



Retired  
Senior  
Volunteer  
Program

AUGUST 2020

# Heroes of COMPASSION

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



**“I am able to get to my doctor’s appointments because of Provide-A-Ride. It is my lifeline.”**

living center and into an apartment, where she says she has more independence. She has a chihuahua that is a certified service dog and has found a church and has made friends that she considers like family.

**To learn more about volunteering as a Provide-A-Ride Driver, contact April Lucas at 405-605-3110 or visit us online [www.rsvpokc.org](http://www.rsvpokc.org).**

## **From Independent to Legally Blind, Overnight**

*I felt totally lost. Now Provide-A-Ride is my lifeline.*

**Five years ago, Karen Robison went to bed one night and woke up unable to see.**

Karen has a condition called wet macular degeneration, which is caused when abnormal blood vessels develop in the eye. Karen went from being independent to legally blind. This all happened at the time she had just lost her mother, she said.

“I felt totally lost. I had to sell my car because it was no longer safe for me to drive, and I decided to move from the town where I had lived with my mom to Oklahoma City into an assisted living center.”

At the living center, Karen was matched with a case worker. It was through the case worker that she heard about RSVP’s Provide-A-Ride Program, which she has now been a part of since 2015.

Karen explained that she has to have injections in her eye every two months to help preserve what little sight she does have left.

“As soon as my appointment is made, I call RSVP and get a ride scheduled. And the volunteers who pick me up are wonderful. Absolutely wonderful.”

Karen moved out of the assisted

*we need you!*

**\$25 provides a senior like Karen a ride to their medical appointment.**

**Please give today!**

# WENDY WIERZBIC

## SAFELY VOLUNTEERING TO HELP THE HUNGRY

Wendy Wierzbic became interested in learning more about RSVP after learning that her sister in New York was an RSVP volunteer.

Wendy reached out to RSVP of Central Oklahoma, a United Way of Central Oklahoma partner, and found Mid-Del Food Pantry, where she has been a volunteer for about a year.

“I come from a family of 11 children and we learned about the importance of volunteering from our father while we were growing up. He also volunteered at a food pantry.”

Wendy works each Friday putting together carts of food for clients who come to pantry from the eastern Oklahoma County area, and she



continues to volunteer through the pandemic.

“I like working with the other volunteers and decided to keep volunteering when I saw all of the safety precautions that were put into place for the clients and volunteers,” Wendy said. “We have protective masks and face shields, protective sleeves for our arms, and everything is continuously sanitized. I have felt very safe because of the restrictions put into place.”

**“By doing something for others, you know that you are helping in some way.”**

Wendy has also stayed busy during the pandemic sewing masks for family and friends, the retired elementary school teacher said. She’s made about 135 masks over the last several months and is now making masks for children who will be returning to school soon. She also quilts and knits items to donate to Infant Crisis Services.

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Volunteering has helped Wendy maintain a positive outlook through the pandemic, she says. “By doing something for others, you know that you are helping in some way.”

To learn more about volunteering, contact Laura McPheeters at 405-605-3110 or visit [www.rsvpokc.org](http://www.rsvpokc.org).

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**RSVP Volunteer Coordinator Laura McPheeters says that a handful of partner agencies have opened their volunteer services at a limited capacity to help get their essential services out to those who need them.**

“All of them have implemented new and thorough health and safety measures for their much needed and highly valued volunteers,” Laura said. “As things open back up, we still value your well-being and encourage safe and healthy practices above all else. Please follow your heart as well as CDC guidelines as you make your decisions on how and when you get back out into your community.”

**AMERICAN RED CROSS:** Virtual/remote opportunities. PPE offered to volunteers who come in contact with others.

**HOMELESS ALLIANCE:** Volunteer for breakfast and lunch meal services and to put together care packages for their clients.

**OBI:** Volunteer for blood drives and the donor center, label blood bags (pre-use), and call and inviting donors to give blood at their drives.

**SALVATION ARMY:** Volunteer at their food pantry or Red Shield Diner. Both opportunities offer PPE, limited number of volunteers at a time, and no client contact.

**YWCA OKC:** Volunteer training is open. Demand for services has skyrocketed during the pandemic, so their need for volunteers is great!



**Laura McPheeters**  
Volunteer Coordinator  
405-605-3110  
[www.rsvpokc.org](http://www.rsvpokc.org)

**REMERGE:** Culinary Volunteers to assist 2-4 program participants at a time in learning the preparation of healthy meals. Preparation of the meal will be followed by social interactions with volunteer, which helps participant practice having healthy conversations during family mealtimes.



## PARTNER AGENCY HIGHLIGHT



Established in 1984, Mid-Del Food Pantry serves 50-60 clients each week and has remained open during COVID-19 serving the needy by taking extensive safety measures.

- ✓ Mid-Del Food Pantry is only open two hours on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.
- ✓ Volunteers wear masks, sleeve guards, gloves, and face shields.
- ✓ Clients are required to have masks and the organization also provides masks to those who do not have one.
- ✓ The donations of food to Mid-Del are quarantined for a week before they are made available to clients.

- ✓ The organization has amended how intake paperwork is managed, minimizing contact for the safety of volunteers and clients.
- ✓ Grocery baskets are sanitized after each client distribution, and at the end of every day, the whole building is sanitized according to CDC recommendations and standards, said Assistant Manager Bonny Waldrop.



## A WARM SEND-OFF FROM BETH PATTERSON AND THE STAFF AT RSVP OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

This spring brought about big changes at RSVP. Faye Beam, who has been a treasured employee for 20 years, retired as the Provide-A-Ride program coordinator. We know our clients and volunteers have felt valued by Faye because she put so much of herself into the work.

Little did I know when I hired Faye 20 years ago the tremendous impact she would have on me and the RSVP Provide-A-Ride program. Faye's commitment and dedication in showing compassion and genuine love as she served RSVP, our elderly neighbors and the community are just a few of the outstanding attributes that made it a joy to work day in and day out with this special woman.

During Faye's tenure as RSVP Provide-A-Ride coordinator, she organized more than 100,000 rides for 4,000 elderly persons on a fixed-income who are no longer able to drive to their medical appointments.

Faye will stay connected to RSVP as a volunteer. Thank you, Faye from all of us!



### APRIL LUCAS: PROVIDE-A-RIDE COORDINATOR

We are so happy to announce that a familiar

face will be the new Provide-A-Ride coordinator. April Lucas, another treasured RSVP employee that formerly served as our administrative assistant, will now serve as PAR coordinator. April has been with RSVP for two years.

When April joined the RSVP team two years ago, I quickly learned this young lady holds a special place in her heart for older folks. Her passion, joy and enthusiasm will play a strong role in the continued success and growth of our Provide-A-Ride program.

### WELCOME KAREN BAIN

We also welcome new part-time administrative assistant Karen Bain to our team. Glad to have her on board and know that you will love to get to know her when you call our office.

### VOLUNTEERS: STAY TUNED

Thank you to all of our volunteers who've been patient as we've navigated together through the pandemic. We will continue to keep you updated on when programs will resume.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DONORS

We want to thank the **United Way of Central Oklahoma** for a generous donation of masks, sanitizer, and gloves for our volunteers, Provide-A-Ride clients, and staff. This will help so much when we are up and running our programs again.

Thank you to **Jasco Giving Hope Foundation Fund**, a Donor Advised Fund of The Signatory (Kansas), for an unsolicited gift of \$5,000. Their support will fund volunteer mileage reimbursement for 300 rides through Provide-A-Ride.

This has been an unusual time in our country and program, but we know we continue to be blessed by the support we are surrounded by.

A proud partner of:



Congratulations to **LACHELLE HUNT** winner of the hours drawing. Enjoy your gift card!

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