RSVP Volunteer News

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Burlington County

August, 2014

The Future of RSVP

The President's 2015 budget outlines a significant reorganization of Senior Corps. Under this proposal only the most competitive RSVP programs will continue and will be integrated into The Volunteer Generation Fund. If approved by congress, this proposal could be a huge loss for Burlington County: local organizations could be left without RSVP, a viable resource to provide volunteers who help maintain the critical services they provide to the community.

For more information visit www.nationalservice.gov/about/budget

RSVP

Improve Lives * Strengthen Communities * Foster Civic Engagement

Station
Spotlight

Contact of Burlington County

Forty-two years ago, in July 1972, Contact of Burlington County began providing free, confidential, continuous 24/7 crisis response to the Burlington County community. In addition to the 24/7 Helpline, Contact also provides Reassurance Care Calls, providing confidential assistance to the homebound.

Crisis Helpline

"Volunteers provide 24/7 response to any one in need in our community, at any hour of the day, 365 days a year," said Theresa M. Tobey, Executive Director of Contact of Burlington County. "It is extremely difficult to staff a 24/7 Crisis Helpline; these volunteers make this caring, reliable, cost-effective response possible."

Trained volunteers at Contact serve shifts on the helplines to provide nonjudgmental emotional support, community resources and crisis intervention. Anyone can call Contact for help and the volunteers do not give advice, but are trained to provide compassionate support, appropriate resources and intervention when necessary. Their in-depth training, which includes a call center apprenticeship, covers topics such as therapeutic communication skills, depression, loss, mental illness, abuse, and community resources, among others. All calls are confidential and the volunteers are anonymous.

"To be able to list the impact that long-term Crisis Helpline volunteers have made is almost impossible," Tobey continued. "When you think of the many callers they have supported, respected and helped over the years, it is incalculable. They have touched many lives with their caring, skills and knowledge of services in the community. When someone needs help, be it during the work day, on a weekend, or a holiday, or in the middle of the night, it is volunteers like these who are willing to 'be there' and offer assistance."

Reassurance Care Calls

Reassurance Volunteers provide pre-arranged, brief, daily telephone calls to the elderly, isolated, or disabled in Burlington County. They provide a listening ear and the client feels supported knowing someone is there to listen to their concerns. In addition, Reassurance volunteers can provide referrals to meet client needs and emergency response if that becomes necessary.

According to Reassurance Program Director Susan Kaczinski, Reassurance has a four hour mandatory training which covers topics pertinent to the elderly or disabled. Listening and communication skills along with setting appropriate limits, dealing with loneliness, loss, elder abuse, and crisis are covered. Volunteers call from a secure location and it is an enjoyable part of the client's day.

"Reassurance is a win-win for all involved," said Kaczinski, "By receiving a Reassurance call, caregivers feel we 'share the care' of their loved one. Having peace of mind, knowing that someone else cares and is ensuring their loved one's well being is comforting."

In addition, by giving undivided personal attention, the client feels less lonely. This service allows the client to age in place and maintain independence in their own home.

Reassurance clients have benefited greatly from the attention of the RSVP volunteers. Recently, one client was having a particularly hectic day and the RSVP volunteer felt compelled to have a supervisor check on the well being of the client, who was comforted to know Contact Reassurance was there for her. Another client reached out to Contact to sing the praises of the RSVP volunteer, as she felt his daily call was a highlight of her day.

Anyone interested in volunteering for Contact of Burlington County can email or call Patricia at ptupycia@bcc.org or 609-894-9311 x1583

Did You Know…

...Registration for Fall LIFE classes begins on August 18? Be on the look out for the Fall LIFE brochure or visit the LIFE website:

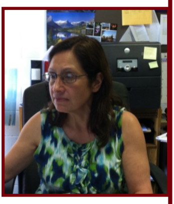
bcc.edu/LIFE

Meet the RSVP Staff

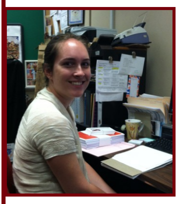
Karen Bennett is the RSVP Director. She oversees the entire RSVP Program and has served in this position for over 5 years. She provides orientation to all new volunteers and assists with their placement. As Director, she is responsible for grant management, budgeting and performance measurement. Karen can be reached at kbennett@bcc.edu or 609-894-9311 x1498.

Denice Flynn is the LIFE Program Coordinator. Learning Is For Everyone (LIFE) membership is open to anyone 50 years of age or older. For an annual fee of $80 a member can choose from over 100 course offerings per year - Fall, Spring and Summer. Most of our LIFE courses are taught by LIFE members. If you have a favorite topic or area of expertise, you can submit a course proposal to teach a LIFE course. To reach Denice, email dflynn@bcc.edu or call 609-894-931-x1499.

Blanche Renz is Money Management Program Coordinator. Money Management helps clients continue to live independently by providing them help with financial matters such as assisting low-income, elderly, or vulnerable persons with budgeting, paying bills, sorting mail and reconciling bank statements. Blanche can be reached at brenz@bcc.edu or 609-894-9311 x1358.



Debbie Cirenza is the Take Control of Your Health Coordinator. Take Control of Your Health is a is six week community workshop designed to give people with chronic conditions and/or their caregivers the knowledge and skills needed to take a more active role in their health care. Participants learn healthier ways to live, gain confidence and motivation to manage their health, and feel more positive about life. For more information, contact Debbie at dcirenza@bcc.edu or 609-894-9311-x1358.



Carolyn Giordano is the MIPPA Program Coordinator. She assists people to determine eligibility for PAAD (Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Aged and Disabled) and other benefit programs such as Lifeline Utility Assistance. She also helps with the application process and follows up with the state on their behalf. Carolyn can be reached at cgiordano@bcc.edu or 609-894-9311-x1051.

Patricia Tupycia is the Volunteer Coordinator. She works with both volunteers and volunteer stations to manage volunteer data and timesheets. She also helps to recruit new volunteers by delivering presentations and providing publicity about the RSVP program. Patricia can be reached at ptupycia@bcc.edu or 609-894-9311 x1583.

If you have any questions, or require additional information,
please do not hesitate to contact a staff member.

RSVP

"one stop shopping" for anyone aged 55 and over
who wants to find challenging, rewarding and significant
service opportunities in Burlington County

Do you live in an age 55+ community?

We'd like to get your friends and neighbors involved in RSVP! Contact us with your Activity Director's name so we can set up a speaking engagement and tell everyone about the wonderful opportunities that RSVP has for volunteers!

Contact us today...

Patricia: ptupycia@bcc.edu or 609-894-9311 x1583

RSVP

offers maximum flexibility and a choice for service opportunities
anywhere from a few hours to as often as you would like

Volunteer Views

Elaine Eufemia spent the last year as a BookMates Volunteer. BookMates volunteers spend one hour per week during the school day (September through June) reading on a one-to-one basis with an elementary school child. As a former elementary school teacher, she missed being with children and that is what drew her to this satisfying position.

"The satisfaction comes from seeing the children's interest, hearing them laugh at a funny story, and their willingness to participate in little accompanying activities I try to plan."

She explains that being a BookMates Volunteer entails finding books that will be appropriate and exposing the children to different genres and the pleasures of reading. "Weekly, I look for books at the library that I remember reading to my students," said Eufemia. "Then I search the teacher's websites for related activities. The children enjoy them and I enjoy the search."

When asked about the impact her volunteer time has had, she responded, "I guess the impact comes from the fact that they just seem to enjoy books. I know this sounds like a pat answer, but I think that is the purpose of Bookmates."

Barbara Biedenbach is also a recently retired educator, and after discovering an article concerning RSVP last summer. She contemplated the many avenues in which to volunteer with RSVP. She knew she wanted to get back into the classroom to help young minds mature and grow. Consequently, she volunteered in two local school systems, each requiring specific needs.

"The Hainesport School provided an opportunity for me to work in a classroom setting helping 2nd graders," said Biedenbach, explaining, "Together with the classroom teacher, I assisted students with their creative writing. By the end of the school year, each student was quite capable in constructing their own creative stories."

In the Westampton Holly Hills School, her job was to assist three individual students with their oral reading. "As each child worked on building fluency and accuracy in reading, it soon became apparent each child's self-esteem was developing," she said, adding, "By the end of the year, I received an additional thrill. One of the students I had been assisting would be receiving the Most Improved Award."

Both women are looking forward to returning as RSVP Volunteers when school starts again in the Fall.

Anyone specifically interested in becoming a

volunteer for BookMates, the Hainesport School or the Westampton Holly Hills School can contact Patricia at ptupycia@bcc.edu or 609-894-9311 x1583

* IMPORTANT REMINDER *

When entering your volunteer hours online, our new system requires a username and password

Your username is your first name and last name with no spaces in between (ex: johndoe)

The password is rsvp

NOTE: The first time you log in, you will be asked to change your password

Looking Ahead

Our annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon will be held in the Spring of 2015

We are currently planning a special volunteer event for the Fall

More information will be available soon!

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:
Email: kbennett@bcc.edu
Call 609-894-9311 x1498
856-222-9311 x1498

RSVP
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Getting Things Done