



# RSVP Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2011

Department of Family and Aging Services

**Tracy Schwiers, RSVP Director** - - As the new year begins, it is important to look back—to reflect on the year - to think about people we helped; and our accomplishments in making our community a better place to live, work, and play. Every kind word and gesture you made to those you helped, and to those with whom you volunteered made a difference. As Margaret Mead, famed US Anthropologist once said, “Never doubt that a small thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

The RSVP Staff—Tracy, Jim, Nekeva, Agatha and Lynne—wishes you a New Year full of optimism and enthusiasm.

## Changes are Coming to RSVP

The Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal grantor who provides funding for Hillsborough County’s Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, continuously looks for ways to serve citizens most in need and use our federal dollars more wisely. In that effort, CNCS is refining the types of volunteer hours that it will accept from Hillsborough County to meet its performance measurements for federal funding. The Corporation’s Strategic plan for 2011-2015 places more emphasis in outcome-driven areas, including Economic Opportunity, Education, Environmental Stewardship, Disaster Services, Healthy Futures, and Veterans and Military Families. To successfully meet the requirements of CNCS, Hillsborough County RSVP must have 50% of its volunteers directly involved in those areas. This may result in a reduction of volunteers eligible to participate in RSVP. This may also impact a volunteer station by having some volunteers eligible for RSVP while others may not be in these activities; and therefore unable to participate in the RSVP program. To retain as many RSVP Volunteers as possible, Hillsborough County RSVP will actively seek more direct impact volunteer positions in our existing volunteer stations, and recruit new non-profit organizations whose volunteer opportunities exist in these areas. With these changes, it is possible that a volunteer may be RSVP eligible at one volunteer location but not eligible to claim RSVP hours at another location. It is equally possible that some functions by a volunteer are RSVP eligible while other functions are not. A current opportunity to serve one of these impact areas, and retain volunteer status is to participate in the Disaster Preparedness Project. It is a telephone inquiry project that has flexibility with hours and locations; and you can register by calling 307-3625 or 276—2292. While Hillsborough County RSVP staff members work toward a successful shift in focus, please be assured that we will concentrate on working with volunteers and volunteer stations to retain the maximum number of RSVP volunteers; and improve volunteer service to the community.

## *Volunteer Stations with diverse opportunities*

- Hillsborough County Department of Family & Aging Services (many locations)
- Hillsborough County Animal Services
- Hillsborough County Library Services
- Hillsborough County Friends of the Library
- Hillsborough County School District
- American Victory Ship
- Guardian Ad Litem
- Children’s Home (Thrift Store)
- Frances’ House (AIDS Daycare)
- Trinity Café
- McDonald Training Ctr.
- Emergency Care Help Organization (ECHO)



## RSVP Advisory Council News

The RSVP Advisory Council met on Friday, November 19, 2010 at the Westshore Senior Center. We discussed the progress of the Disaster Preparedness Project, RSVP's third year of participation the MLK—National Day of Service in 2011, and the partnership with AmVet Post 44 for the 10th anniversary of September 11 next year. The advisory council also discussed ideas for the 37th Annual Recognition Luncheon slated for Spring 2011. Suggestions included using popular music from 40s 50s, & 60s, and dancing. The RSVP staff will begin planning in January for a late April, early May luncheon, depending upon venue availability. Look for an update in the Spring Newsletter prior to official invitations. Again, the RSVP Advisory Council reminds everyone that volunteers are still needed for the Disaster Preparedness Project and the MLK National Day of Service.

### Welcome New Volunteers

Joan Berger  
Charleen Donato  
Gloria Favreau  
Jill Fredericks  
Herman Halterman  
Yvonne Layne  
Linda Mathinos  
Barbara Olson  
Sam Wear  
Janice Wentzel-Stafford  
Robert Young

### Disaster Preparedness Project Update

The Disaster Preparedness Project is underway. We have some RSVP volunteers trained already, but we need more for Hillsborough County Nutrition Services to assure that their elderly homebound meal clients are ready for any disaster. As previously stated, the volunteer reads a prepared statement to the senior about why the RSVP volunteer is calling, and asks questions on the Disaster Preparedness questionnaire/survey. All information is forwarded to Nutrition Services. There are five convenient locations throughout Hillsborough County where volunteers may make these telephone calls. All information is printed for the volunteer, the schedule is flexible, and minimum training is required. A volunteer can participate a few days a week, once a week, or once a month. Please call us at **307-3625** or **276-2292** if you can help these seniors.



## MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE



In observance of the 2011 MLK National Day of Service, RSVP Volunteers will partner with the James A. Haley Veteran's Hospital to provide support and recreational therapy to the veterans in Haley's Cove Community Living Center on January 21, 2011 from 1:00 pm—3:00 pm. Each RSVP volunteer will provide a game or puzzle designed to stimulate mental abilities and improve physical dexterity for the residents of the facility. Volunteers will also escort residents needing assistance to the common area, provide instructions, and assist with completing games and puzzles. Additionally, we plan to pair volunteers with residents for a small, healthy dose of competition for prizes. Stitchers in Service (see opposite page) has graciously offered some lovely lap blankets for residents we will visit that day. There is still time to sign up for this opportunity to assist and socialize with veterans on January 21. Please call 307-3625 or 276-2292 to register and join us for this activity.

### ARE YOU AN AMERICAN ARMED SERVICES VETERAN?

During December, RSVP Staff has been surveying RSVP Volunteers to find out if they are veterans of the United States Armed Services. The Corporation for National and Community Service now requires this information for all RSVP participants in the country. Since your schedules are so busy, we have missed some of you. Please call us at 307-3625 if you have not spoken to our staff about this. If you reach our voice mail, please leave your name, telephone number and state whether or not you were in the Armed Services. If your answer is yes, a RSVP Staff member will follow up with you for more information about your dedicated service.

### TIME SHEETS

Please send in your Monthly Timesheet by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month. Please be sure you and your volunteer coordinator/supervisor signed in the appropriate boxes before mailing to RSVP.

### DIRECT DEPOSIT

If you are interested in receiving direct deposit, instead of waiting for the postal service to deliver your mileage and meal reimbursement checks, please contact us at 307-3625 or 276-2292

## Volunteer Spotlight—The Ladies of Stitchers in Service



**Stitchers in Service** started with a single volunteer over 30 years ago. Lucie Mathurin visited seniors in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, and provided many with bed covers. Almost 17 years ago, she organized a group of ladies who shared her vision of using donated materials to make various items to be used by others in the community. They crochet lap robes, shawls, baby blankets, sew quilts, and make crafts to decorate nursing homes so that residents feel more at home. These items have been distributed locally to the American Red Cross, Metropolitan Ministries, the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, Migrant Social Services, St. Vincent DePaul Society, and Salvation Army. They also donated to the Hurricane Katrina Relief Effort in 2005. In 2007, these ladies donated over 90 hand made quilts and blankets to local agencies in need. In 2008, the group made over 500 laminated placemats for all the recipients of the Meals on Wheels program. Additionally, they make baby caps, booties, and blankets for a neonatal unit in an Atlanta area hospital that serves at-risk babies, and one of the ladies transports everything by car. Each lady has her craft specialty, but they all work together on major projects. When the RSVP staff recently visited them at St. Lawrence Catholic Church, they proudly showed off many items being made for their upcoming bazaar. Some of the ladies are St. Lawrence parishioners, but many faiths are represented in Stitchers. Many of them are first generation Americans, coming from Italy, Sicily, Guatemala, Peru, and (French) Canada. Most of their material is donated, but they participate in bazaars and other events to raise money for batting—the filling used in quilts, pillows, etc. They continually need and accept donations of baby yarn, large skeins of yarn, and sewing thread in every color. If anyone wishes to donate material to the Stitchers in Services for their community projects, please **call Lucie at 877-4815**. And while visiting with Lucie, we found that the Stitchers do some projects just to put a smile on someone's face. Recently, Lucie saw a gentleman on CBS Sunday Morning presenting his famous pies in a flowered apron. Lucie said she did not think it was particularly "appropriate" for a gentleman to wear a flowered apron—so she made him a denim apron. Her friend embroidered "The King of Pies" on it, and Lucie sent it to him. In return, The King of Pies who had never met Lucie, sent her a pecan pie with a note, "Thanks for the apron!! Bless, Bud the pie man." Thanks to the Stitchers in Service, many people in our community get smiles for their faces!



**Stitchers in Service:** Carmela Belluccia, Sandra Brantley, Martha Carrasco, Martha Fernandez, Lucie Mathurin, Norma Mayor, Edna McCauley, Lucy Piazza, Mary Piazza, Victoria Rodriguez, Barbara Russo, Lorraine Stephens, and Kitty Wallace.

## **Welcome Aboard —American Victory Ship Mariners Museum**

The USS American Victory Ship at Channelside in Tampa is nestled between cargo ships and cruise ships making it difficult to find. Once found, it is a fascinating museum experience. Amazingly, this world-class SS American Victory was built in 55 days. It was delivered to the U.S. War Shipping Administration in 1945; and from June 1946 until November 1947, she carried foodstuffs and machinery from the United States to Europe under the Marshall Plan. In 1966, she was used to ferry military equipment to American forces in Vietnam. Slated to be scrapped in 1998, she was rescued for preservation as a museum ship and memorial. She arrived at Tampa in September 1999, and is now included on the National Register of Historic Places. This American Victory Ship is a fully-functioning steamship. Visitors experience an unforgettable voyage of discovery and relive history by visiting cavernous three level cargo holds, radio and gyro rooms, hospital, galley, weaponry, steering stations, flying bridge, wheelhouse, mess halls, engine room, crew cabins, lifeboats and cargo equipment. There are photographs, uniforms, medals, documents and naval equipment from its glory days. Several rooms are restored and decorated in original period memorabilia including the captain's quarters and galley cold storage. The ship is a popular destination for school groups, and other organizations for its daily tours. It hosts special events during the year such as the Boat Parade of Lights Holiday Spectacular, and various Gasparilla festivities. It is also available for meetings, dinners, and birthday parties. You can learn more from its website: [Www.Americanvictory.org](http://Www.Americanvictory.org). As with all our volunteer stations, American Victory Ship needs more volunteers. During the victory ship's active days it did not have female crew members, but Executive Director Bill Kuzmick hopes women will consider volunteering to add diversity to the volunteer crew. They need many docents, mechanics, welders, etc. There are also opportunities to work with current volunteer artisans to learn new skills. Call RSVP at 307-3625 or 276-2292 to join other RSVP volunteers on the USS American Victory Ship for a truly unique volunteer experience.



### **Seniors: When it comes to talking with your doctor, don't be shy!**

(ARA) - Prior to her 25 years experience in health care as a nurse and certified physician assistant, Patti Emfinger admits that she used to feel a little hesitant about talking with her doctor when she was in an examination room as a patient.

Now an assistant professor in the College of Health Professions at South University's Savannah, Ga., campus, Emfinger worked previously in an internal medicine/internist setting. "A lot of my patient interaction had been with people over age 65," she says. "And they were raised to have a great deal of respect for medical professionals. They worried that questioning the physician or the physician assistant suggested a lack of confidence in the health care professional's competence. And many people, of all ages, are still embarrassed to talk about personal medical issues."

Advances in diagnosis, treatment, and changes in the health care delivery system have changed the way patients and health care professionals interact. Emfinger says, "With so many options available now, we appreciate that our patients want to know the reasons behind what we're recommending and prescribing. First of all, you absolutely have to tell the doctor or physician assistant all your concerns." And, while you may be embarrassed to talk about certain issues, medical professionals have seen and heard it all.

She also says that we have to ask questions in order to make informed decisions. "If you're diagnosed with a disease or condition, avoid your own unguided Internet search for answers. Instead, ask your physician or physician assistant for a reliable website or for literature or a journal where you can find reliable information. Ask about organizations that offer local support groups and other resources for people suffering from the same or similar diseases."

So how does Emfinger deal with her own reluctance in talking to her doctors? "First, I remind myself that this is my life, my health, and I'm in charge of it. I know my body better than anyone else. I'm open about my concerns. I know that if there's not good communication, I'm missing out on getting the very best care possible and achieving the health outcome that's best for me." So, when it comes to talking with your doctor, don't be shy!

(Courtesy of ARA Content)