Introduction

RSVP is America’s largest senior volunteer network. Today, the Greater Hartford & Central CT RSVP continues to provide seniors 55+ with quality, well organized, meaningful volunteer opportunities that match their skills and interests. As President of the Connecticut Senior Corps Association, which includes not only RSVP but also Senior Companion, and Foster Grandparents, the following statistic offers a true picture of what our volunteers did across the state of Connecticut last fiscal Year: 1,384 individual volunteers served 420,049 hours at a cost savings to the state of $10,371,009. (*based on the volunteer service federal rate)*

Locally, our own project is proudly serving over forty-five+ towns in Greater Hartford & Central Connecticut. Our 300+ volunteers have the gratifying opportunity to serve in a variety of capacities. We want to thank all of our current volunteers for all of their time, dedication, and support; Without you—our own local programs wouldn’t be possible. We always welcome new volunteers to join us at any time during the year and promise to provide you with meaningful volunteer opportunities to keep you actively engaged, all while meeting community needs in your area. It’s hard to believe that another year has gone by for us at RSVP; but we are excited to announce some of our most recent accomplishments:

We are now serving in 23 schools over 6 school districts for our RSVP READs Program and in 4 schools over 2 school districts (Vernon & Wethersfield) for our RSVP Mentoring Program. We have expanded our Volunteer Medical Transportation Program to 6 communities (Berlin, Cromwell, New Britain, Southington, Suffield, & Windsor Locks) - all thanks to grant awards from CNCS, NCAAA, and also recently obtained local municipal community support & private donations.

We had the distinct honor of being asked to have one of our volunteers from the Attorney General’s Office serve as a participant in a round-table discussion at the Department of Justice in Washington, DC on Senior Fraud issues in March of 2019; followed by CNCS visiting us to develop a video that will be used nationwide by the DOJ and CNCS (federal agencies) in the hopes of modeling our RSVP Program at the Attorney General’s office in Connecticut.

We hope you enjoy reading our latest newsletter edition and we hope to see you serving as an RSVP Volunteer for the 2019-20 fiscal year.
RSVP READs & Mentoring Programs—

RSVP READs: an elementary school-based program where volunteers partner with students, providing reading guidance and support to students just below grade level for 1 hour per week from October-May of each school year. No previous professional educational background required.

RSVP READs tutors make reading interesting, fun and also act as positive role models, all while helping students improve their reading academic level.

For 2018-19, READS Tutors volunteered in six (6) school districts:

- Berlin, New Britain, Manchester, Portland, Vernon, & Wethersfield helping over 250 students improve in areas of reading comprehension, fluency, sight words, etc.

If you are interested in helping out with this program for the 2019-20 academic school year in one of these six districts—just tell us what days of the week you’re available to donate a minimum of 1 hour and what school district you are willing to serve in; and we will place you accordingly. You can also choose to serve as a substitute only, if that works better for your schedule.

RSVP Mentoring:

Although mentoring is NOT an academic-based program, it truly is a wonderful program that provides much needed support for 1-hour a week at lunch time to a student in need from a social service perspective during the school year (Oct-May). We are currently in 3 Vernon school sites and one in Wethersfield.

We expect to expand for 2019-20 - so get aboard if interested. As a RSVP Mentor, we can promise you will truly make a difference in the lives of the student you touch.

Attorney General’s Office

The consumer advocacy unit at the State’s Attorney General’s office receives over 3,000 complaints annually, a majority that involve senior fraud incidents.

Our RSVP Advocacy’s work on the front-lines to investigate and mediate these cases for the best outcome possible for the seniors.

With Senior Fraud having become such a prevalent issue in our country, we only see this program growing in the future.

If this is something that interests you, let us know and we’ll flag your file in our database to contact you as vacancies open.

Adult Literacy Tutors

Low literacy levels and a growing ethnic diversity in communities create challenges for many adults.

To help struggling adults face these challenges and improve their quality of life, volunteers can facilitate free literacy classes in one-on-one or small group settings. RSVP volunteers can assist students in New Britain by volunteering with the Siena Learning Center.

This is a wonderful opportunity if literacy is ‘your thing’ but you’d prefer to work with adults, knowing you made a difference in helping them succeed.

Register as an RSVP Volunteer Today!

To volunteer with the Greater Hartford & Central CT RSVP-Program:

- Contact us at RSVP 860-519-3484 or email Theresa at strongt@crtct.org and arrange to complete. We promise you will be glad you did. The # one thing we hear from current volunteers is that ‘They feel they get back so much more than they give’
- RSVP Staff will then meet one-on-one with you in your own community and explain the program in detail and complete any required registration forms
- Attend training sessions when necessary and if available.
- Provide supporting documentation related to your service if necessary.

Nothing will be more rewarding than that welcoming smile, or expression of appreciation from the people that you serve. The feeling that you get because you touched their lives, in such a valuable and special way, is priceless.
Medical Transportation Drivers

There is a transportation gap facing seniors and aging veterans who experience challenges getting to non-emergency medical appointments in their hometowns or nearby.

Presently RSVP volunteer drivers meet the transportation gap for these individuals in the communities of Berlin, Cromwell, New Britain, Southington, Suffield, and Windsor Locks that cannot obtain rides from their local dial-a-ride services.

Medical transportation volunteers provide non-emergency medical transportation to ambulatory clients.

This free service augments the local dial-a-ride transportation services provided in the clients community and we strive not to duplicate services.

Ongoing training provided as well as mileage reimbursement. Last year, over 700 one-way rides were provided. A very self-gratifying opportunity.

Volunteer a minimum of (1) 4-hour shift per week, possess the ability to speak clearly, and enjoy meeting and interacting with a variety of people. Volunteers are always needed in this capacity and again, you can choose to serve as a substitute Ambassador as well. If you love helping people, enjoy the airport environment, and have 4 hours to spare a week—why not give it a try?

Last year our program assisted over

Bradley Ambassadors

The Bradley Ambassadors Program facilitated by RSVP, works in collaboration with the Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA) & Travelers Aid at Bradley International Airport (BDL).

The role of the RSVP Ambassador Program is to ensure a positive experience for all passengers and visitors from the moment they enter the airport and to offer information assistance as applicable.

Orientation training and on-going training are provided for all volunteers. Bradley Ambassadors are knowledgeable of the State of Connecticut, have their own transportation, a flexible time frame to serve before OR on event days for 1-3 hours and although there are no physical fitness requirements, they are expected to stand for at least an hour while performing tasks.

The best part is you can pick whichever events during the year to help with that work with your own schedule, even just one race per year.

Volunteers serve before OR on event days for 1-3 hours and although there are no physical fitness requirements, they are expected to stand for at least an hour while performing tasks.

The best part is you can pick whichever events during the year to help with that work with your own schedule, even just one race per year.

Food for thought: “Volunteering is a great opportunity to make a difference in someone’s life, be a part of a team, share your experience, learn new skills and develop long lasting friendships.”

Homebound Meals

Through CRT’s Meals On Wheels program, volunteers can assist with the delivery of meals to homebound individuals (60+) who live in Hartford, Manchester, Vernon and Enfield areas. Hot/cold lunches & cold dinners which cater to special diets are delivered by Meals on Wheels volunteers. Volunteers also provide social interaction through their daily contact with these homebound seniors and provide wellness checks on a regular, consistent basis.

Recipients are referred to CRT by doctors, hospitals, VNA’s, local municipality departments, relatives, neighbors, and other concerned citizens. Rewarding for all participating volunteers. Volunteer time to donate can range from 1 1/2 hours per month to 1 1/2 hours per day (5 days per week) - we expect this program to be expanding into other geographic areas as well in the near future. Ask for details if interested.

Hartford Marathon Foundation

At HMF, RSVP volunteers have the opportunity to assist the foundation with organizing for and coordinating healthy lifestyle events state-wide.

Volunteers can assist with bib mailing, athlete shirt distribution, race course monitoring or at athlete food/water stations.

Volunteers serve before OR on event days for 1-3 hours and although there are no physical fitness requirements, they are expected to stand for at least an hour while performing tasks.

The best part is you can pick whichever events during the year to help with that work with your own schedule, even just one race per year.

Hartford Hospital Volunteers

At Hartford Hospital, RSVP volunteers are instrumental in ensuring that patients and their families receive quality care and service. Volunteers support core hospital staff and can serve just a few hours per week as Patient Meal Mates, Surgical Family Lounge Liaisons, ‘Read to Grow’ advocates, or as Information/Hospitality assistants.
Here’s what our community partners and volunteers are saying about their experience with the Greater Hartford & Central CT RSVP’s READs Program:

“Thank you for bringing this wonderful program to our school. The teachers like having their students meet with tutors. Likewise, students enjoyed the special attention and reading with their tutor.”

“I enjoy participating in Vernon READs. I think the children enjoy the one-one-one attention that allows them to read aloud, make mistakes and ask questions in a supportive environment that ultimately improves their reading skills.”

LOOKING AHEAD FOR 2019-2020

♦ With the help of the RSVP Advisory Council and a grant from the NCAA and, we will be facilitating Opioid Presentations to seniors in the Greater Hartford/ Central Ct area over the Summer of 2019

♦ We also look forward to expanding our RSVP READs and Mentoring Program by adding volunteers to all of our current school site locations; and also potentially add more mentors to additional school sites in our Wethersfield district.

♦ We will continue to seek out partnering communities in an attempt to enhance and bring our Volunteer Medical Transportation Program to more clients.

♦ Working with our Advisory Council, we will update our Policy Manual to contain specific informational sections for volunteers on each of our signature programs: RSVP READs, RSVP Mentoring, and the Volunteer Medical Transportation Program

Meet the Greater Hartford & Central CT RSVP Staff

Theresa Strong/ RSVP Manager

Theresa Strong, RSVP Manager, has been in her role for (6) years now; with 25+ years prior municipal government experience (specifically Senior Center and Human Services operations). Theresa currently serves as President of the CT Senior Corp Association, a member of the State of Connecticut Commission on Community Service, and as a National Board Member on the National Senior Corp Association.

Yahaira Santiago/RSVP Coordinator

Yahaira Santiago, Program Coordinator, has been in her role with RSVP for almost 2 years and previously served as the CRT Home Bound Meal Delivery Coordinator at the Enfield Senior Center. Yahaira is the ‘front’ lines for our Volunteer Medical Transportation Program and insures that all clients receive their rides on a daily basis and coordinates with our volunteers daily to insure the successful operation of the VMTP. In addition, Yahaira keeps up with all of our office updates including monitoring our volunteer and station site files. Yahaira can be reached at the office at 860-539-6233 or email: santiagoya@crtct.org