

Heroes of COMPASSION

Seniors Living, Loving, and Giving for a Better Community



Retired
Senior
Volunteer
Program



17 Years of Service

Vera Aldaz says volunteering has taught her that there are a lot of people who need help and there are many people who would like to provide the help but don't know where to begin.

She and her husband, Abel, found their way to begin 17 years ago through RSVP of Central Oklahoma. Abel had retired and discovered how RSVP connects volunteers to many nonprofit partner agencies in the community.

"He said he'd found something we would both love and he was right. We do!" she said.

As a couple, they've volunteered together in elementary schools, food drives, the Arts Festival, and the library, to name a few. Vera's favorite is volunteering with the St. Matthew Meals on Wheels.



"The people that we deliver meals to are so grateful not only for the meal but for the blessing of having someone to care about them and visit with them," she said. During the pandemic when volunteering was put on hold temporarily, Vera worried about the people she delivered meals to weekly.

"I really missed the time when we could go visit those who were alone and not able to go out and be with others," she said.

Moving Forward Together is RSVP's theme for this year and we asked Vera how she is moving forward. "Moving forward is not really a choice, is it? We cannot allow ourselves to live in what was or what might have been. All we can do is keep on moving forward and hoping/praying that we can continue this journey."



We are so excited to announce the promotion of Laura McPheeters to Assistant Director.

Laura joined RSVP in 2018 and you have known her as our organization's volunteer coordinator. She has linked more than 500 older adults to volunteer opportunities with 85 local nonprofit organizations.

"In addition to Laura's genuine compassion for people through her words and actions every day, she has such insight, problem-solving skills, follow-through, and attention to detail that make her an excellent person for this role," said Executive Director Beth Patterson.

Laura has a long-time dedication to volunteerism, serving since 2008 with D-Dent, Inc. and West Wind Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

She has completed all tiers of the Nonprofit Management Certification program through the Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits.



Cindy and Provide-A-Ride Client Doris

All in the Family: Sisters Patty and Cindy Volunteer at Provide-A-Ride Together

As each other's only sibling, sisters Patty Ducharme and Cindy Richter say they've always been close.

After retirement, Cindy moved from Texas to Oklahoma and today lives with her sister and brother-in-law. They began volunteering together, first at the City Rescue Mission and now as new Provide-A-Ride (PAR) drivers. They learned about the program after attending a community event that showcased nonprofit organizations and their volunteer needs.

Cindy said that what attracted them to PAR was that it helps older adults who can no longer drive themselves. Also, Patty had experience caring for their parents and taking them to doctor's appointments and was drawn to help.

"There's a very important need for this service," Patty said. "I saw this with my mom and dad; when they could no longer drive themselves,

they needed help. And the people are so grateful for it. For some people, this is a life saver."

As new volunteers still getting their feet wet, the sisters like that they can be flexible with how much they volunteer. For now, they are scheduled for one ride a week. Sometimes they will do solo drives, other times they will do drives together, pitching in to help one another.



Cindy, Left, Patty, Right, with PAR Client Doris.

If you'd like to learn more about volunteering as a Provide-A-Ride driver, contact April Lucas at 405-605-3106 or email april.lucas@rsvpokc.org.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD AND ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

We have the pleasure of introducing you to our new board member Maria



Fernanda Martinez. Maria is the Community Outreach Specialist with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oklahoma. She holds a bachelor's degree in family studies from Southern Nazarene University. She serves on the board of Possibilities Inc., Calm Waters, serving on the fundraising committee, and the United Way, serving on the allocation committee. She has been a member of the Calle Dos Cinco civic group and served on the Citizens Advisory Board for the City of Oklahoma City. She has been a volunteer at Hilltop Pediatrics and the Integris Mobile Clinic. She and her husband, Cesar, have three children: Alejandra, 19, Adrianna, 17, and Cesar, 10.

Welcome back to our seasoned Advisory Council member Jamie Jeter!



Jamie returns to our advisory council. She previously served a three-year term on the advisory council. Jamie retired from working in contracting and finance at Tinker Air Force Base for 37 years, serving in management the last eight years of her career. She is an avid volunteer, serving at Alliance Health, Midwest City, as auxiliary treasurer and office manager and a strong supporter of RSVP's mission.

Connecting Volunteers with Community Opportunities



Agency Highlight: Whiz Kids

City Care Whiz Kids has been our partner agency since 2003 and we currently have 15 active RSVP of Central Oklahoma volunteers who work with students one-on-one, providing mentorship and literacy support. The organization recognizes the whole child academically, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. It is a faith-based organization that serves children in kindergarten through fourth grade.

Welcome New Partner Agency: The Spero Project

We are excited to announce our new partner agency, The Spero Project. Spero's purpose is to serve the refugee community by connecting them with the relationships, resources and

learning opportunities that make Oklahoma City a place of belonging.

Our new partner has an immediate need for classroom assistant volunteers.

Volunteers will support teachers as they educate Afghan students who have been resettled in Oklahoma City with their families. You would work with small groups of K-12 students who need additional academic/ or behavioral support and provide additional supervision of the classroom to ensure a safe and calm environment. If you enjoy communication and relationship building, have patience and care for children, and have flexibility to adapt to different situations, The Spero Project would love to have you as a volunteer.



LEARN MORE

We have seen lives changed because of volunteering--older adults feel fulfilled, needed, and know that they are making a difference.

That's what we offer at RSVP of Central Oklahoma.

To learn more, contact Assistant Director **Laura McPheeters** at 405-605-3110 or email laura.mcpheeters@rsvpokc.org

Love for our Community



Our volunteers, along with the Midwest City Lions Club and D-Dent Inc., helped bring love to the residents of North Winds Living Center, OKC, on Valentine's Day.



Volunteers created and donated more than 100 Valentine's cards for the 21 residents and donated baked goods for the North Winds staff. The care items in the gift bags were purchased and put together with the help of the Midwest City Lions Club, and oral hygiene kits were donated by D-Dent Inc.

We love our volunteers!



National Volunteer Week April 17-23

The Benefits of Volunteering

Kathleen O-Toole
Board President

YES! A simple three-letter word.

All that is necessary is to raise your hand and say, YES!!! A very simple three-letter word that can impact someone else’s life tremendously. When asked to volunteer, you raise your hand and say, YES!!!

Greek Philosopher Aristotle once said, “The essence of life is to serve others and do good.” Volunteerism is the basic expression of human relations.

According to the United Nations report of 2020, over one billion people volunteer globally, not because they have more time but because they have more heart. Volunteering is beneficial to the doer for a multitude of reasons. To highlight some:

- a. It provides a sense of community and a purpose of life
- b. Increases social skills and builds self esteem
- c. Brings fun into your life and creates happiness
- d. Provides an opportunity to give back and share your skills
- e. Gets you out of your comfort zone and allows you to meet new friends

Benjamin Franklin founded the first Volunteer Fire Department. This tradition continues today. Seventy percent of firefighters are volunteers and in small cities all they have are volunteers. If my house were on fire, I would be glad someone raised their hand and said, YES!

The census of 2020 states that 1 in 5 Americans are 60 and over. RSVP offers so many opportunities for you and your friends to volunteer and to serve our older adults and improve our community. In reality, none of us are that busy, none of us are too important, but we all want to make a difference!

Learn More About Volunteering Through RSVP of Central Oklahoma

Volunteering is good for our community and our health, providing us with opportunities to share skills and connect with others. If your business, civic organization, or church group would like to learn more about the joys of volunteering through RSVP of Central Oklahoma, contact our office and we can schedule a guest speaker to visit your group. Call Karen Bain at 405-605-3110.

In Fond Remembrance

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

Billie Fritch
Lora Williams

A proud partner of:



Congratulations to
FRANCES CASH
winner of the hours drawing.
Enjoy your gift card!

FOLLOW US AND LIKE US!



Better With Age

Mark your calendar for March 24 to join us at the Better with Age Health and Safety Del City FUN Day. The event is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the City of Del City Community Center, 4501 SE 15th St., and is hosted by Caregiver Magazine. The event is free to the public and will include expert advice, live music, dancing, health screenings, food, door prizes, and giveaways.