

# RSVP

# NOTES & NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF UNITED WAY OF PORTER COUNTY | SUMMER 2020



## IN THIS EDITION

Volunteer Opportunities

Prescription Discounts

Volunteering in a Pandemic

Look for Your Survey

Tax Credits

# ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

*Volunteerism at its finest during a pandemic*

## DURING CHALLENGING TIMES, WE OFTEN LOOK FOR A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL TO GIVE US HOPE. THAT BRIGHT LIGHT IS YOU, OUR VOLUNTEERS.

With COVID-19 posing a threat to Northwest Indiana's senior population, one might expect our members to stop volunteering and protect themselves. But, that is not the case for our volunteers—you've done just the opposite and stepped up to do more, because you know our community needs you! Here are a few examples of the amazing work you're doing.



### AUDREY MORTON

*Meals on Wheels of NWI Phone Pal Volunteer*

Audrey serves as a Meals on Wheels Phone Pal, calling clients to check in after they receive their meals. Due to social distancing, meals are now dropped off at the door for residents to collect once the volunteer has walked away.

While this keeps everyone safe, it also removes

the socialization component of the visit that so many residents need. Audrey spends her days contacting meal recipients to listen and check to make sure they're doing okay. She enjoys the conversations and feels as if she is checking on family members because of the new friendships that have formed. Audrey joined RSVP in 2018 and enjoys making new friends.



### EDWARD SEYKOWSKI

*United Way of Porter County Veterans Transportation*

Ed is a veteran who enjoys serving other veterans. Before the pandemic, Ed was transporting five veteran families to the Northwest Indiana Food Bank Mobile Food

Pantry unit each month. Since the shelter-in-place mandate, the veterans don't feel safe enough to leave their homes because of their high health risk status. Yet Ed continues to serve them by going through the drive-through distribution line, picking up their food boxes and delivering them curbside at their homes. Ed joined RSVP in 2016 and has made a huge impact on the veterans and the families he serves.



### PEARL STONE

*United Way Crafting for Love Volunteer*

Ms. Pearl is a crafting volunteer who is safely volunteering from the comfort of her own home. While RSVP volunteers are busy servicing the community, Pearl has been busy serving *them* by sewing masks for those who are out-and-about. Pearl joined RSVP in 2017 and has been

crafting for love ever since.



### JAY & NANCY BEDOLLA

*Portage Township Food Pantry Grocery Shopping Volunteers*

Jay and Nancy have been serving their community for years at a local food pantry, sorting and distributing food baskets. Due to COVID-19, the volunteers were asked to stay home for safety reasons, but the Bedollas

continued to serve, this time as Grocery Shopping Volunteers. To meet the need of the increased number of clients that visit the local food pantry, the Bedollas drive from store to store picking up items to make sure that there is enough food for everyone. Jay and Nancy joined RSVP in 2015 and continue to serve faithfully every week.

**If you or someone you know is 55 or older and looking for a way to stay busy, make an impact or simply serve their community, please consider recruiting them to join RSVP—where you are essential to your community's health!**

And remember to refer recruits for a chance to win dinner on us! Have your recruits call Evelyn at 219.464.3583 x127. Winners are drawn twice a year.



### RICK & SUE PELIS

*Michigan City Meals on Wheels Delivery Volunteers*

Rick and Sue are a married couple who enjoy delivering meals together to people who are homebound. Their dedication to their neighbors is heartfelt as they continue to serve during the

pandemic. When asked why they do it, Rick responded, "Because they depend on us." They practice social distancing by leaving the meal on the doorstep and notifying the resident by phone. Rick and Sue joined RSVP in 2013 because they enjoy serving others and doing it together!



"Thanks to COVID-19, this year has been full of many twists and turns that have foiled our plans: we've postponed the Roaring 20s Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon and any thoughts of a summer event. Since we're unable to be together, we still want to show our appreciation with restaurant gift cards to volunteers who served and submitted a timesheet during January 2019-June 2020. While I would rather be dancing around in my flapper dress, my priority is to keep you safe. So, for now, I'll hang up my dancing shoes until next year—make sure you're ready! On behalf of RSVP and United Way, thank you for your service to our community and dedication to the RSVP program. I'll coordinate distribution of gift cards with your Station Managers, since we'll need your signature upon receipt. In the meantime, don't let COVID-19 get you down. Instead look for a bright spot—it just might be you!"

 Evelyn Harris,  
RSVP Regional Director

## SOCIAL DISTANCING VOLUNTEER SPOTS

### Grocery Shopping Volunteer

Shop and deliver groceries to the door of a neighbor, senior, etc. As a safety precaution, the volunteer isn't required to enter any homes. Instead, volunteers will leave the delivery on the porch and notify residents.

### RSVP Volunteer Survey Taker

Volunteer surveys are normally completed every year during the Volunteer Appreciation Banquet to measure the performance of the RSVP program. Due to COVID-19, we were unable to meet this year. We are looking for volunteers who are willing to call members that don't have email to take their survey responses over the phone.

### Inspirational Note Writing Volunteer

Write encouraging notes for food pantry clients to give them hope and let them know that they are not alone. Due to COVID-19, many of them are using food pantry services for the first time.

### RSVP Resource Volunteer

Call members without email to notify them of program updates, news, referrals and more.

### Crafting for Love Volunteers

Sew COVID-19 face masks, hospital gowns and seasonal items such as gloves, hats and scarves. Or recruit volunteers and sewing clubs to help make face masks and hospital gowns to be used by medical professionals, first responders, senior centers and other volunteers as they serve.

### Social Distance Transporter Volunteer

Volunteers who are willing to provide transportation for others to critical medical appointments, pharmacies and grocery stores. Volunteers and clients are provided gloves and masks. To social distance, clients will ride in the passenger-side back seat.

### Meals on Wheels Phone Pal Volunteer

Provide wellness checks and social support to Meals on Wheels clients via phone.

### Companionship Volunteer

Assist individuals in need with grocery deliveries, medication deliveries, rescheduling doctor's appointments, enrolling for mobile meals, connecting to mental health support services or just being a listening ear.

### RSVP Volunteer to Volunteer Calls

Since many members live alone, we're looking for volunteers to place wellness calls to ensure RSVP members are doing well.

### Stress Reduction Support Volunteers

Provides information about ways to help reduce stress and anxiety. Will conduct wellness checks, provide information about depression and stress reduction and refer individuals in need of further assistance to professionals with the help of RSVP staff.

### Computer Buddies

Assist RSVP members with social media (setting up emails, Facebook, shop online, etc.).

Volunteer opportunities are subject to change based on availability.



## SURVEY COLLECTION PROJECT & NEW VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

In the next month, look for your volunteer survey—help us improve program services! We read every survey, so it's important to share your suggestions and ideas. And we'll share survey results with all of you.

Volunteers who've given us an email address will receive a link to take the survey online. If we do not have your email address on file, our new Survey Taker and Resource Volunteer Nancy Walter will reach out via phone to make sure your voice is heard. If you do have email and we just don't have it on file, Nancy will collect this info from you when you chat.

An RSVP member since 2012, Nancy Walter has a new role. She'll be contacting volunteers without email on a regular basis to keep them informed of program happenings. Thanks, Nancy!



## RXGO.COM PRESCRIPTION DISCOUNT PROGRAM

RXGo offers up to 85% discount on everyday prescriptions and is available to anyone, regardless of health insurance status. Coupons can be found online at RXGo.com. Utilize their comparison tool to get discount coupons on a variety of prescriptions at a variety of pharmacy locations. Pick the one best for you, print and go!

When you use your RXGo coupon at the pharmacy, we'll receive at least a 15% donation of the savings. If coupons are used this month, July 2020, that donation amount becomes 100% of the total saved. All RXGo donations will go to support our Coronavirus Pandemic Relief Fund.



## NEW CHARITABLE GIVING TAX CREDIT

As part of the federal government's CARES Act, a charitable giving tax credit is now available for those who don't itemize on their taxes. In 2020, if you don't itemize and donate \$300, you can claim this donation as a tax deduction above and beyond the standard tax deductions you already receive. Your first charitable donation adding up to \$300 will count toward this new deduction.

Interested in taking advantage of this tax credit but not sure where to give? We suggest the Coronavirus Pandemic Relief Fund established to help with immediate needs and long-term recovery in NWI. Donate online at [unitedwaypc.org/Coronavirus-Pandemic-Relief-Fund](https://unitedwaypc.org/Coronavirus-Pandemic-Relief-Fund) or mail a check made out to United Way of Porter County to 951 Eastport Centre, Valparaiso, IN 46383.

“Only a life lived for others  
is worth living.”

— Albert Einstein



The United Way of Porter County fights for the health, education and financial stability of every resident in Porter County. Together with 200 community partners, 4,000 donors and 8,000 volunteers, we are uplifting lives across Porter County and Northwest Indiana.

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