

RSVP Volunteer Program

RSVP IS A PROGRAM OF THE WESTERN DAIRYLAND COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

May/June 2020

RSVP Partnering Sites– Local Food Pantries offer Drive-Up Pantries to Continue Making an Impact During Covid-19.



Pictured (Left to Right) : RSVP volunteers Deb Nichols, Tom Epps, and Larry Whaley.

Food insecurity in rural areas is apparent even in the best of times. When something unprecedented occurs, it is in those moments where the community needs volunteers to step up and shine. COVID-19 has created a lot of obstacles for individuals and families. Everyone had to adapt quickly in order to get by from day to day. Mid-March, when COVID-19 really hit western Wisconsin businesses and organizations had to adjust the way they operate, or close for an unknown amount of time, everyone was affected. As of April 2020, the Wisconsin unemployment rate was 14.1%. (See more at: <https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.wi.htm>). People who had never been without a job were finding themselves unemployed. Unfortunately, a lot of community members had to worry where their next meal would come from. For some individuals, this meant that they would need to utilize food pantries more often and/or for a longer period of time. Others were finding themselves needing the food pantry for the very first time.

Within a short amount of time, the pantries had to secure food and deliveries, perhaps meet with their board to approve more distributions, and line up volunteers who were still willing and able to volunteer their time. The pantries still in operation had to reconfigure the way their participants received their food. Many choice pantries now had to bag food and develop a drive-through operation.

The Western Dairyland RSVP Volunteer Program has many partnering stations that are food pantries. RSVP volunteers serve in a total of five counties in Western Wisconsin. Those counties are Buffalo, Eau Claire, Jackson, Pepin, and Trempealeau. In order for the food pantries to maintain their pantry and be able to serve their community members facing even more food insecurity, they had to adjust just about every aspect of the food pantry-and fast! RSVP was able to contact some of the pantries to have them share how they have implemented new practices to keep their volunteers and participants safe during a pandemic, AND battle food insecurity at the same time.

The Arcadia CommUNITY pantry located at Bethel Lutheran Church in Arcadia has been providing food twice a month for April and May; June will return to once a month. Previously, they were providing food the 4th Thursday of the month from 3:30-4:30. Like other partnering pantries, they have also adapted the drive-up service to safely distribute food to participants.

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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

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23122 Whitehall Road
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Independence, WI 54747

Office hours:

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

Website:

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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!!

Cindy Halfen

Cherie Noll

Gertrude Lehman

Dawn Shepherd

Rita Bechly



Continued from Page 1...

In order to accommodate pantry participants, the Trempealeau County Food Pantry in Whitehall (located at the old Trempealeau County Healthcare Center) has been open 7am-5pm. Food pantry Coordinator and RSVP volunteer, David McRae, stated that the pantry stays steady from beginning until about 4:30 pm. There is also little to no congestion with the range of hours and the current set-up of the drive up pantry. Because of COVID-19, the pantry has doubled the amount of food that they distribute each month! Prior to the pandemic, the food pantry was distributing about 8,000-10,000 pounds of food. In April, the pantry was up to 16,000 pounds of food. The growth was more than they could have ever anticipated. Consequently, the amount of pounds distributed per person dropped from 40 pounds per family to 16 pounds to accommodate the larger participant numbers per month and ensure that each participant received enough food.

Fortunately, David has had [RSVP] volunteers able to help during the pandemic. Volunteers have been available to help prepare the boxes of food the Friday prior to Saturday's distribution. Of course, in the morning, anything frozen/refrigerated has to be brought out for the distribution, but preparing what they are able to on Friday helps significantly. David said, "At this time, we are currently operating on a 2-tier system for distribution. Families with 1-3 people get the same amount of food. And, any household with 4 or more people get the same amount of food. It is usually about 1 box more for families with four or more people."



**The Drive-up for the Arcadia
CommUNITY Pantry**



**Bags of food prepped for the
Jackson County Food Pantry.**



**The drive-through set-up at
the Trempealeau County
Food Pantry in Whitehall.**

David has always been humbled by the support from the community, but it is even more apparent during the pandemic that the community is willing to help. David shared, "Even when the pantry didn't have a home (between the county pantry's previous location in Strum), and the future of the pantry in limbo, the community gave the okay for the county pantry to be operated out of the previous Healthcare Center building. David is especially thankful for the opportunity to utilize the building. Primarily because the building has offered accessible parking, handicap accessibility, and the space to grow. The amount of food alone that the pantry has been moving through their doors during COVID-19 would have been difficult at many other locations. Another plus, David said, is the use of the loading dock to make the truck deliveries easier. The Trempealeau County Food Pantry receives deliveries from Feed My People out of Eau Claire, and from TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program). The amount of food from TEFAP has increased significantly during this time as well. Previously, it was 165 cases (at most) to a whopping 489 cases of food!

In hard times, the community has come together to offer assistance. First when the Trempealeau County food pantry didn't have a home, and now during a pandemic. There is much that is unknown during this time, but one thing is for sure, together we can persevere.



Heartland Hospice- (Eau Claire):

Compassionate individuals are needed to volunteer their time providing hospice services @ various facilities and in homes throughout several counties, including cities in Buffalo, Eau Claire, Pepin, & Trempealeau Counties. This volunteer opportunity offers flexible scheduling and can be as little as one hour.

Please give us a call to learn more about this volunteer opportunity at 715-985-2391.

RSVP Volunteer Caregiver Project- (Trempealeau County):

Would you like to help individuals in your community? If so, we have the match for you! Seniors and/or individuals with disabilities in Trempealeau County need your assistance.

No personal cares. Friendly phone calls and/or visits, transportation, light housekeeping, etc. You decide when, where, and frequency. You This is a very rewarding, yet flexible volunteer opportunity.

Give us a call to see what we have available in your town [Trempealeau County only]. Call 715-985-2391 to learn more!

HDM Volunteer Drivers- (Buffalo & Pepin Counties):

Deliver more than a meal with this impactful volunteer opportunity!

Meal Sites are located in Durand, Pepin, Nelson, Buffalo City, Gilmanton, & Nelson. The need for volunteers varies on location. Flexible scheduling available! Mileage reimbursement is offered if you drive your own vehicle. If you drive a county vehicle, there is no mileage reimbursement.

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**Mission Thrift Store-
Arcadia:**

Volunteers are needed to assist at the thrift store Fridays from 3-6 pm and Saturdays from 10-1 pm and/or every other month as needed.

Please give us a call today to learn more about this volunteer opportunity.

715-985-2391

**RSVP Advisory Council-
(Buffalo, Jackson, & Pepin
Counties):**

Are you interested in what happens in your community? If so, this may be the opportunity for you! RSVP is seeking Advisory Council members. You are able to share ideas and develop new ways to serve your community. Meetings are held from 1:30-3:30 three times/year at the Western Dairyland office in Independence. We have spots open in Buffalo, Jackson, and Pepin Counties.

Please call 715-985-2391 to learn more today!

Volunteer Drivers-

(Buffalo, Jackson, Pepin, & Trempealeau counties):

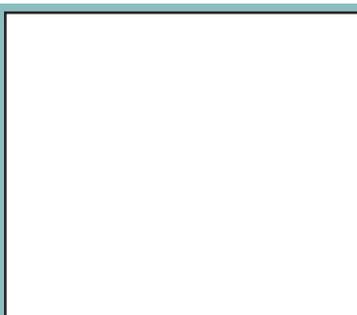
Volunteer drivers are needed to transport individuals to medical, social, and personal appointments. If you are looking for a flexibility, this is it! You can choose/deny rides at the time of booking. Use your own vehicle or a county vehicle based on location/availability. Mileage reimbursement is paid monthly when you use your personal vehicle.

The ADRC's in Jackson & Trempealeau counties are seeking volunteer drivers to transport individuals to medical appointments.

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For example, when word got out that local dairy farms were having to dump their milk, a local man who previously hauled decided to start a 100 gallon milk challenge to get the milk out to those who needed it most. For many pantries and food programs, this meant a surplus of milk and cheese becoming available. It wasn't long before the 100 gallon milk challenge grew to a 1,000 gallon milk challenge! Hearing about the need for a place to store the milk for distribution, a local business owner [Falls Meat Market in Pigeon Falls] offered the use of his truck for Saturday's distribution on May 16th.

RSVP volunteer and Jackson County Food Pantry Coordinator, Jon Warmke also stated that they saw a significant increase right after COVID-19 "Safer At Home" order came to our rural areas. He said that they gave out the max amount of food to any household size. Whether you had 1 individual or 6, the same amount of food was given to pantry participants. This streamlined the drive-up pantry process. They developed a system that worked for their pantry and its participants. They used a series of color-coded bags for distribution. Each household received one of each bag color (Red, yellow, orange, green). This way there was no confusion on who was receiving what and it left little to no room for error. Their goal was to serve individuals as quickly as possible while not compromising their quality of service and keeping everyone safe. It also ensured that households would get enough to eat and not have to wait for a long time. Soon a whole new process was developed; printing signs to place strategically throughout their parking lot to let participants know what to do (and what not to do to keep everyone safe). They also worked with a local printing company to get the bags printed for food distribution. It was a win-win. Not only did the pantry receive a product to organize their pantry, it helped a local business as well. Jon stated that after the initial month (March), the numbers did level out a bit. He believes it is partially because individuals with smaller households still had food left to sustain them for a longer period of time. Jon stated they also had to utilize a smaller number of [RSVP] volunteers but it worked out because, with the drive-up option, you didn't need as many to operate. Volunteers were able to work in 'shifts'. Some were there to help set up and prepare for distribution and others were available to help load and direct traffic so it was safe for everyone. Perhaps the most humbling thing that Jon and his volunteer team noticed was a number of participants putting signs on their windows thanking volunteers for their service! This assured the volunteers that they were doing a great job and gave them the encouragement to keep going.

One thing is for sure, together we can get through hardships. RSVP partnering food sites and RSVP volunteers have definitely stepped up and proved that when faced with an obstacle, they can succeed. It also is apparent that the community support is there as well. Without everyone working together, the outcome and impact may not be as positive.

If you are interested in volunteering with RSVP and making an impact in your community, please give us a call. We have several volunteer opportunities available! Contact us at 715-985-2391.





World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) happens each year on June 15th. It was officially recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2011, following a request by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), who first established the commemoration in June 2006. It represents the one day in the year when the whole world voices its opposition to the abuse and suffering inflicted to some of our older generations.

Elder abuse can be defined as “a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person”. It is a global social issue which affects the Health and Human Rights of millions of older persons around the world, and an issue which deserves the attention of the international community.

In many parts of the world elder abuse occurs with little recognition or response. Until recently, this serious social problem was hidden from the public view and considered mostly a private matter. Even today, elder abuse continues to be a taboo, mostly underestimated and ignored by societies across the world. Evidence is accumulating, however, to indicate that elder abuse is an important public health and societal problem.

Elder abuse is a problem that exists in both developing and developed countries yet is typically underreported globally. Prevalence rates or estimates exist only in selected developed countries — ranging from 1% to 10%. Although the extent of elder mistreatment is unknown, its social and moral significance is obvious. As such, it demands a global multifaceted response, one which focuses on protecting the rights of older persons.

From a health and social perspectives, unless both primary health care and social service sectors are well equipped to identify and deal with the problem, elder abuse will continue to be underdiagnosed and overlooked.

*See more at: <https://cutt.ly/cyGj0ne>

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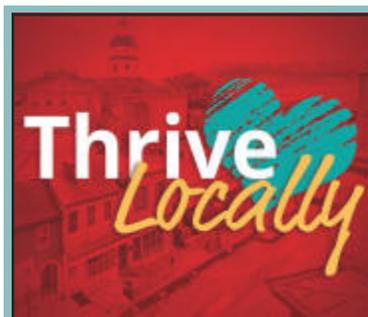


SENIOR CORPS

CORONAVIRUS SCAM ALERT

Unfortunately, people are using COVID-19 as a way to scare individuals into giving personal info. See below for some common/known scams.

- **Counterfeit Stimulus Checks:** You may receive a fake check with a number to call for you to verify your info. Providing this info. to them is simply a way for them to gain access to your checking account so they can take your money/use your personal information to secure credit cards and other documents
- **IRS Scams:** A person calls pretending to be from the IRS wanting your financial info. in order for you to receive your stimulus check. The IRS won't call unless they are returning your call. They won't contact you via text or on social media.
- **Fake COVID Vaccines/Test Kits:** Someone may try to sell test kits or other products that they say you can use to test for the virus or that will prevent the virus. These might be vaccines, pills with high doses of Vitamin C or some kind of air filter system that they say will remove COVID-19 from the air in your home. There is no cure or vaccine for this virus and testing is only available from your medical professional or through your local and state governments. And, none of these are delivered to your house.
- **Errands-Grocery-shopping/Medication Pick-up:** Be careful of someone you don't know calling to offer to run errands for you such as grocery shopping and picking up medications or other supplies. These individuals will take your cash and never be seen again, leaving you empty-handed.
- **Scams Targeting Your Social Security Benefits:** Someone is calling you to say that, due to COVID-19, your Social Security benefits will be decreased or suspended unless you provide personal information or send them money to maintain regular benefit payments during this period. Whether by text, email or letter, any communication saying that you will not receive your benefits due to COVID-19 is a scam.
- **Online Shopping:** Many of us are now going online to buy groceries, medical masks and cleaning supplies. Be sure to purchase these goods directly from an established store or internet service that offers contactless delivery. Some others may not even have the goods that you're trying to order.
- **Person in Need Scams:** This is a variation of the grandchild scam. Someone might contact you claiming to be a grandchild, friend, or relative who is ill or stranded someplace and needs for you to send them money. They might also ask you to keep it a secret. Hang up and call the person they're pretending to be to see if they are okay. Do not send money unless you are sure their story checks out.
- **Census Scam:** Census scammers may contact you by phone, email, regular mail or visit you seeking your personal and financial information. They may also tell you that this information is required before you can receive your stimulus check. Real Census workers will never ask for financial information and receiving your stimulus check is not connected with completing the Census.



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While you are ‘safer at home’ here are some additional ideas that you can do to keep your mind and body busy. It is a perfect time to try something new! Or time to get things done that you haven’t had time or energy to do previously.

- Complete the crossword and Sudoku puzzles from a book or in the newspaper.
- Try a new way to make your coffee or tea — use a French press, or a percolator; try a new flavor/brand.
- Read a magazine cover to cover.
- Pull out an old photo album (physical or digital) and flip through some memories.
- Listen to an audiobook. You can download lots for free, or borrow for free from libraries.
- Sort out that junk drawer. Or drawers.
- Try one of those projects you pinned a long time ago on Pinterest, saw in a magazine, etc.
- Find out what local businesses are still open and support them as best you can.
- Update your will. Don’t have one? Write one.
- Do a random act of kindness.
- Scrapbooking is a great way to relax. You might also join or start a scrapbook club and share your memories with friends and relatives
- Knitting and crocheting are also great stress relievers while helping to maintain dexterity in your fingers
- If you like to read, join or start a book club
- Create your own spa day. Self-care is important so give yourself a manicure, pedicure or a facial
- Start a blog. If you’re online and like to write, share your memories, experiences and life lessons for others to enjoy.
- FaceTime or video-message family and friends.



Get lots of rest and stay positive!

*See more at: <https://cutt.ly/kyGjQHh>

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**HAWAIIAN GLAZE:**

- 1/2 C. Ketchup
- 1/2 C. Pineapple Juice
- 2 Tbsp. Brown Sugar
- 1/4 C. Reduced Sodium Soy Sauce
- 2 Garlic Cloves, minced
- 1 Tbsp. Ginger Root, minced or grated

HAM SKEWERS:

- 4-6 Skewers
- 1-1/2 Lbs. Ham Steaks, cut into 1.5-2" squares
- 1 Lg. Red Onion, cut into 8 wedges with root end intact
- 2-3 Sweet Bell Peppers, cut into 1.5-2" pieces
- 1/2 Fresh Pineapple, cored & cut into 1/2" slices
- 4 Oz. Fresh Button or Crimini Mushrooms, halved.
- 1 Green Onion, Thinly Sliced, for garnish

#Get Your Grill On

TO PREPARE GLAZE: In a small bowl, whisk ketchup, pineapple juice, brown sugar, soy sauce, garlic and ginger root until combined; reserve, refrigerated, for up to 3 days.

HEAT GRILL to medium-high. Skewer ham, onion, bell pepper, pineapple and mushrooms by alternating pieces and brush with about 1/3 of glaze.

GRILL 8-12 minutes, or until slightly charred and vegetables are cooked as desired, turning as needed. Glaze skewers about halfway through cooking and again before serving. Garnish with green onion.



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*Western Dairyland's RSVP program serves
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WE LISTEN, WE ACT, WE CARE