



Retired Senior and Volunteer Program

December, 2009

Dorothy M. Cebula, Editor

### Director's Corner



Dear RSVP Volunteers and Supporters,

It has now been a year since coming to BCC as the new Director. I have had a lot to learn, and your years of volunteer experience have helped make that learning curve easier. Thank you for your participation, patience and mentoring!

I came to RSVP from a dual background in education and volunteer management. After earning a M.A. from Middlebury College, and teaching French for more years than I will admit, I have directed volunteer programs in Tennessee and New Jersey. At Burlington County College, I help to oversee the RSVP program, the LIFE program (Learning is for Everyone), the SHIP Program (State Health Insurance Program), the Bill Payer Program, and soon a VISTA worker with the Amachi program (mentoring children of incarcerated parents). All these programs share a common theme: RSVP members are making an incredible difference in their communities. Because of your active volunteerism, lives are being touched and improved. This office would like to celebrate the difference YOU make, by collecting your stories. If you have had a meaningful experience while volunteering,

Vincent Russo, Reporter

please e-mail or send it to this office; we'd like to share that in an upcoming issue.

The RSVP Staff, Advisory Council and Community Enrichment Department of Burlington County College wish you a joyous holiday season, full of blessings and anticipation of the wonders and opportunities 2010 will bring to all.

Karen Bennett



### Spotlight on Stations

Vincent Russo

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF BURLINGTON COUNTY

The mission of Literacy Volunteers of Burlington County (LVBC) is to improve the well being of families in Burlington County by providing reading, English language learning, and literacy services to anyone wishing to improve their literacy skills. There is a great need for these services. According to the U. S. National Adult Literacy Survey, 51% of adults over the age of 25 have literacy problems severe enough to affect job performance, family life, and community participation.

LVBC provides required training for all volunteers. Volunteers do not need a college degree, teaching experience, or knowledge of languages other than English, to be a tutor. Volunteers receive 4 weeks of training in 3 hour sessions once a week. Trainees are able to practice teaching techniques. Sensitivity for the adult new reader is stressed. Classes emphasize a one-on-one technique. For ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages) small groups are often formed.

Once training is completed, LVBC then matches volunteers with literacy needy students who have come forward and requested help. This match considers the needs and personal goals of the student and availability of both mentor and student. Tutoring sessions, once or twice per week, last approximately 2 hours. Tutors are asked to tutor at least one year or 50 hours. Most tutors work with one student at a time. Tutoring takes place at public places, like libraries, schools, etc. LVBC can help suggest tutoring sites in Burlington County.

RSVP tutor volunteers contacted tell stories of the accomplishments of their students and also the rewards the tutor receives by helping the student gain improved literacy. **Rick Trout**, an RSVP volunteer, SHIP counselor, Advisory Council member and literacy tutor, reported that one student improved her English speaking so that she could give music lessons to her own students, when originally she was hampered by her lack of confidence in her own oral skill. Another RSVP volunteer **Ruth Gandek**, a literacy volunteer since 2004, was instrumental in helping a foreign born student through the exciting process of applying to become a U.S. Citizen, learning the requisite information, taking and passing a test, and then being proudly sworn in. Both learned a lot. Ruth said "Volunteering is a fascinating and rewarding way to spend my time. Each student that I have

worked with has had a different goal, an interesting personality, and various life experiences to share. I thoroughly enjoy what I do."

Contact Karen Bennett if you would like more information about how you can volunteer with LVBC or other programs.



### **NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY**

**MONDAY JANUARY 18, 2010.**

Join RSVP volunteers in collecting items for one of the three area organizations providing support for people who are homeless.

Please choose the site nearest to you:

**Christian Caring Center**- 378 Lakehurst Road, Browns Mills, NJ 08015 (609)893-0700

**Interfaith Hospitality Network** 228 Mount Laurel Road Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054 (856)638-0110

**Burlington Township Food Pantry** -10 Cadillac Rd., Burlington, NJ 08016 (in Mr. Big's Self-Storage across from Wal-Mart) Look for sign on MLK Day 888-847-3278

**Items needed:** "Survival Bags", plastic zip lock with juice box, slim jims, beef jerky, apple sauce, canned fruit, peanut butter or cheese crackers.

Gently used blankets, clean (please no new blankets)

Paper products (food stamps cannot be used for these) – toilet paper, paper towels.

Thank you for joining RSVP of Burlington County to make this national day of service a success this Martin Luther King Day!

## Impact in Action

### “MEDICARE Open Enrollment”

In November and the first two weeks of December, RSVP Burlington County State Health Insurance Program (S.H.I.P.) Counselors spoke with more than 117 Medicare beneficiaries who had questions about their coverage. The complexity of choices has become overwhelming for most people.

After one session in Willingboro, beneficiaries shared their feelings. Comments included **“I can now save more than \$950 on my prescriptions for next year”** (P.E. - Florence, NJ) and **“You took the confusion out of the many choices.”** (M.P. – Browns Mills, NJ)

If you are interested in volunteering with S.H.I.P. or other programs with strong impact, contact the RSVP office. A new S.H.I.P. Counselor training program will begin in April.

## PHOTOS OF NOTE

This year, RSVP recognized more than 100 volunteers for their efforts in various programs around the county. The event was held at the Fountain of Life Center in Burlington where many of the Center’s high school students provided hours of community service in appreciation of the many efforts of senior volunteers throughout Burlington County.



RSVP Volunteers at the Recognition Luncheon last May.



Life Center Academy students who hosted the 2009 Recognition Luncheon.

### ***“ Volunteering is my Purpose and Passion “***

I've reached a stage in life when defining my Purpose is a significant part of who I am.

I never gave much thought to Purpose in my earlier years. Important to me then was a career, material wealth, and success.

Gratifying my ego was paramount, but now these things don't matter as much. What is important is discovering and knowing who I am, and how I can benefit others without status or any sort of acclaim. I have found volunteering to be my Passion at this time of life.

The satisfaction I receive is in knowing that those who have settled their issues, grown emotionally, are happy with their lives and know who they are, is my Purpose.

I may never know what their futures turned out to be, but what I do know for certain is that I was able to stand behind myself and allow others to improve, grow, and stand in the limelight.

This is my Purpose  
This is my Passion.

by Julie Bishop

*(Julie Bishop is an RSVP volunteer and LIFE member.)*

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT RSVP? Mail this form to Karen Bennett, RSVP Director

Burlington County College  
601 Pemberton Browns Mills Road  
Pemberton, NJ 08068

email [kbennett@bcc.edu](mailto:kbennett@bcc.edu), phone 609 894-9311 Ext. 1498.

**Yes, I am interested in**

**Becoming an RSVP volunteer.**

**Obtaining further information RSVP.**

**Involving my organization in the RSVP program.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

RSVP- Burlington County College

601 Pemberton Browns Mills Road

Pemberton, NJ 08068