

RSVP

NOTES & NEWS

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COMMUNITY SERVICES OF STARKE COUNTY VOLUNTEERS



Director Evelyn Harris spent an afternoon with the RSVP volunteers who serve at the Community Services of Starke County (CSSC) RSVP Station along with staff member Jimmie Howard. Since 2012, volunteers have faithfully supported all areas in which CSSC gives back to the community: a council on aging, a senior activity center where many come together and enjoy each other's company, energy assistance, tax assistance for the elderly and a food pantry. CSSC recently received the 2022 Best of Knox Award in Non-Profit Organization Category for their service to their customers and their community.

CSSC Executive Director Cynthia Benke is no stranger to the community center; she served on their board for three years before accepting the Executive Director position. Cynthia's background is in Criminal Justice and case management, helping families find jobs and reuniting them with other family members. She says, "I have no regrets on the decision I made to leave law enforcement. My heart is at CSSC where I can continue to serve and support the residents and help and connect more people with their families and support this great staff and volunteers."

Cynthia joined the team in July 2021 and her heart for family, community and justice has truly made a difference in the team since her arrival. She loves to laugh and always has an encouraging story to tell. She starts every day at the center with a greeting via intercom, beginning with the weather, a joke for the day, a positive quote and ending with the Pledge of Allegiance.

"The atmosphere feels like family," says Jimmie Howard, the Food Pantry Manager who recruits, schedules and

trains volunteers. "I started off as a volunteer and had done so for seven years before I started managing the food pantry. I had cancer at the time, and the team helped me to get through it. I love being here; it's a part of my life," he says. Jim manages inventory, picks up food supplies and does all the data entry for RSVP.

Doloras Dan joined RSVP in December 2012 and served through December 2021 as a food pantry and receptionist volunteer. She says, "I did it all. I loved it all the time because it kept me busy. I enjoyed the people I worked with and those who came for help. They were nice people."

Don Bowman joined RSVP in April 2015 and faithfully served as a food pantry and grocery delivery volunteer. Don is currently on medical leave and says he cannot wait until he's able to return and help the residents of Starke County.

Ruth Schwenk joined RSVP in December 2012 as the volunteer receptionist and continues to do so faithfully. Ruth was also a rummage sale and food delivery volunteer for RSVP in the past.

Mary Myers is an employee in CSSC's Transportation Department, and joined RSVP in 2018 as a volunteer receptionist in her spare time. Mary's dual role keeps her busy. She says, "I'm a helper—and people need help."

The CSSC team is looking for more volunteers to continue their mission to provide dependable, quality services to low-income, elderly and disabled citizens in Starke County so they can maintain their independence in their own homes. For more information on the services CSSC provides or to become an RSVP volunteer, call **574.772.7070**.



HELLO, MY FELLOW RSVP-ERS!

It's spring already, which means time flies when you're having fun! Are you ready for some baseball? We're currently planning our summer outing, "RSVP goes to the Rail Cats Baseball Stadium!" Volunteers who have submitted a timesheet in 2021 and the first quarter of 2022 will receive a complimentary ticket which includes a food voucher for your lunch. Mark your calendars for June 22, look for your invitation in the mail and RSVP before the designated deadline to hold your spot. Meet us at the gate to sign in and receive an appreciation gift, as our way of saying "Thank You." I look forward to seeing you there!

Evelyn Harris,
AmeriCorps Seniors/RSVP Regional Director

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Lake County

- Campagna Academy
- Foodbank of NWI
- Habitat for Humanity of NWI ReStore
- Lake County Sheriff's Department
- Meals on Wheels of NWI
- NWI Parkinson's, Inc. - **NEW**
- Sojourner Truth House

LaPorte County

- Dunebrook
- Meals on Wheels, La Porte and Michigan City
- Stepping Stone Women's Shelter
- The Salvation Army, La Porte
- VNA Hospice
- Sacred Heart Food Pantry at St. Mary - **NEW**

Porter County

- Banta Center
- Bonner Senior Center
- Duneland Family YMCA
- First Presbyterian Resale Shop
- Helping Hands Food Pantry
- Meals on Wheels of NWI
- Memorial Opera House
- Porter County Aging & Community Services
- Portage Township Food Pantry
- Portage Township Dept. of Parks and Recreation
- Portage Township YMCA
- St. Agnes Adult Day Service Center
- United Way of Porter County
- VNA Lifeline
- VNA Meals on Wheels, Porter County
- VNA Porter County, Hospice
- Westchester Public Library

Starke County

- Community Services of Starke County



Volunteer opportunities are subject to change based on availability.



REFER A FRIEND & WIN A PRIZE!

Refer a friend to RSVP to be entered to win \$50!

If they serve six consecutive months, you'll be entered to win a \$50 Visa gift card! Tell your friends about the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program today—and be sure they put your name on the referral line on their application. Drawing winner will be announced in December, so you have plenty of time to recruit!

Congratulations to the 2021 winner, Pat Mistak! She received a \$50 Visa card for referring Tim Zorn, who has served faithfully since joining RSVP in March 2021.



CRAFTING FOR LOVE WRAP PARTY

RSVP partnered with First United Methodist Church of Valparaiso to donate knitted items for our Annual Crafting for Love Project. RSVP volunteers met on December 7, 2021, to wrap 789 knitted scarves, hats and mittens that were distributed to Meals on Wheels recipients as Christmas presents.

THANK YOU to our supportive partners: Brittani Fox of First Light Home Care, Elisabeth Wilson of Indiana Home Care Northwest, Angie Monahan of Life Care Center of Valparaiso, and Cathy Ellis of Dunes Hospice. And, thanks to our amazing RSVP volunteers who continue to answer the call whenever there's a need: Sandy Coolman, Bev Hmurovic, Grace Hopp, Jennifer Jones, Diana Poffinbarger, Vanessa Smith Estelle Ziegler and Judy Bornstein, the brainchild and project lead.

UNITED WAY OF NORTHWEST INDIANA

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Unites Northwest Indiana



**“Do small things
with great love.”**

– *Mother Teresa*



**Are you 55+ years and interested in volunteering? Contact
Evelyn Harris at evelyn@unitedwaynwi.org or 219.464.3583 x127.**

United Way of Northwest Indiana helps struggling families by ensuring access to community health, education and financial stability services. In a single year, more than 22% of Northwest Indiana households are helped by United Way programs.

219.464.3583 | unitedwaynwi.org | [f/unitedwaynwi](https://www.facebook.com/unitedwaynwi)