

RSVP Newsletter

Serving Benton, Boone, Carroll, Crawford, Madison, Marion, Sebastian and Washington counties.

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Tax Season Takes Grit

RSVP members did a great job of rising to the challenges presented during tax season this year. All tax preparers had to deal with learning a new software. And everyone (volunteers and clients) had to deal with an online system which wasn't reliable. Many thanks to the VITA, TCE and Tax-Aide volunteers who were so generous with their time and talent. Their patience was greatly appreciated.

Despite having to just close the doors on several days during tax season (because the online system went down) our grant objectives were met and we exceeded our previous record of returns prepared. Two IRS grants allowed us to expand our service area into Holiday Island, increase the training provided to the tax preparers and meet our operating expenses. Both IRS grants will continue through the 2018 tax season.

Income tax assistance was offered at both of our RSVP sites and at the Holiday Island Presbyterian Church. In total, volunteers at all three locations prepared 4, 777 federal tax returns, resulting in more than \$4.3 million dollars in refunds and just under \$1.6 million in Earned Income Credit. Families were served from 116 different zip codes. Tax assistance at our RSVP sites in Fort Smith and Rogers continued on Wednesdays through September 20th.

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Special points of interest

- Year ends with **912 RSVP members** volunteering 147,320 hours.
- Medicare Open Enrollment starts on October 15th. Call either RSVP office for an appointment after October 1st.



Who To Contact?

If interested or if you need additional information for all the volunteer jobs in Sebastian and Crawford counties please contact **Trish Walker** at (479) **783-4155**.

For all the volunteer jobs in Benton, Boone, Carroll, Madison, Marion, and Washington counties please contact **Cindy Feaker** at (479) **636-0578**.

Benton County – Bella Vista

Village House Adult Day Center- Village House is a non-profit program providing social, recreational, educational, and care giving opportunities for participants who may no longer feel comfortable staying at home by themselves. Our goal is to maintain quality of life for the clients and the caregivers.

Client Care Aide: Volunteers are needed to assist with activities, games and help out at meal time. They love having volunteers and can use your help in our facility as a senior-friend, activity helper, BINGO caller, etc. A patient heart and smiling face is all you need to start! Choose your schedule; we welcome daily, weekly and monthly volunteers, as well as special one-time visits. Assistance is needed Monday through Friday any time between 8:00 am –5:00 pm.

Boone County – Harrison

Boone County Senior Activity & Wellness Center

Center Volunteers are needed as kitchen helpers, help with light cleaning, assist with special events, assist with daily meal service, and other activities as they become available. The center also has a garden and could use assistance with it. Gardening day is usually on Wednesday at 12:30 pm but help would be appreciated any time. Assistance is needed Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. If you could help out a couple of hours a day or every day during the week, any assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Homebound Senior Meal Delivery: Delivering meals is a simple and rewarding way to help seniors and people with disabilities in need of hot meals and a daily visit from a friendly face!

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Homebound Senior Meal Delivery continued

Volunteers bring a prepared and nutritious meal to each recipient's door. Part of the fun of delivering is visiting with recipients. Delivering meals is also a great social activity – you can do it with a friend or spouse. Volunteers use their own vehicle. Meal preparers and Ride Along Partners are also needed! Volunteers are needed Monday through Friday 10:30 am – 12:00 Noon.

Crawford County – Van Buren

Crawford County Volunteers for Literacy

Tutors: Help English-speaking and non-English-speaking adults, 18 years of age or older, learn to speak, understand, read, and write English to meet self-identified goals. Tutor and student set own sessions during office business hours: Monday through Friday 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. Two hours sessions with four sessions per week, if possible. Training will be provided.

Van Buren Visitor Center

Station Masters: The Van Buren Visitors Center is one of the excursion points serviced by the scenic Arkansas & Missouri Railroad. Station Master's duties include meeting and greeting guests, taking about the history of Main Street and the Train Depot and directing guests to area shops, restaurants museums and attractions. This position requires some light stocking of brochures and bathroom supplies. No heavy lifting or strenuous activity required. Training regarding the history of Van Buren will be provided.

Marion County – Flippen

Marion County Senior Activity Center

Center Volunteer are needed as kitchen helpers, help with light cleaning, assist with special events, assist with daily meal service, and other activities as they become available. Assistance is needed Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. If you could help out a couple of hour a day or every day during the week, any assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Sebastian County – Fort Smith

Ft. Smith Activity Center & Beckman Senior Activity Center

Homebound Senior Meal Delivery: Delivering meals is a simple and rewarding way to help seniors and people with disabilities in need of hot meals and a daily visit from a friendly face! Volunteers bring a prepared and nutritious meal to each recipient's door. Delivering meals is also a great social activity – you can do it with a friend or spouse. Volunteers use their own vehicle. Meals preparers and Ride- along Partners are also needed! Volunteer hours at Fort Smith Activity Center Monday – Friday 9:45 AM – 12 Noon. Volunteer hours at Beckman Senior Activity Center Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM.



Ft. Smith Activity Center & Beckman Senior Activity Center continued

Center Volunteers are needed to assist with setting up for special events, helping with mailings, assist with daily meal service and other activities as they become available. Assistance is needed Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. If you could help out a couple of days a week or every day during the week, any assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Don W. Reynolds Cancer Support House

Support House Volunteer is needed to give their time, energy and talents each week to greet, register, call and encourage patients. Others clean, straighten, organize, file and provide other services that keep the House running. Volunteers are needed Monday thru Thursday from 9:00 am - 12:00 noon or 1– 4 pm.



Project Compassion

Volunteers Needed: Check out just a few of the opportunities available with Project Compassion! One-to-one Visits (assist with activities, party and game companion, visit and reminisce with residents) Pet Therapy (visit residents with your pet) Write to a Resident Be a friend to someone today! You can pretty much set your time and day to volunteer.

Fountain of Youth Adult Day Center

Client Care Aide: Volunteers are needed to assist with activities, games and help out at meal time. They love having volunteers and can use your help in our facility as a senior-friend, activity helper, BINGO caller, etc. A patient heart and smiling face is all you need to start! Choose your schedule; we welcome daily, weekly and monthly volunteers, as well as special one-time visits. Assistance is needed Monday through Friday any time between 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM.

Volunteer Hairdressers are also needed to provide salon services to clients one morning a week (preferably on Friday, but time and day is flexible) for mostly women and a few men. The volunteer must provide their own supplies. Put your talents to work in making someone feel beautiful.

Peachtree Hospice & Mercy Hospice

Hospice relies on the caring, compassionate services of trained and dedicated volunteers. Volunteers receive training which is designed to prepare volunteers by helping them understand the hospice concept of care the unique needs of terminally ill persons and family members.

Some examples of typical volunteer duties are: Listening to a patient's concerns; Being a comforting and supportive presence; Engaging in the patient's hobbies, such as, playing a board game or discussing current events; Running errands or doing light housekeeping for the patient and family; Providing time for the caregiver to take care for themselves.

Community Services Clearinghouse

Pantry Workers: The Clearinghouse maintains a well-stocked pantry for use by persons needing food assistance. They serve clients on an emergency basis through the work of several caseworkers who interview the clients. Volunteer Pantry workers are needed to bag food for clients and assist in stocking bulk food area. Carts are utilizing in the preparation of the food bags to ensure no heavy lifting. Hours that assistance is needed are: Every Monday and Tuesday Noon – 3 pm.

Washington County – Fayetteville

7 Hill Homeless Center

7 Hills Homeless Center is a hub of services for homeless and impoverished individuals and families in northwest Arkansas. They rely on the generosity of the community in NWA to meet the growing needs of the homeless and impoverished in the region. Several Volunteer opportunities are available.

Food Pantry Assistants build bags of food to be distributed to clients during food pantry hours of operations. Volunteers are needed Monday – Friday 9—11:00 am and 1—3:00 pm.

Clothing Room Attendants assist the clients in selecting and bagging clothes, sorting through donations and stocking the clothing room. Volunteers are needed Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9—11 am and/or Tuesday/Thursday 1:00 – 3:00 pm.

Meal Servers help prepare, serve and clean up after daily Kitchen meals. Breakfast is served Monday – Friday 8:00 – 10:00 am and snack time is Monday – Thursday 2:00 – 4:00 pm.

Ozark Literacy Council

Tutors: Help English-speaking and non-English-speaking adults, 18 years of age or older, learn to speak, understand, read, and write English to meet self-identified goals. Tutor and student set own sessions during office business hours: Monday through Thursday 8:00 am – 8:00 pm and Friday 8:00 – 1:00 pm. Additional times are available at the Springdale Public Library to meet with students, as well. Ozark Literacy Council prefers to have at least 1.5 hours scheduled per week. Training sessions for volunteer tutors is provided the last Wednesday of each month.

Washington County – Springdale

Springdale Senior Center

Homebound Senior Meal Delivery: Delivering meals is a simple and rewarding way to help seniors in need of hot meals and a daily visit from a friendly face! Volunteers bring a prepared and nutritious meal to each recipient's door. Delivering meals is also a great social activity – you can do it with a friend or spouse. Volunteers use their own vehicle. Meals preparers and Ride Along Partners are also needed! Volunteer hours are needed Monday – Friday 8 m – 4:30 pm.



Mark Your Calendars

Ft. Smith Medicare Volunteer Training

Tuesday, October 10th
9:30 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Rogers Medicare Volunteer Training

Thursday, October 12th
10 a.m.—2:30 p.m.

Medicare Open Enrollment

Oct. 15th thru Dec. 7th

RSVP Offices Closed

Wednesday, Nov. 22nd thru Sunday, Nov. 25th.

Ft. Smith Holiday Open House

Monday, December 11th
10 a.m.—4 p.m.

Rogers Holiday Open House

Tuesday, December 12th
11 a.m.—3 p.m.

Rogers New Tax Preparer Training

Wednesday, Dec. 13th—15th,
9:30 a.m.

Ft. Smith New Tax Preparer Training

Wednesday, Dec. 20th—23rd,
9:30 a.m.

RSVP Offices Closed

Thursday, Dec. 21st thru
Monday, Jan. 1st.



Medicare Advocate Training Scheduled

Training for Medicare Advocates who will be aiding in Medicare Open Enrollment is scheduled for Tuesday, October 10th, in Fort Smith and Thursday, October 12th, in Rogers. Training times are listed to the left. Additional training will be scheduled at both locations on October 16th.

Volunteers who are interested in attending this training need to contact their local RSVP office about their interest. Medicare advocates will need to be set-up with access to the SHIPTALK website by Susie Reehl prior to training. All data for the Medicare Community Outreach program is now gathered online.

New Tax Preparer Training Scheduled

WestArk RSVP is looking for RSVP members who would like to take a free tax class to learn about taxes, then help others with their tax return preparation early next year through the IRS-sponsored VITA Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and TCE Tax Counseling for the Elderly program. Orientation for new tax volunteers (or experienced preparers if they would like to attend) will be offered at the Rogers RSVP office on Wednesday, Dec. 13th through Friday, Dec. 15th, starting at 9:30 a.m. and at the Ft. Smith RSVP Center on Monday, Dec. 20th through Wednesday, Dec. 23rd, starting at 9:30 a.m.

VITA/TCE volunteers need not have a financial or tax background – in fact they come from all walks of life. But they all share an interest in learning about basic tax preparation and in helping others. Being comfortable working on a computer is necessary, since all returns are prepared electronically.



I am writing this after we finished hosting our two “Breakfast of Champions”. We hosted events at Golden Corral in Lowell and Ft. Smith. Our members do an amazing job volunteering and these events are our way of saying “thank you” for your service. Combined attendance exceeded 350 volunteers at the “Breakfast of Champions” this year.

Between July 1, 2016 and June 30th of this year **912 WestArk RSVP members volunteered 147,320 hours.**

October is the month my thoughts turn to Medicare Open Enrollment. Trish Walker, Cindy Feaker and I attended the Medicare Train-the-Trainer workshop in Jacksonville last week. I always learn something new and useful. The training seems to get better every year—our thanks to Beth Moore and her staff of two at the Arkansas SHIIP office who hosted the event. Look out for more information after the first of the year about new Medicare cards not containing anyone’s Social Security number.

For those of you who choose to receive your Medicare benefits from an Advantage plan please take advantage of the assistance we offer (see page 8). There are some big changes in the market this year and it may well be worth your effort to look at all the possibilities. About two-thirds of the Medicare beneficiaries we have helped so far have saved money by changing plans.

As you can see on the proceeding pages, we have many unfilled volunteer jobs. I will be at a 6th Annual Volunteer Fair Saturday, October 7th from 9 am until 1 pm at the Riverpark Events Building, 121 Riverfront Drive, in Fort Smith. Our best volunteer recruiters are our satisfied volunteers. All members of RSVP are encouraged to bring these volunteer opportunities to the attention of family and friends. Current RSVP members may find an additional volunteer job for themselves. Please help—your efforts can make a difference.



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WestArk RSVP is a program of the Western Arkansas Counseling & Guidance Center, Inc. and receives funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service.



Cindy Feaker

Welcome New Volunteer Coordinator

I am extremely excited about coming on with RSVP as the new Volunteer Coordinator in the Rogers office. While I realize, I will never be able to replace Karen Tyler (who has retired), I will do my best to step into the position for a smooth transition. Let me tell you a little bit about me and my background and what has brought me to the RSVP organization.

For those of you who do not know me my name is Cindy Feaker. I was born and raised in south Florida and lived there until 2008. After moving to Arkansas I fell in love with the area and cannot even imagine moving away from here. For the past five years, I have had the opportunity to work as the Volunteer Coordinator at Northwest Medical Center.

However, due to cutbacks my position was eliminated. I feel very fortunate to have the chance to be a part of RSVP.

Karen and I spent the month of August visiting at Volunteer Stations and with RSVP members. I am looking forward to meeting each and every one of you! Until next time, Cindy

Welcome our new Volunteer Coordinator, Cindy Feaker! She joins Steve Tyler at our Rogers RSVP office as of August 1st.

Medicare Open Enrollment



The annual Medicare Open Enrollment is the time of year when people with Medicare may make changes to their Part D pharmacy plan or their Part C Medicare Advantage plan for the coming year. They can also use this period to change from Medicare Advantage to Original Medicare or vice versa.

Medicare Open Enrollment runs from October 15 through December 7. Any changes made during Medicare Open Enrollment take effect on January 1, 2018.

Each year plans change what they cost and what they cover. Plans are added and closed.

WestArk RSVP is offering appointments throughout Medicare Open Enrollment for people with Medicare to meet with trained (by the Arkansas Insurance Department) SHIP Advocates who will provide them with information about their 2018 choices.

Call 783-4155 for an appointment in Fort Smith or 636-0578 in Rogers.
