbs or less) of dog or cat food to Senior Services of Southwest Michigan. Cash donations accepted.

**Our annual Pet Food Drive will be October 13—17.**

Thanks to Cool 101 FM and Harding’s for supporting this program.
**Mission**
RSVP engages people 55 and better in volunteer service to meet community needs, and provides a high quality experience that will enrich the lives of volunteers.

**Funding Sources**
- Michigan Office of Services to the Aging
- Partner Agencies (in-kind)
- Fundraising
- Donations

**Membership Benefits**
- Opportunity to share or learn new skills
- Personalized placement assistance
- Free supplemental excess accident medical, volunteer liability & automobile liability insurance
- Newsletter, *The Involvement*
- Limited reimbursement for mileage for those who might otherwise find it difficult to volunteer
- Recognition for service
- Invitation to volunteer celebration
- Free membership in Rx Optical Vision Advantage Program

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**Staff**

**Phone:** 269-382-0515

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**Advisory Council**
Karen Betley, Kathi Fahl, Kristy Finney, Dave Hager, Bill Krasean, Garrard Macleod, Brian Pitts, Martha Terpstra & Julie VanderNoot

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**RSVP is in Calhoun County**
Help us spread the word.
- **Handy Helper Services** to assist seniors to live in a safe, clean home.
- **Meals on Wheels Drivers or Hoppers** to deliver nutritious meals to frail, homebound seniors.
- **VA Medical Center** needs people to visit with or mentor Veterans, and for activity & meal assistance.

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Recycle this newsletter, or promote volunteering and service by sharing it with family, friends, neighbors, or church. Thanks!