

# Heroes of MPASSION

*Seniors Living, Loving, and Giving for a Better Community*



*“Don’t sit back and let life pass you by, be a part of it.”*

– Jerry Brown, Women’s Army Corps  
WWII Veteran and RSVP Volunteer

**America recently recognized Veterans Day and we are aware that among our valued RSVP volunteers are also veterans who have faithfully served our country. Jeraldine “Jerry” Brown is one of those special people.**

Jerry says a class that she took her last semester of college opened the door for a dream job and experience she will never forget.

As Jerry finished up her teaching degree at Oklahoma State University (Oklahoma A&M at that time), she needed two more credits to graduate and chose a photography class. After graduating in 1943, as WWII was going on, Jerry wondered how she could help her country.

“I wanted to help and felt that I could since I was finished with college, so I went across the street on my lunch hour and enlisted. I was sworn in on my lunch hour and reported for active duty on the 3rd day of July 1943.

“Because of that photography class, I ended up with the most fabulous job in the Army in photo intelligence,” said 98-year-old Jerry, who helps at OU Medical Center, Edmond, once a week as an RSVP volunteer.

As part of the Pentagon’s photo intelligence team, Jerry developed top secret military photos from combat zones in Europe, the Pacific, and Japan, including photos of the bomb dropped by the Enola Gay on Hiroshima, Japan, she said.

“When I saw those pictures, I knew it was much worse than anything we’d developed before,” she said.

After the war, Jerry married and started a family. She taught school for many years in Oklahoma City and Edmond. Even after retirement, she continued to substitute teach until she was 90 years old.

Today, she believes volunteering and staying active with friends, family, and as an elder in the Chickasaw Nation keep her vibrant.

“If you keep your energy level up, you will have energy,” she said. “Volunteering makes me feel connected and that I’m doing something worthwhile. I tell people, ‘Don’t sit back and let life pass you by, be a part of it.’”



## IT'S A BETTER LIFE WHEN YOU KEEP ON GIVING

**Rebecca Hill retired in 2006 from General Motors after 27 years of 10-12-hour days driving a forklift, trucks, and railcars.**

"I dreamed about having free time once I retired," she said.

During that first year of retirement, she did what most retirees do with their free time—cleaned house, moved furniture, got caught up on television programs, and just enjoyed the freedom of not working. But it wasn't long before she was asking herself, "What am I going to do with my time?" she said.

"Sitting around the house after a while gets a little boring," she said. Rebecca reached out to RSVP and learned about the Provide-A-Ride (PAR) Program, where she could drive elderly seniors to their medical appointments.

"When I found out that I could set my own time and volunteer as many days as I wanted, I knew that the flexibility suited me just fine,"

Rebecca said. "I've been driving ever since."

Rebecca is one of about 55 volunteer drivers for the RSVP PAR program. There are 683 active PAR clients. Drivers pick up clients at their home, take them to the appointment, wait for them at the doctor's office, then drive them home.

"I love the people. I have clients that I pick up on a regular basis," she said. "The PAR program is the best thing that I've done since retirement to meet other people. We share stories about our families and most always start chatting about the good old days."

**To volunteer as a Provide-A-Ride Driver, call Coordinator Faye Beam at 405-605-3106.**

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**The American Red Cross's Service to the Armed Forces branch has many opportunities to help active service people and veterans.**

### FAMILY FOLLOW-UP

Call center opportunity where volunteers call service members and/or their families after the service member has been sent home for an emergency (such as the death or birth of a family member) and check to see how their experience with the Red Cross was and if they are still in need of any services.

### RECONNECTION WORKSHOPS

Programs designed to help children of military families.

### MEDICAL SUPPORT

Support military and veteran medical facilities by volunteering with the VA or the Tinker Pharmacy.

**To volunteer please call Volunteer Coordinator Laura McPheeters at 405-605-3110.**



## PARTNER AGENCY HIGHLIGHT

### [ The Hugs Project ]

*Martha Duerksen  
RSVP of Central Oklahoma Volunteer*

Martha Duerksen, RSVP of Central Oklahoma volunteer, loves working with The Hugs Project.

She and other volunteers find the joy of helping members of the US Military stationed around the world feel a connection to home, said Founder Karen Stark.

Stark and her husband, Ray, started The Hugs Project in 2004. It grew out of a letter writing campaign to deployed Troops and over time has evolved into care packages that include anything from canned food items and candy to what Karen calls a "Boo-boo Kit" of band-aids, Chapstick, and Tylenol. Volunteers

also prepare "cool ties" that can wrap (or hug, which is how the organization got its name, The Hugs Project) the soldiers' necks to help lower body temperatures in dangerously hot climates.

Volunteers meet weekly to assemble items in the care packages. At Christmas, the group puts together and sends approximately 600-700 care packages.

**To volunteer at The Hugs Project or one of our other Partner Agencies, call Volunteer Coordinator Laura McPheeters at 405-605-3110.**

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS FY 2019-20

**Debbie Evers**  
*Executive Director  
Quail Creek Senior Living Center*  
**Francellies Otero-Berrios**  
*Vice President of Membership & Events for the Greater OKC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce*

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Carolyn Cummings**  
*Well Preserved Advisory Group*  
**Kadie Cusac**  
*Edward Jones*  
**Julia Davis**  
*Oklahoma Blood Institute*  
**Alexis Heatrice**  
*Cox Communications*  
**Jamie Jeter**  
*AllianceHealth Midwest*  
**Crystal Levine**  
*Upward Transitions/Travelers Aid*  
**Rachel Morse**  
*Community Volunteer*  
**Wanda Patrick**  
*Retired, Community Volunteer*  
**Kim Sanders**  
*Retired, Community Volunteer*  
**Paul Sanders**  
*Retired, Community Volunteer*

## RSVP NEWS



**PROUD PARTNERS**

The United Way of Central Oklahoma kicked off its 2019 annual campaign on September 13 at the Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark with a goal of raising \$17.1 million to help local nonprofits in the community. United Way of Central OK awarded RSVP a one percent increase for fiscal year 2019-2020 which allows

us to continue to do the work in our community that impacts the lives of so many. United Way of Central Oklahoma is known for supporting nonprofit organizations that they refer to as "the cream of the crop"; and for 40 years they have financially funded RSVP, enabling us to expand and enhance our services. United Way continues to be a blessing for RSVP of Central Oklahoma!



## RSVP VIDEO

Crafty Communications Inc. did a wonderful job

on our new RSVP video. Thank you to Provide-A-Ride client Jean Pereyra and volunteer driver Larry Edwards for participating in the video and talking about the importance of volunteering. We hope you will take a look at it on our website:  
<https://rsvpokc.org/rsvpvideo>

# Save the Date

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

MAY | 21 | 2020

*More information coming soon*



## 'TIS THE SEASON OF GIVING

There is a joy in giving that you can't experience anywhere else. I believe so strongly in the altruistic reward of volunteering that I have worked at RSVP of Central Oklahoma for 37 years, helping connect people with the volunteer opportunities. Because I

know beyond a shadow of a doubt the impact volunteering makes, not only on those who *receive*, but also on those who *give*.

Givers like Jerry Brown inspire me, not only with her selfless service of our country in WWII, but her lifelong commitment to generosity since then. I hear countless stories from you, our volunteers and donors about how you partnered with RSVP of Central Oklahoma to give back, but how you feel you truly were the one who benefitted from the folks you serve.

It truly is so much more fulfilling to give than to receive. So *thank you*, for giving your time. *Thank you* for giving your endless support. *Thank you* for sending donations and encouraging others to give as well.

My wish for 2020 is that we all grow in our ability to impact the community around us. Please continue to think of RSVP of Central Oklahoma as you give this year end. Your gift is invaluable.

Beth Patterson  
Executive Director



### In Fond Remembrance

...emo...  
whose gener...  
ouched all our lives.

*Charlene Francis  
Barbara Newton  
Ben Troutman*

A proud partner of:



Congratulations to  
**BONNIE WALDROP**  
winner of the hours drawing.  
Enjoy your gift card!

**FOLLOW US AND LIKE US!**



**Joy**  
**of GIVING**

When you know your gift is making a difference, it's easy to give.

\$25 helps a senior receive rides to appointments, and live independently longer. What a gift to give someone!

Please consider a gift of \$25 or more today to support RSVP of Central Oklahoma.

*Thank you for giving!*