

RSVP Volunteer News

RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM OF BURLINGTON COUNTY

Improve Lives * Strengthen Communities * Foster Civic Engagement



Editor: Michael Schaefer

Contributor: Robin Petty

current events

April 29th—Transit 101 at the Westampton Library (see page 5 for details)

May 2nd—Flapjack Fundraiser from 8–10 a.m. at Applebee's in Mt. Holly

May 12th—2015 Recognition Brunch at BCC's Mount Holly Center from 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Helping Others Help You!

As a member of RSVP, you are already committed to volunteering. You have experienced the many benefits you receive as a volunteer in your community. You also probably like to share your experiences with your friends and families. Here are some facts you can share to help encourage them to join RSVP, too.

Studies have shown that volunteers have lower mortality rates, lower rates of depression and experience less decline in their physical health due to aging. Volunteers also report that their activities help keep them more physically active and improve their memories, too.

Volunteering increases self-confidence, self-esteem and life satisfaction. Volunteering gives seniors a sense of pride and identity, especially nice for those who were used to getting that kind of satisfaction from their work life.

Those who volunteer are more engaged in their communities and have developed more friendships. Sharing an activity together is one of the best ways to make new friends and strengthen your existing friendships. And if you tend to be a bit on the reserved side, it helps you even more by giving you the chance to socialize regularly with a group of people who share common interests.

Volunteering actually makes you happier. According to a study in *Science and Medicine*, researchers at the London School of Economics found that the more people volunteered, the happier they were. As little as two hours a week can make a big difference

Being a volunteer can help you learn new skills and have new experiences. Some volunteer activities even provide extensive training to help you succeed in something new. Maybe you worked at a desk job your whole career. As a volunteer you can share those skills or decide to work outdoors.

Above all, RSVP provides seniors with a wide range of choices regarding volunteer opportunities in their community. ***So encourage your friends and family members to join RSVP today.*** If you belong to a church or a club, or live in an over-55 community, be sure to share this article. And encourage everyone to visit our website at www.bcc.edu/rsvp or call at 609-894-9311, ext. 1498 for more information.



Take Control of Your Health



Living with a chronic medical condition, whether it's diabetes, heart disease or arthritis, can seem overwhelming. You have to work hard to overcome the physical, mental and emotional toll these conditions can place on you and your family every day. To win the daily battles, you have to take control of your health.

Take Control of your Health is a free six-session workshop that provides people with chronic conditions and their caregivers the knowledge, skill and confidence to take a more active role in their own healthcare. This includes becoming an effective self-manager of your healthcare, developing a successful action plan and finding resources to help you. Each two-hour session addresses different topics, such as how to communicate effectively with your doctor and other healthcare professionals, how to manage your symptoms, and dealing with fear, anger and frustration. Participants also learn about healthy eating, how to exercise to improve flexibility, strength, and balance, and how to manage your medications.

It is a great program, with proven results. "Just setting small goals can make a huge difference," says Deborah Cirenza, who organizes and leads sessions. "I recently had a participant's wife tell me that her husband went to the shore this past summer, walked up the ramp to the boardwalk, and kept walking, resting on benches when he needed to. It may not seem like much of an accomplishment; unless you realize that he started by getting up each day and walking across the room as his first goal." Each participant receives a free textbook, a relaxation CD, as well as free refreshments at each session.

The sessions are conducted at locations throughout the county including senior centers and churches.

If you are interested in becoming an instructor for the Take Control of Your Health program, please call Deborah Cirenza at 609-894-9311, ext. 1358 or send an email to DCirenza@bcc.edu. You can also contact her if you or someone you know is interested in enrolling in the program, the next session runs from Wednesday, April 22 through Wednesday, May 27, from 10 a.m. to noon at Burlington County College in Pemberton.

Michael Schaefer joins staff as Money Management & RSVP Program Coordinator

On April 8, Michael Schaefer joined our staff as the new Money Management & RSVP Program Coordinator. He recently served for more than five years as the Director of Volunteers for Meals on Wheels of Trenton/Ewing. His volunteer management experience also includes three years with Anchor House in Trenton.

Michael's responsibilities will also include promoting our State Health Insurance Assistance Program. He can be reached at extension 1358 or by email at mschaefer@bcc.edu.

He replaces the retiring Blanche Renz, who well represented the Money Management program for seven years.

Welcome Michael!

Volunteer View



After she retired, **Kathleen Farren** admits she didn't know what to do with herself. "I thought about volunteering," says Farren, "but I didn't know where to start to find someplace to get involved." By sheer luck, Farren's daughter happened to go to the Burlington County Store to renew her passport one day in January 2011 and saw an RSVP flyer. She told her mom about it and Farren says, "I was on the phone the very next day. And I have to say that since then, I have enjoyed every single moment of my volunteer time."

Farren, who worked for more than 40 years as a secretary, didn't want to do that kind of work as a volunteer. But through RSVP, she found a perfect fit for her interests. "My mother was in a facility at one point," she says, "and I saw so many people there who had no one to visit them because they had outlived everyone in their family." So Farren volunteers at two places, visiting senior citizens. "I go to Riverview Estates in Easton, and to the Senior Care Daycare facility in Delran." Farren spends two or three mornings a week at Senior Care and an hour or so each week at Riverview.

"I get so much more than I give," she says. "When you get ready to leave, the residents want to hug you and tell you that they love you. It makes you want to do it even more." Farren is an ambassador for RSVP everywhere she goes, sharing her experiences with people and encouraging them to join RSVP. "Even when I was in the hospital last year, an ICU nurse shared that her husband had recently retired as an accountant. He was looking for things to do including maybe helping people with their taxes," she said. I told her about a tax assistance program affiliated with RSVP.

Farren thinks that RSVP is perfect place to go for anyone who wants to volunteer. "No matter what you want to do, they have a job for you."

She always makes sure to tell prospective volunteers that they can they can volunteer when they are available, no matter how much or how little time they have to give. "You can visit people for a couple hours a week or go read to children for just an hour, whatever you can do. But once you get started, it's hard to stop," she said, laughing. "When you see how rewarding it is, you find out fast that it's contagious!"

Help Us Spread the Word!

If you belong to a community group, church or other organization, RSVP is happy to provide a presentation on our many programs including **volunteering, SHIP, Money Management, LIFE and Take Control of Your Health**. Contact Michael at 609-894-9311, ext. 1358 for more information.

A Wonderful Pair: Barbara Sharp & Harriet DiLeonardo



At its 2015 Recognition Brunch on May 12, RSVP honored Barbara Sharp (pictured right) for her 25 years of volunteer service. But we would have been remiss without recognizing the 23 of service provided by her long-time friend and fellow volunteer, Harriet DiLeonardo (pictured left).

Harriet's RSVP roots date back to 1992 when she was a volunteer at the gift shop at Rancocas Medical Center where she met other RSVP volunteers. Since she joined the ranks, she has volunteered as a tutor with Literacy New Jersey in Burlington County and as an instructor for RSVP's Learning Is For Everyone (L.I.F.E.) Program.

In 1999, Linda Bennett, former RSVP Director, recruited her to be a Peer Instructor for Project Healthy Bones (PHB), a strength training exercise program for older adults with or at risk for osteoporosis. Harriet finds this work quite fulfilling since the participants acknowledge the program's benefits, especially regarding improvements in their bone density.

Barbara's quarter century of service to RSVP began with helping seniors manage their finances. To help clients save money, she would encourage them to write letters instead of calling long-distance friends or bake rather than buy cookies.

Barbara decided to join Harriet as a Peer Instructor for PHB 15 years ago. They have led classes together which typically involve approximately 15 seniors. She enjoys meeting new people who she would probably not meet otherwise. She also enjoys the 30-second breaks in between exercising, citing that Harriet has a gift for sharing funny anecdotes while the participants rest.

Frances Cirenza and Brenda Esaw-Howard Boost Medicare Savings Program

Those enrolled in Medicare who earn \$36,575 (single) or \$42,582 (married) or less may qualify for a host of cost savings benefits. (The lower your income is, the more programs one will qualify for.)

RSVP's free service offers one-on-one assistance completing government applications for the various state and federal Medicare assistance programs. Our coordinators, Frances Cirenza and Brenda Esaw-Howard, can answer your questions and get you started over the phone or in-person by appointment.

To find out more, please contact our Medicare Savings Program at (609) 894-9311. Frances can be reached at extension 1488 and Brenda's extension is 1051.

NJTIP @ Rutgers

*Expanding Mobility
for People with Disabilities and Seniors*

Transit 101 is coming to the Burlington County Library in Westampton!

NJTIP Travel Instructors will be here to discuss public transportation options in Burlington County and to distribute copies of the South Jersey Guide to Public Transportation.

Wednesday, April 29, 2015

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Burlington County Library—Westampton Branch

5 Pioneer Boulevard Westampton, NJ 08060

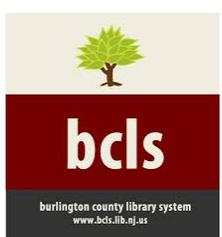
What you will learn at this **free** training:

- NJ TRANSIT accessible features
- How to plan trips and pay reduced fares
- A variety of paratransit options
- Upcoming opportunities for group trips

To register contact Louis Hoffman of NJTIP at
lhoffman@njtip.rutgers.edu or call (201) 616-8623

Snacks and coffee will be provided * Free parking available

NJTIP @ Rutgers has received funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) under the New Freedom Program for a travel training program in Burlington County.



**BURLINGTON
COUNTY COLLEGE**

Retired Senior Volunteer Program
of Burlington County
Getting Things Done

RSVP
Burlington County College
Parker Center, Room 221
601 Pemberton Browns Mills Rd.
Pemberton, NJ 08068

RSVP needs people to fill a variety of volunteer opportunities.
Contact us for a personal interview. We will match your past experience,
interests, and talents with the best opportunity for you!
For more information and to volunteer:
Website: www.bcc.edu/rsvp
Email: rsvpoff@bcc.edu
Call: 609-894-9311, ext. 1583



