

# RSVP NEWS

## Inside this issue:

Importance of Hour Submission	1
Senior Wishes	2
Volunteers Wanted	3
Professionals Help Nonprofits	4

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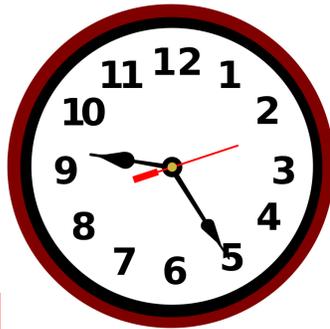
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## Why Should RSVP Volunteers Report their Hours of Service?



**Hours and other data collection are federally mandated.** As a federally funded program, we must abide by the accountability and compliance guidelines and standards set for RSVP. We collect hours and other data to provide a statistical snapshot of what we are accomplishing in relation to the mission of RSVP which is to engage volunteers in activities that will make a difference in our communities by meeting the needs of nonprofits and the people they serve. The data we collect goes to legislators and other funders and helps them to determine allocation amounts for our program.

**It verifies that enrolled RSVP volunteers have been active over the course of the fiscal year.** Only those volunteers who are active in the current year are eligible to enjoy the benefits of RSVP (for example, supplemental insurance coverage, recognition events, newsletters, etc.)

**It keeps our volunteers insured.** The hours reported and verified by the volunteer and/or the volunteer supervisor is the **ONLY** documentation we have that an individual is serving at a site or participating in a volunteer activity. If we have no written documentation, our supplemental insurance policy does not cover that volunteer in the event of injury.

**RSVP promotes the true story of today's seniors as active citizens who contribute substantially to the health and welfare of their communities.** This helps to dispel myths that older adults are a financial drain on society. The more we can document, on a local and national level, the reality of older volunteers' contributions, the more we dispel these myths and stereotypes about aging.

**It helps local non profits tell their story of service to the community and to funders.** Accurate records of RSVP volunteer hours helps RSVP's community partners to document how volunteers help provide services related to their missions. This represents a cost savings to already tightly budgeted organizations and an in-kind match for their budgets. This leveraging of funds is viewed positively by potential funders as evidence of wise and creative fiscal management.

**Tracking volunteer hours is a valuable measure of how volunteers impact a community, what they accomplish, and how valuable they are to the operation of hundreds of non profit organizations, schools, and health care facilities in our communities.** Without tracking, the efforts of RSVP volunteers remain unidentified.

## Senior Wishes is Looking for Dreams to Fulfill



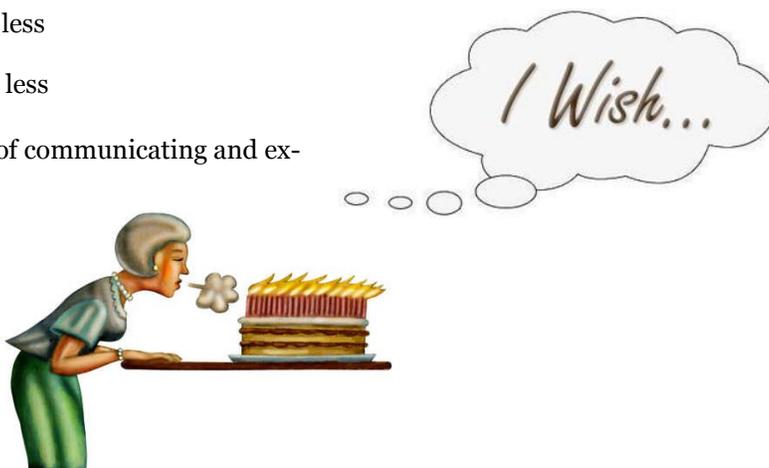
Senior Wishes, WNY's only program dedicated to enriching the lives of low-income senior citizens by granting meaningful wishes, is continually on the lookout for more seniors to assist.

Established in late 2013 by the United Church Home Society (UCHS), Senior Wishes' mission is to honor and recognize the lifelong contributions of our oldest citizens by granting meaningful wishes that will enhance seniors' lives and bring them joy. Network in Aging of WNY, recently presented the "Program of Excellence Award" to Senior Wishes for its outstanding and innovative contributions to the Geriatric Citizenry of WNY.

According to Wendy Backman, Senior Wishes Executive Director, "One of the things that's struck me most about the wish requests is how simple they are, yet how much of a difference they can make in the lives of these seniors. Whether it's bringing long-separated family members together for a reunion, take a senior to a museum for the first time, or providing an opportunity for a senior to experience her passion for photography, granting these simple wishes help our seniors feel connected, purposeful and appreciated."

Help us discover a wish. Wish recipients must meet the following requirements:

- Must be 65 years old and a resident of WNY
- U.S. Citizen
- Annual income: Household of One - \$38,000 or less  
Household of Two - \$44,000 or less
- Cognitively, emotionally and physically capable of communicating and experiencing the wish
- Unable to fulfill the wish on your own



Senior Wishes will be hosting its annual fundraiser, Sips, Suds & Sweets on April 28, 2016 at Fox Run at Orchard Park, 6-9pm. Visit [www.seniorwishes.org](http://www.seniorwishes.org) or call 508-2121 for event information or a wish application.

## Current Volunteer Needs

### School Tutors

We are still seeking volunteers for our Buffalo Public School **partners. In particular, Charles Drew Magnets Schools and Southside Elementary.** Volunteer one-on-one or in small groups assisting students with reading and math, Research has shown that compassionate volunteers working in the classroom have made a measurable impact on students who are not only struggling academically but also with stu-



### Become a Team Leader

Prepare Dinner in the Compass House Emergency Shelter

370 Linwood Ave, Buffalo, NY 14209

**When:** First and Third Monday of February – May (8 total) \*\*Beginning Monday, Feb 15, 2016

**Time:** 5:45pm – 7:30pm (flexible)

The Compass House Emergency shelter houses runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth ages 12-17. This opportunity is directly in the shelter kitchen with one of our team leaders. The Volunteer Leader will provide an overview of Compass House services to our volunteers and lead a project to prepare a meal for our residential clients. Volunteers will join the group for dinner to enjoy the opportunity to get to know our kids and learn a little about their background and story. At the completion of the meal, youth will assist in cleanup. This opportunity is more than just preparing a meal, it is showing at-risk youth that there are volunteers in the community that care about them. Training is provided.

### Builders

Habitat for Humanity is an organization that truly helps people help themselves. Volunteers work alongside future homeowners building simple affordable housing and would love you to join us. This is a hand up and not a hand out organization. They are looking to increase our number of volunteers during the week at our construction sites. If you even have one day a week that you would be willing to help us with **construction from 9:00 – 3:00** it would be sincerely appreciated. It is a great way to belong to a fun group of volunteers and give back to the community while making new friends. Although skills are helpful, we are more than happy to teach you any of the skills you would need.

### Food Pantry Assistant

University Presbyterian Food Panty (3330 Main Street, Buffalo )needs your assistance with distributing food to the clients, guiding clients through the "store" to help them choose their groceries and to help to stock shelves. You can choose to volunteer on either Tuesday or Thursday (or both!) for a 4 hour shift. Free off street parking on location.

## Nonprofits Benefit When Volunteers Use Their Professional Skills

Posted By *Jane Hess Collins* In *Create the Good*

As a foreign service officer, George Frederick lived in the Middle East, Africa and other exotic places during his 25-year career. His job was to observe and report what he saw, sometimes several times a day, whether it was groundbreaking or mundane. “You see a lot,” he said.

Often he saw things that he wanted to fix, but as an observer he could not. So he volunteered in his off-duty time to help out in the community where he lived. He sponsored a soccer game for kids in Somalia and volunteered at a refugee camp in Jordan and at an arts school in Cameroon. Although a lot of his work was grassroots, or “church basement” work as he called it, he felt like he was making a difference.

When he retired in 2013, Frederick, 59, was still troubled by issues that he saw as an observer and was unable to fix. He thought using his career skills in the nonprofit sector could bring him some closure.

Frederick attended a seminar for RSVP, a Corporation for National and Community Service program that matches job skills of people 55 and older with compatible volunteer work. In January 2014, he was placed with Volunteer Alexandria, the volunteer hub of Alexandria, Va.

It was a perfect match. Marion Brunken, executive director of Volunteer Alexandria, needed someone to write newsletter articles and stories that were informative, brief and interesting. As a foreign service officer, Frederick learned to write quickly and concisely. When Brunken asked Frederick for a writing sample and he completed it before the interview ended, he was hired.

“We are delighted to have George volunteer with us,” Brunken said. “His skills are very valuable and his contributions make a big difference on our newsletter. Offering a variety of volunteer opportunities, like this virtual one, is very important for any nonprofit organization.”

Today Frederick still observes, but for the nonprofit sector. “There aren’t enough men who volunteer,” he noted. “And there is a lot of activity that we as citizens never see that the nonprofit world fills.” He is impressed by the nonprofit sector’s often unseen work — such as emergency preparedness and intervening and protecting endangered children — and by the diversity of citizens who gather to help out.

“Our country is the most important philanthropic country in the world,” Frederick declared. “It’s a very American thing, and one of the most positive things about our country. I don’t think we ring that bell enough. It draws people in and it builds community very quickly. I think that’s a big selling point for us as a nation.”

Frederick is happy with his new, post-foreign service role. He has the freedom and flexibility to travel as well as time to give back to a worthy cause. “I feel like I’m contributing to Alexandria. That helps me feel useful,” he said. “It still makes me feel creative.”

And he’s open to the next adventure. “The luxury of being an American in the 21st century is that you can redefine yourself.”

