

# RSVP Volunteer Program

RSVP IS A PROGRAM OF THE WESTERN DAIRYLAND COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

## RSVP Volunteer Drivers—*Someone to Rely On*

March/April 2020



**RSVP Volunteer Driver: Carmen Kuss**

As seniors age, they often find themselves in need of transportation assistance in order to remain living independently. Many seniors are no longer able to drive and may also be experiencing a medical hardship. In rural communities, the issue is magnified. Given the fact that medical facilities are located at least 30 miles away and, oftentimes, family members have moved out of the area, seniors rely on volunteer transportation in order to attend medical appointments.

RSVP volunteer Carmen Kuss enjoys making an impact in others' lives.

She has been volunteer driving for over 12 years with the Trempealeau County ADRC, a partnering site of the RSVP Volunteer Program. Carmen said, "If that [volunteer driving] could have been my job for my whole life, I would have loved it." She began volunteering because, after retirement, she wasn't quite sure what she would do to fill her time. It was after connecting with another RSVP volunteer that she found her specialty [volunteer driving]. She was happy to stay active and knew she was truly making an impact by helping people get to essential medical appointments.

Prior to retiring, Carmen worked for TRW in Winona and had a few other jobs after that. None of them were the right fit for her; she was glad when she started volunteering with the RSVP Volunteer Program. She had finally found where she belonged! Her greatest reason for volunteering is that she finds joy in helping others and feels like she really can be her own 'boss'. Meaning, she chooses which rides to do and what would work around her schedule. She prefers to only take time off for her own appointments. Carmen wants to remain busy five days a week. Carmen's schedule is generally very set, and typically includes providing rides for individuals undergoing dialysis. Mostly, she drives clients to Onalaska to Mayo or Gundersen Clinics.

**Continued on Page 3...**

Western Dairyland EOC Inc. is a private, non-profit community action agency established in 1966 for the purpose of alleviating poverty-related conditions and assisting low-income families to achieve their economic self-reliance. We welcome your comments & suggestions about the Western Dairyland RSVP program.

#### **RSVP Contact Information**

##### **Address:**

Western Dairyland EOC Inc. RSVP Program  
23122 Whitehall Road  
PO Box 125  
Independence, WI 54747

##### **Office hours:**

Monday - Friday from 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.

##### **Website:**

[www.westerndairyland.org/rsvp.phtml](http://www.westerndairyland.org/rsvp.phtml)

##### **RSVP Program Director**

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##### **RSVP Program Coordinator**

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[Erika.hobbs@wdeoc.org](mailto:Erika.hobbs@wdeoc.org)

##### **RSVP Program Assistant**

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## **Have You Moved? We want to hear from you!**

The RSVP Program has had the pleasure of working with many wonderful volunteers and watching the impact each person has made in their own community through volunteerism.

We ask that you please help the RSVP office stay updated. Are you still volunteering? Perhaps you are not feeling well or maybe you have been physically unable to volunteer due to an illness or surgery? We also know summers are busy and you may be enjoying more time with your family which may result in being too busy to volunteer at this time.

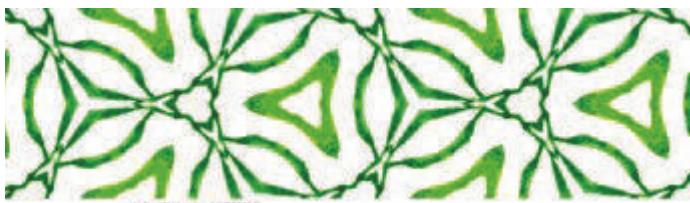
Whatever the reason, we would really like to hear from you. To insure that you receive RSVP volunteer recognition and to assist you with future RSVP volunteer opportunities, we ask that you be sure to record all volunteer hours at your volunteer work site. Feel free to contact us at anytime; we welcome your input, concerns and volunteer stories.

**Call us at 1-800-782-1063 ext. 1205, 1207 or 1232.**

**We look forward to hearing from you!**

## **Welcome New Volunteers!!**

Patricia Hajduk  
Larry Myhre  
Carol Myhre  
Susan Dahl  
Pamela Baier



Continued from Page 3...

The furthest she has travelled with a client is Madison or Rochester. Her week includes transporting 3 individuals on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and giving 3 individuals rides on Tuesdays and Thursdays to their dialysis appointments. Her time commitment is usually 21 hours a week. For that reason, if a family member or friend is in the area to take an individual, they are unable to do so because of the time commitment. More often than not, family members are still in the workforce and do not have the flexibility to transport their loved ones. Some ride recipients do not have family in the area to drive them to their appointments.

Each volunteer driver makes it possible for individuals to make it to crucial medical appointments. Without a volunteer driver, individuals may not be able to receive necessary medical care. Carmen appreciates that there is a set schedule for her. Carmen shares, “It is a lot like a job, except for you can say ‘no’ if you cannot drive for an individual for any reason.” She counts on being there to help those in need of vital transportation. Carmen is open to go above and beyond. Any time that she has free time between her ‘regular’ clients, she is willing to take on another client, keeping herself busy. Carmen knows that without her assistance, an individual in need may not make it to their appointment(s). She takes that very seriously.

Carmen understands that volunteer driving is about more than a ride- it is an essential outing for most of the individuals. The drive time is mutually beneficial, allowing the driver and the individual(s) receiving the ride an opportunity to socialize. According to a 2018 survey conducted by Cigna, nearly half (46%) of 20,000 U.S. adults report that they feel alone sometimes or always. Perhaps no other age group feels the keen sting of loneliness more than the elderly. (<https://www.agingcare.com/>). Carmen is very aware that volunteering helps her also because it gets her out of the house and keeps her mind busy. If she was not volunteering, she would be watching television or trying to call others to talk on the phone. The ride recipients she transports to appointments have taught her a lot. She has learned about the history of her hometown- Arcadia. She knows that this helps individuals by talking about their lives and the history of a place that is important to them. It really benefits everyone. Because of conversations she has while volunteer driving, ride recipients have become friends. RSVP volunteer, Carmen, has formed long-lasting friendships while volunteering. So much so that many of the ride recipients ask for her and reschedule their appointments around her availability. It makes Carmen feel good to know that they can count on her and are able to receive adequate medical care with her assistance. She is always receiving positive feedback from the individuals she gives rides to. “Ninety-nine percent of ride recipients, I would say, are thankful for the service and happy that it’s available in our area.” In rural communities, it is definitely a need for individuals to receive rides [to medical appointments]. Carmen shares that being an RSVP volunteer driver takes empathy. “You do get reimbursed some for your mileage, but you have to be willing to share your time too.” For Carmen, the rewards far outweigh the time commitment. If you think you have what it takes to volunteer drive, give us a call at 715-985-2391.

We look forward to helping you find your fit!

## RSVP FEATURED VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**Durand Meal Site—(Pepin County):** The Pepin County Senior Nutrition Program is actively recruiting four volunteers to help out at the Durand Meal Site (located at Corral Bar & Riverside Grill) from 11:15am-1pm Tuesday-Friday. Duties would include; greeting participants, answering the telephone, & completing a small amount of paperwork. For more information, please contact us at 715-985-2391.



**Site supervisors....In need of volunteers?  
Contact us today! Your ad could publish in  
the next newsletter page 4 or 5!**

**Volunteer Drivers (Pepin & Buffalo County Aging):** Volunteer drivers are needed to transport individuals to medical, social & personal appointments. This is a flexible volunteer opportunity based on your schedule & availability so you can choose or deny rides @ the time of booking. Use your own vehicle or possibly a county vehicle based on location/availability. Mileage reimbursement is paid monthly when you use your personal vehicle.

Give us a call today at 715-985-2391 to start making a difference in your community!



**Mission Thrift Store (Arcadia):** RSVP is seeking volunteers to work the sales floor on Fridays from 3-6 pm & Saturdays from 10-1 pm and/or every other month as needed. Please call 715-985-2391 to learn more about this volunteer opportunity.



**RSVP Volunteer Caregiver Project (Trempealeau County):** Seniors in Trempealeau County need your help! We are seeking volunteers to assist individuals with light practical assistance in their home. No personal cares. You choose when you are available and what services you can provide. This opportunity is flexible with a minimal time commitment but a significant impact! Give us a call at 715-985-2391 to see what we have available in your area.

**RSVP Advisory Council (Buffalo, Jackson & Pepin counties):** The RSVP Program is looking for members to join the RSVP Advisory Council. This opportunity allows you to share ideas & come up with new ways to serve your community. Meetings are held 3 times a year at the Western Dairyland office in Independence from 1:30-3:30 pm. Currently, RSVP is looking to fill 1 or 2 more spots on the Advisory Council in Pepin County, 1 more in Buffalo county, & 1 additional spot in Jackson County.

Give us a call at 715-985-2391 to start making a difference!



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Western Dairyland, Independence, WI

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## Heartland Hospice Services (Buffalo, Eau Claire, Pepin & Trempealeau County):

Compassionate individuals are needed to provide hospice services @ facilities & in homes in several locations including cities in Buffalo, Eau Claire, Pepin, & Trempealeau counties. Interested volunteers will attend an orientation & are trained @ the Heartland office in Eau Claire. This opportunity is very flexible & can be as little as an hour @ a time. (Includes friendly visits, reading, playing cards, singing to patients or playing music, or keeping patients company while family members take a break.

Please contact us at 715-985-2391.

**THOSE WHO BRING SUNSHINE  
TO THE LIVES OF OTHERS  
CANNOT KEEP IT FROM  
THEMSELVES**

*James Matthew Barrie*

**Gundersen Tri-County (Whitehall):** The Care Center is seeking a committed volunteer to come in twice/week for 1 hour each time to wash the display windows, water the birds, and clean up the bottom of the display. Please call us to learn more about this opportunity at 715-985-2391!

**Volunteer Drivers (Trempealeau/Jackson County):** The ADRC's in Jackson & Trempealeau County are seeking volunteers to transport individuals to medical appointments. This is a very flexible opportunity; snow birds are welcome! If you are interested in making an impact by becoming a volunteer driver, give us a call at 715-985-2391!

RSVP is seeking volunteers to complete handyman jobs on an as-needed basis at homeless shelters throughout the Western Dairyland service area (Buffalo, Eau Claire, Jackson & Trempealeau counties). This can include assessing repairs needed at the shelters, patching drywall, drilling holes for/ installing doors, etc. Please contact us at 715-985-2391 to learn more about this opportunity!



**Senior Corps volunteers are healthier, less depressed, and more connected compared with those who do not volunteer regularly.**

\*See more at: <https://bit.ly/2PmNo6x>



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# Thank You RSVP Volunteers!

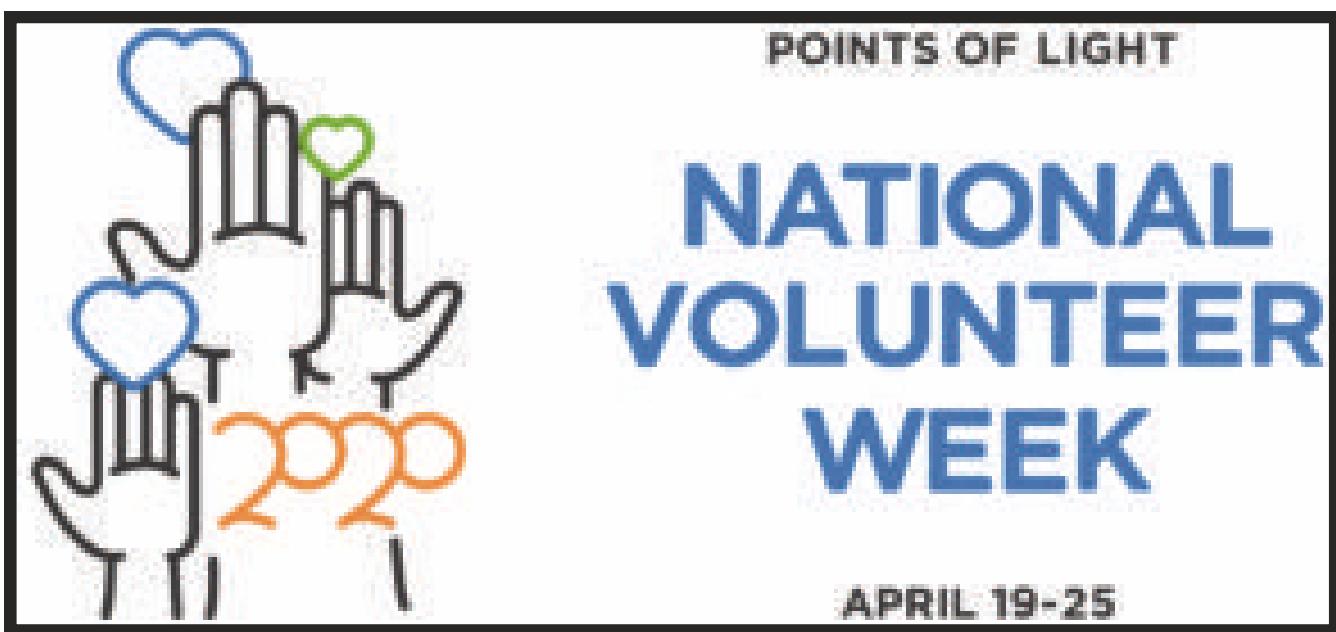
RSVP would like to thank every RSVP volunteer for the impactful service provided in your communities. We appreciate each volunteer for their unique skills and background. No matter what your background, education level, and physical capability, any individual can serve & make an impact in their community. If you know anyone who you feel would benefit from volunteering, please have them reach out to us at 715-985-2391. We have many sites & opportunities throughout Buffalo, Eau Claire, Jackson, Pepin, and Trempealeau counties.



National Volunteer Week is an opportunity to celebrate the impact of volunteer service and the power of volunteers to tackle society's greatest challenges, to build stronger communities and be a force that transforms the world. Each year, Points of Light shines a light on the people and causes that inspire them to serve, recognizing and thanking volunteers who lend their time, talent and voice to make a difference in their communities.

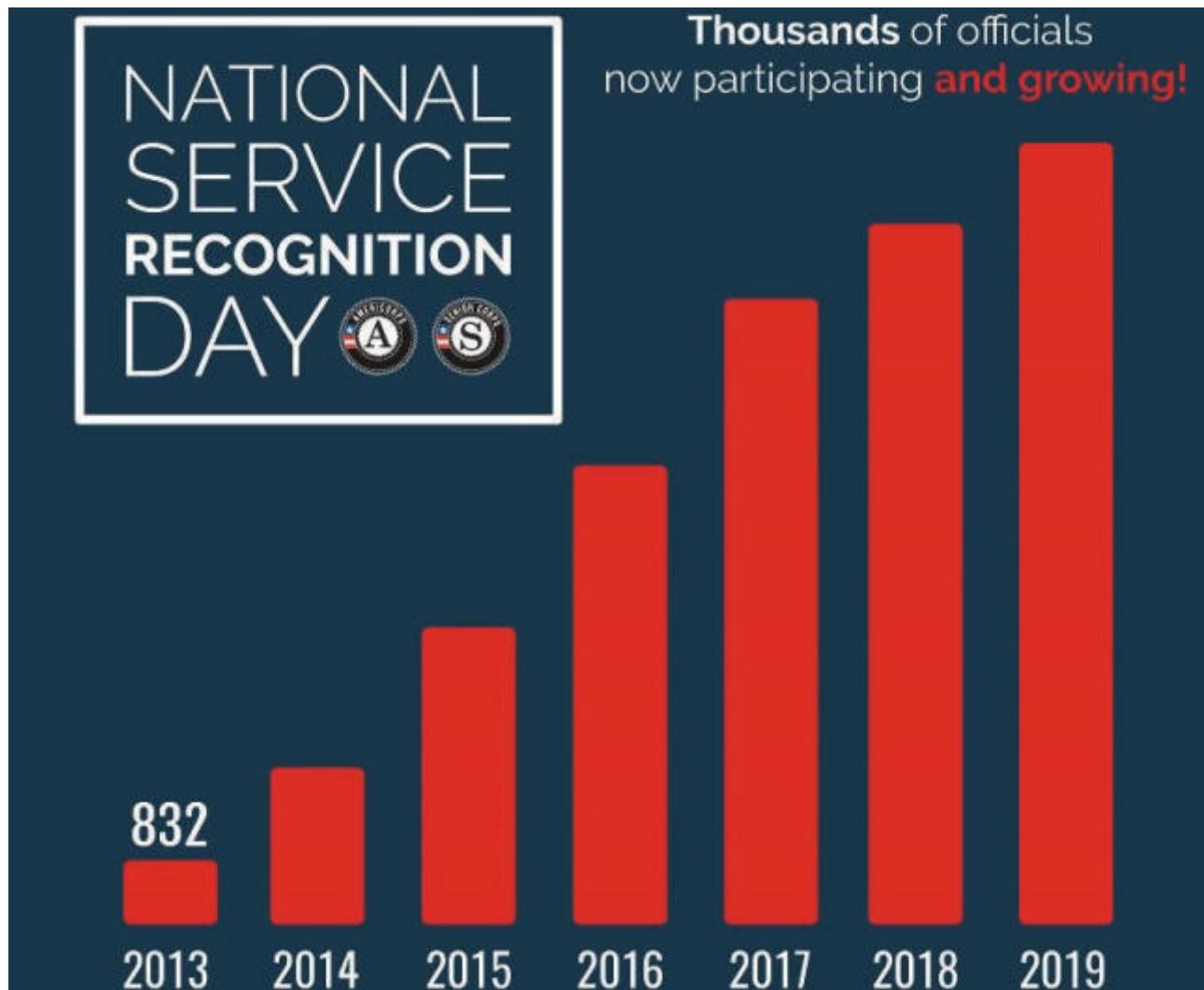
National Volunteer Week was established in 1974 and has grown exponentially each year, with thousands of volunteer projects and special events scheduled throughout the week. Today, as people strive to lead lives that reflect their values, the expression of civic life has evolved. Doing good comes in many forms, and we recognize and celebrate them all.

\*See more at: <https://www.pointsoflight.org/nvw/>



When National Service Recognition Day launched in 2013, more than 800 mayors recognized the positive impact of AmeriCorps members and Senior Corps volunteers in their communities. Since then, thousands of local leaders including city council members, county commissioners, tribal leaders, and state legislators, have joined in support.

This annual initiative is led by CNCS, the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and Cities of Service. Mayors and city leaders, county officials, and tribal leaders across the country are using national service more and more to solve their community's toughest challenges.



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Please pick up an application from the Housing Authority office at 203 South Farwell Street or call the Housing Authority at 839-4943 for more information. You can also contact the office if you require voice TDD, specialized needs due to handicap (such as sign language interpreter, wheelchair accessibility, reader) or if you need a bilingual interpreter.

Call the Housing Authority for application, income guidelines, and other qualifications



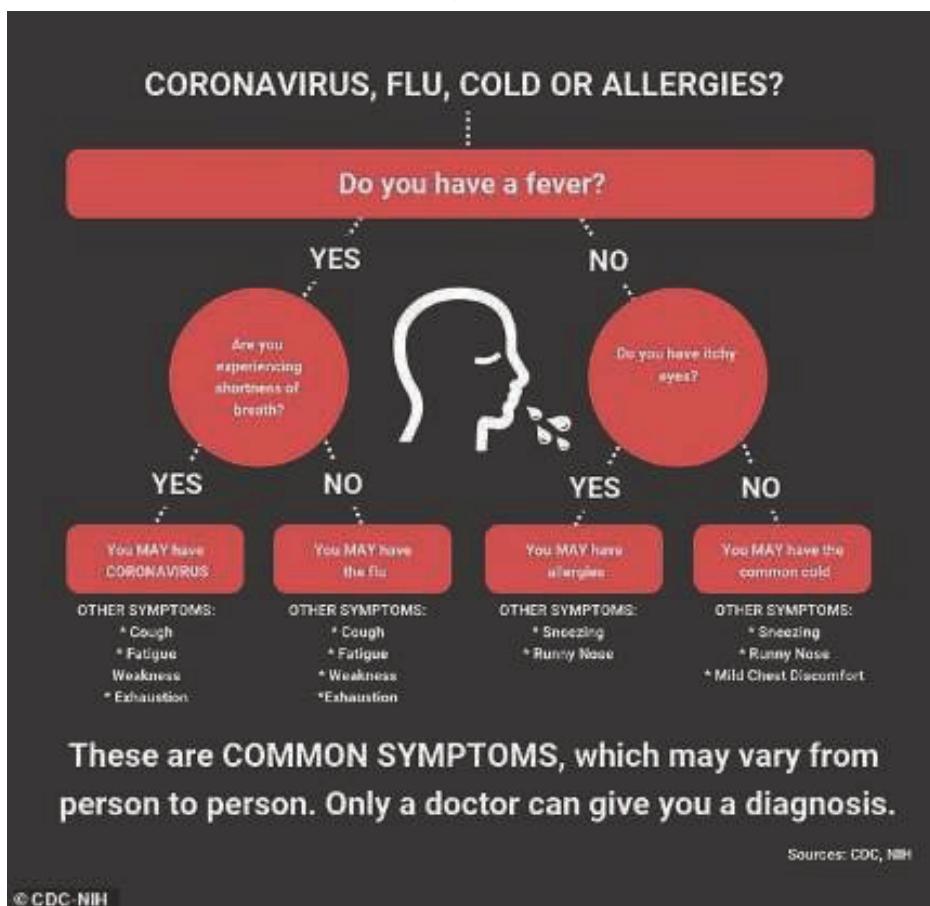
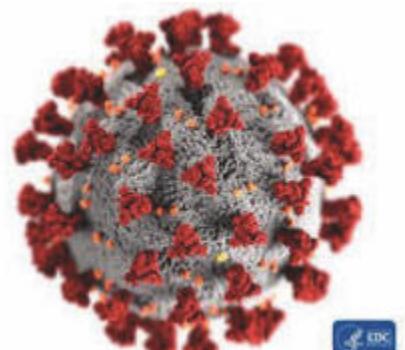
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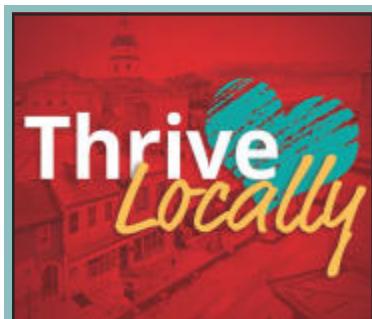


- REACH OUT TO OTHERS AND OFFER HELP (THROUGH PHONE CALLS, ONLINE ACTIVITIES, ETC.)
- GO ONLINE AND TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR OF A MUSEUM OR OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST
- WRITE A LETTER OR SEND CARDS TO LOVED ONES
- ENGAGE IN SPRING CLEANING; YARD WORK
- READ A BOOK OR PUT TOGETHER A PUZZLE
- GO FOR A WALK OR TAKE A DRIVE
- TRY OUT NEW RECIPES; MEAL PLAN



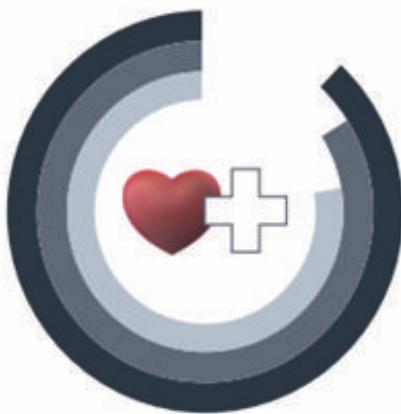
- PLAY CARDS/BOARD GAMES
- SKETCH OR PAINT
- TAKE AN ONLINE COURSE
- LISTEN TO MUSIC
- MEDITATE OR TRY YOGA
- FIND A CRAFT/NEW HOBBY
- KNIT/CROCHET
- MAINTAIN A ROUTINE
- STAY POSITIVE

**FOR THE MOST CURRENT INFORMATION AND MORE TIPS REGARDING COVID-19, PLEASE VISIT THE CDC WEBSITE. (CDC.ORG)**



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## IN THEIR LIVES...

Comparing baseline scores with a second-year follow-up, Senior Corps Volunteers were **healthier, less depressed, and less socially isolated** than those who did not serve:

- LESS SOCIALLY ISOLATED**  
88 percent reported fewer feelings of isolation
- BETTER HEALTH**  
84 percent reported stable or improving health
- LESS DEPRESSED**  
78 percent reported fewer symptoms of depression

\*See more at: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/senior-corps/senior-corps-and-health-benefits>

**Each year, Senior Corps engages more than 200,000 older adults in service through its Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and RSVP programs, enriching their own lives and benefiting the communities they serve.**

Senior Corps helps keep **Wisconsin** healthy!

Last year, Senior Corps volunteers served **1 million hours** in Wisconsin.

After two years of service, first-time Senior Corps volunteers\* reported **improvements in health, decreased depression, and less social isolation.**



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## SPRING CRAFTING— SUN CATCHERS & SOCK BUNNIES



### Materials:

Colored art page or coloring page (printed on basic white printer paper)  
 Mason Jar lids (Wide mouth mason jar bands)  
 Olive Oil (or another kind should work)  
 Cotton Balls  
 Scissors  
 Twine  
 Glue  
 Paper towel (to protect work area and absorb extra oil)

### Directions:

- Use a cotton ball to apply oil to your art. Make sure to cover all of the paper. You don't have to drench the paper, just cover completely. Dab excess oil with a paper towel. Allow to dry for about 5 minutes.
- Using the mason jar lid, trace a circle around the art. Cut the circle inside the line so the art fits inside the mason lid.
- Apply a little bit of glue inside the lid. Place the art in the lid, art side facing outward.
- Wrap twine around the lid, tie a knot to hold in place. Leave at least 4" of twine. Tie a knot at the top so you can hang your sun catcher.

\*See more at: <https://bit.ly/2P9V103>

**Materials:** Scissors, a few cups of rice, beans, etc., twine, a sock, ribbon, & a marker

### Directions:

- Fill toe of sock with rice. Fill to the beginning of the heel so it stands by itself. Ensure that the toe has more rice than the top. Form a well-shaped cylinder. Squeeze from the heel to form a small round head & bigger body. Leave some space at the top of the sock for the ears. Use the twine to tie the upper part of the heel. This will distinguish between the head & ears. Cut off the remaining upper part of the heel using scissors. This will make oval-shaped ears. Ensure that you trim off any unnecessary material.
- Use the ribbon & twine to tie the middle of the head & body. The ribbon should appear at the top. Take the marker, make two small dots that make the eyes & an X to make the mouth. Ensure that they are evenly spaced. You can also add a small tail for the bunny. Pinch a small part of the sock bunny's body from the toe & use your twine to make the tail. You could also use a small cotton ball to make the tail.



\*See more at: <https://bit.ly/2vXkhA7>



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*Western Dairyland's RSVP program serves  
Buffalo, Eau Claire, Jackson, Pepin and  
Trempealeau counties.*

# RSVP Volunteer Program

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**WE LISTEN, WE ACT, WE CARE**