



Retired  
Senior  
Volunteer  
Program

OCTOBER 2020

# Heroes of COMPASSION

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



**Edie Aitken**

**Volunteering is a Gift**



**Edie Aitken sees volunteering as a gift from God. “I praise God for giving me the opportunity to volunteer to help lives and help non-profit organizations,” she said.**

Edie is a long-time RSVP of Central Oklahoma volunteer who donates her time to the Oklahoma Blood Institute. She’s volunteered with OBI weekly since 1997 and she and the other volunteers call themselves the Bag Ladies.

Each Tuesday she and a group of volunteers places identification labels on four to six cartons

of empty blood bags that are then used at OBI donation locations and blood drives. With exception of a few weeks off at the beginning of COVID-19, Edie has remained an active volunteer with OBI during the pandemic.

Edie retired from AT&T Lucent Technologies after 30 years of service. Before her husband, Douglas, died four years ago, the couple traveled to 49 states and rode motorcycles together. Volunteering has helped her to feel connected to others and to her community since her husband’s death.

“I enjoy the company. We all keep up with each other and celebrate our birthdays together.”

**“THEY ALL FEEL LIKE FAMILY,” EDIE SAID. “WITHOUT FRIENDS AND SOMETHING TO DO, IT WOULD FEEL VERY DIFFERENT.”**

“Volunteering is very rewarding and satisfying.”

**If you would like to learn more about becoming a volunteer, contact Laura McPheeters at [laura.mcpheeters@rsvpokc.org](mailto:laura.mcpheeters@rsvpokc.org) or call 405-605-3110.**





**Sylvia Frank and Robert Prest have taken their interests in life and used them to help others in their retirement.**

Sylvia worked for many years with senior citizens as a nursing assistant and Robert, until recent retirement, worked as a driver for an equipment supply company. Today, they are volunteer drivers for Provide-a-Ride.

“After I retired, I wanted to continue to help other people,” said Sylvia, who became a PAR driver in 2011. “When Robert retired in 2018, he got kind of bored and I said, ‘You need to do something.’”

One afternoon when the PAR coordinator called for Sylvia and Robert answered, he asked if they needed any drivers, he explained.

“So, we got him signed up to be a driver, too,” Sylvia said.

Sylvia grew up with a father in the military and has lived in many different places, graduating from high school in El Paso, Texas. At age four she began wearing hearing aids due to a congenital hearing loss and received a Cochlear

implant in 2010. Robert grew up in Oklahoma City, and has lived in Oklahoma City all of his life, retiring from the Oklahoma National Guard in 1993 after serving in the medical unit in maintenance and as a dispatcher. They met through a dating service more than 25 years ago.

They both like getting acquainted with the PAR clients and enjoy the conversations they have with them to and from the medical appointments. In the nine years Sylvia has volunteered, she’s completed 396 rides. In the year Robert has volunteered, he’s completed 46 rides.

**“VOLUNTEERING  
KEEPS US GOING,”  
SYLVIA SAID.**

The couple likes to travel, they stay involved with Air National Guard events, and Sylvia paints and tap dances with the Oklahoma Senior Cabaret.

**If you would be interested in becoming a Provide-A-Ride volunteer driver, contact April Lucas at 405-605-3106.**



## **WELCOME BACK PROVIDE-A-RIDE CLIENTS & VOLUNTEERS!**

Our Provide-A-Ride program was suspended in March after the pandemic hit and it became apparent that placing a hold on the program was best for the safety of our clients, volunteers, and staff. Our volunteers and clients both missed the program and so this month when we reopened the program, it was a thrill to welcome back our volunteer drivers and clients they love so much.

There was a lot of thought and preparation in re-opening the program with a safety plan that includes COVID-19 Care Kits. Each driver is supplied with safety kits that include gloves, masks, and hand sanitizer for both driver and client. Drivers sanitize their vehicles before they pick up a client and each person must wear a mask to and from the appointment. Drivers have the option to wait in the waiting area of the doctor’s office or wait in their cars depending on the temporary rules of each doctor’s office. If they wait in their car, the client will be given a volunteer driver phone ID card with the volunteer’s name and cell phone number on it.

**To learn more about becoming a volunteer driver or if you need a ride to a medical appointment, call April Lucas at 405-605-3106 for more information.**

# **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

## **FAMILY BUILDERS**

We would like to introduce you to our new partner agency, Family Builders. In the midst of so much change, it brings us joy to announce this agency is joining RSVP with an exciting remote way to give back.

Family Builders is dedicated to breaking the cycle of family abuse. They offer a range of services to help truly stop the cycle of abuse and family violence, and to bring more community members to the table to learn about the issues and find collaborative solutions.

### **How to Help Family Builders from Home**

They are now asking RSVP volunteers to write encouraging notes and letters to families as they walk through the process of rejoining after an instance of family violence and separation.

## **CENTENARIANS OF OKLAHOMA**

Centenarians of Oklahoma, which honors those who reach the age of 100 in our state, has continued throughout the various levels of shutdown!

Now as much as ever it is so meaningful to offer these super-citizens praise and recognition for their resilience! If you’d like to find out more about how you can help out with this mission, give us a call.

## **SKYLINE URBAN MINISTRY**

Skyline’s goal is to establish an atmosphere of respect and empathy while providing groceries, clothing, eye exams and dignity to Oklahomans struggling with resources.

Skyline’s Food Resource Center is open to serve the community and is looking for volunteers!



This volunteer opportunity has no contact with the clients, only with Skyline staff, and includes filling up shopping bags with groceries and essential items, loading shopping carts with those bags, and restocking shelves.

## **QUESTIONS? I’M HERE TO HELP!**



**Laura McPheeters**  
*Volunteer Coordinator*  
**405-605-3110**



## **PARTNER AGENCY HIGHLIGHT**



**Whiz Kids**  
CITY CARE

The City Care Whiz Kids program has adapted its curriculum to go virtual this fall to meet the needs of children throughout the city. Children who participate in the program will meet with their tutors and other students weekly on virtual platforms. Every month children will receive a book box delivery from City Care that contains a book and activity that coincides with the month’s theme.

*How you can help:*

- ▶ City Care is in need of virtual volunteers. Training included!
- ▶ If you would be interested in tutoring a child virtually, contact Laura McPheeters at [laura.mcpheeters@rsvpokc.org](mailto:laura.mcpheeters@rsvpokc.org) or call 405-605-3110.





## CONNECTING DURING COVID

I'm so excited to announce that we have re-opened the Provide-A-Ride program after extensive planning for safety measures. We have equipped our volunteers to get safely back on the road helping the elderly in our community.

We are staying in touch with partner agencies regarding volunteer opportunities as they open back up, as well as virtual options for volunteers who are needing the option to help from home.

For many of you, the volunteers you have met have become friends. I'd encourage you to call each other, and stay in touch until you are able to go back to volunteering together.

### Here are some other ways to connect right now:

1. Call a friend and go for a walk and talk.
2. Spend time in the park and chat with people who are there.
3. Hang out in your front yard and interact with neighbors.
4. Talk to postal workers as they deliver mail, or chat with those walking along the sidewalk.

You can be a friendly, encouraging part of your neighborhood. Who knows, they may be outside hoping to connect as well. We'll get through this together!

*Beth Patterson*

Beth Patterson  
Executive Director



### UNITED WAY KICKOFF #ComeTogetherChallenge

The United Way of Central Oklahoma kickoff celebration was scheduled for August 21 but was cancelled for safety

due to the pandemic. The organization launched an activity where its partner agencies could still celebrate the kickoff with a Social Media Video Challenge.

### THE CHALLENGE

Each agency was to create a fun 1970s themed that encourages "coming together" to give to support programs that benefit individuals and families in our communities. The RSVP team had some disco fun!



Beth Patterson  
Executive Director



## In Fond Remembrance

In loving memory of our volunteers whose generosity in service touched all our lives.

*Richard Wood  
David Goodman*

A proud partner of:



Congratulations to  
**MEL NORTON**  
winner of the hours drawing.  
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