

RSVP

Lead With Experience

WestArk RSVP serving volunteers & the community in Benton, Carroll, Crawford, Madison and Sebastian counties.

June / July 2011

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- VITA (volunteer Income Tax Assistance) will be offered at the RSVP Center in Ft. Smith on Tuesday's from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m..

2011 RSVP Grant Slashed by 20%

In April, notification was received that the Continuing Resolution (CR) that funds the federal government for the rest of fiscal year 2011 reduced funding for Domestic Volunteer Service Act (DVSA) programs by \$12.6 million.

The DVSA programs include RSVP, Foster Grandparents, Senior Companion and AmeriCorps VISTA. The full amount of the reduction will be applied solely to RSVP programs. This reduction of \$12.6 million from FY 2010 levels will result in a 20% decrease to local RSVP programs.

WestArk RSVP has already been

awarded a grant and funded for 2011. The 20% reduction will be realized by increasing the amount of time the grant funds are to cover from 12 to 15 months.

Unfortunately, these cuts were made so late in the calendar year that drastic reductions in spending are needed in order for WestArk RSVP to continue to operate. Funding is only available to meet basic RSVP grant requirements.

Immediate cost-saving measures will include:

- ◆ As of May 31st the Rogers RSVP office will be closed. Cyndi Najar will continue as the RSVP Volunteer Coordina-

tor for Benton, Carroll and Madison counties, but she will work from her home. *The phone number 636-0578 will not change and the phone will continue to be answered by Cyndi.*

- ◆ WestArk RSVP will no longer partner with volunteer stations outside its five county service area.

- ◆ Membership in WestArk RSVP will be reduced to 800 (primarily by attrition).

- ◆ Transit tickets will no longer be provided to RSVP members.

- ◆ Availability of sponsorships will determine if and when recognition activities take place.

New RSVP Members



Please welcome the newest members of WestArk RSVP. Many of these new members are from Northwest Arkansas. These new volunteers are greatly needed and their willingness to donate their time and talent is appreciated.

WestArk RSVP members volunteer with Volunteer Stations (partners) in Benton, Carroll, Crawford, Madison and Sebastian counties.



- Judy Arbia
- Gayle Austin
- Carolyn Balik
- Richard Barnett
- Brenda Blue
- Reba Bolinger
- Sandy Boyer
- Sharon Carter
- Mary Chew
- Mary Clark
- Ronald Clark
- Ann Cloud
- Rheta Counts
- Beverly Craig
- Annis Mae Cripps
- Maria DeGidts
- Donald Eaton
- Kathryn Estep
- James Ferguson
- Loretta Ferguson
- Carol Fishel
- Leota French

- Melvin French
- Sue Gaines
- Sammye Green
- Charles Hamilton
- Thomas D. Hatfield
- Hazel Nelle Haught
- Barbara Hays
- Pam Henderson
- Patsy Hiob
- Geri Hoerner
- Eddie Johnson
- J.E. Johnson
- Char Kittelson
- Maggie Kowalski
- Dan Krotz
- Leon Lauber
- Helen Ledbetter
- Tommy Ledbetter
- Betty Lundberg
- Mary Mayeb
- Chester McElhaney
- Marlene McElhaney
- Marcia McKenney
- Patricia Meier
- Jean Beall Michelsen
- Lucinda Newman
- Buddy Oxford
- Loretta Oxford
- Bonnie Parker
- Colene Parker
- Leon Patrick
- Helen Peltier
- Hulen Peters
- Martha Rogers

- Wanda Rogers
- Norma Russell
- Wanda Shook
- Dorothy Slay
- Pauline Sloan
- Sharon Sly
- Reba Faye Smythe
- Ione Spencer
- Eleanor Springsted
- Norma Staley
- Samuel Steele
- Anna Stephens
- Emma Leah Stone
- Sallie Stucky
- Sherrie Sutcliffe
- Carol Thornton
- Betty Tidwell
- Mary Ann Tompkins
- Sara Treftz
- Ken Van Poucke
- Nancy Van Poucke
- Joyce Van Roekel
- Jerry Vnuk
- Kay Vnuk
- Carolyn Wall
- Ruth M. Waller
- Floyd Wheeler
- Joyce Whittlesey
- Diane Winder
- Betty Witt
- Ruth Wyatt
- Thomas Wyatt

VITA/TCE Volunteers Impact Our Community

RSVF members volunteered with the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) and TCE (Tax Counseling for the Elderly) program at the RSVP Center in Fort Smith and the Lavaca City Hall during the 2011 Tax Season. They prepared and filed **2,007 electronic federal tax returns** despite a tax season shortened by 10 days (because of a delay in the availability of Arkansas software and 4 snow days. This was a **4% increase over last year in the number of federal tax returns prepared.**

Of those returns **649 were through our TCE program** serving those age 60 or older.

These tax returns generated **\$708,083 in Earned Income Credit** (last year's total EIC was just over \$670,000) for **599 families. EIC increased 5.6%** over last year despite changes to EIC eligibility which reduced the number of eligible families.

The returns generated total refunds of **\$2,448,930.** This is a **9% increase** over last year.

Typical cost of a tax return is estimated at \$125 – which means we saved the folks we helped **\$250,875 in preparation costs.**

Between January 24th and April 16th Oklahoma/Arkansas state returns totaling **2,257** were electronically filed. Paper returns

numbered **114** and were primarily tax returns for prior years.

WestArk RSVP members who volunteered at either of the two VITA/TCE sites were honored at a Luncheon on Tuesday, May 17th at the RSVP Center. IRS certificates of appreciation were presented to the volunteers. A wonderful meal was prepared by Dorothy McCartt.

Bob Cockreham received the *Outstanding Service Award* for preparing the most returns (283) and **Liz Robinson** was recognized for screening the most clients. **Larry Goss** was recognized for the fewest errors both numerically and as a percentage of the returns he prepared.





CDBG Funding in Jeopardy

WestArk RSVP was approved for a city of Fort Smith Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). We anticipate another \$8,000 grant for the tax program and a new \$6,000

grant for the Medicare Assistance Program will be available on July 1, 2011.

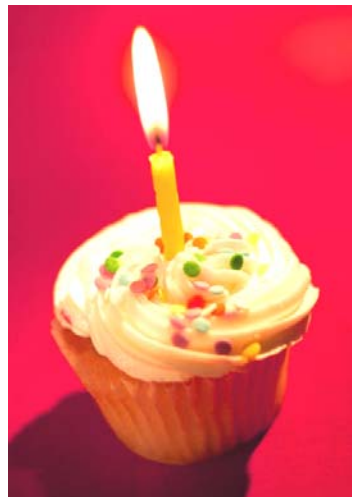
Unfortunately, future funding of the CDBG and HOME programs is in jeopardy. Cuts of two-thirds of the

federal funding is being considered.

These cuts will have a major impact on Fort Smith. Loss of CDBG funding will result in a decrease in the services offered through the RSVP Community Outreach program.

June Birthdays

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Barbara Beever | 8 Ruth Ann Lucker | 17 Joan Bryan | 19 Robert Johnson |
| 1 Catherine Meren | 8 June Rochan | 17 Ann Cloud | 19 Marjorie Marrs |
| 2 Charlene Albright | 9 Ruth Haag | 17 Phyllis Francis | 19 Bridget Schmidt |
| 2 Dorothy Straub | 9 Jenney Sheffield | 17 Bill Johnston | 20 Allen Pruisner |
| 2 Steve Tyler | 10 Larry Elam | 17 Bob McPherson | 21 Velda Armstrong |
| 3 Bernice Giddens | 10 Bonnie Huseman | 17 Frances Wood | 21 Marjorie Shafer |
| 3 Patsy L. Hiob | 10 John Roberts | 18 Jerry Ezell | 21 Hallie Standard |
| 3 Barbara Pudas | 10 Pauline Sloan | 18 Frank Goga | 22 Dale Hunter |
| 3 Richard Rhoades | 11 Lola Brown | 18 Richard Taylor | 22 Doris McPherson |
| 4 Bob Cockreham | 11 Beverly Watts | 19 Garland Conway | 22 Shirley Shepherd |
| 4 Pete Hurlburt | 12 Helen L. Ledbetter | 19 Ralph Dovre | 23 Velda Berning |
| 4 Gardine Powell | 12 Tracy Pennartz | | 23 June Hardgrave |
| 5 Freda Pierce | 13 Darcie David | | 23 Laverne McCorkle |
| 5 Louise Rusterholz | 13 Ruby Wolf | | 24 Patricia Meier |
| 6 Paul Moser | 14 Helen Peltier | | 25 Lizbeth Winford |
| 6 Barbara Jo Smith | 15 Renee' Campbell | | 25 Sarah Yada |
| 7 Marjorie Boer | 15 Marguerite | | 26 Callie B. Dodson |
| 7 E. Ray Fougnie | Ditlevson | | 26 Euba Harris-Winton |
| 7 Robbie Grim | 16 Barbara Brasvell | | 26 Erma Faye Hobbs |
| 7 Wilma Smoot | 16 Jean Freeman | | 27 Kathryn Cooper |
| 7 John Urbia | 16 Larry Keller | | 27 J.E. Johnson |
| 8 Marcia Bohn | 16 Betty Mullenix | | 29 Dorothy Day |



July Birthdays

1 Carl Bruns	11 Kathy Sherrill	18 Roy Harris	23 Becky Keller
1 Oga Grizzle	12 Velma Farrar	18 Lois Johnson	23 Marlene McElhaney
1 Don Moor	12 Beth Kastl	18 Irvin Sternberg	24 Mary Bryant
2 Marilyn Bell	13 Bill Cameron	19 Leota L. French	24 Katherine Hughes
2 Shirley Hullauder	13 Clyde Chaney	19 Charles Klaus	24 Kay Vnuk
2 Tim Randolph	13 Sue Row	19 Margaret Long	25 Harold Fitch
3 Treva Goodman	13 Sara Treftz	20 David Kerr	25 Jack L'Heureux
3 Vicki Hurst	14 Floyd Barger	20 Mary Sue Lowri- more	25 A J Lee
3 Bob Leach	14 Daisy Bruns	20 Murl Nichols	25 Patti Logan
3 Hazel Martin	14 Mary Jo Gage	20 Peter Schutz	26 Sue Kelley
3 Mr Hack Moore	14 Richard Watt	20 Maureen Thames	26 Helen Warren
4 Ronald Esserman	14 Phanita Williams	21 Anna Campbell	27 Boyd Clayton
4 Suzanne Karr	15 Lynn M. Gould	21 Edward Meren	27 Pauline Smith
4 Lori Oliver	16 Donna Ramey	21 Charles Raney	28 Louise Barnett
4 Mary T. Ott	16 Robert Simmons	21 Luanne Raynoha	28 Tommy Ledbetter
4 Deon Rollans	16 Ronnie Wagner	22 Jerry Akins	28 Twyla Reinecker
4 Shirley Sautter	17 Richard Davis	22 Jeanette Belin	28 Carolyn Scott
4 Jessie Zanzeberg	17 Deanna Williams	22 Jimmie Griswold	28 Georgia Brasher
5 Bobby Abbott	18 Dolores Bates	22 Drucilla Hughart	29 Loretta Ferguson
5 Peggy Lewis	18 Janalou Devers		29 Betty Lundberg
5 Louise Turner			29 Anna Redden
6 Clarice Gnuse			29 Peggy Shopfner
7 Alice Lewis			29 Lynndon Sloan
7 Edgar Newlin			29 Judith Ticknor
9 Harry Akers Jr.			29 Rosemary Wingfield
9 Cindy Borchert			30 Donald Eaton
9 Flora King			30 Margie Hagood
9 Richard King			30 Lone Spencer
9 Dorothy McCartt			31 Jewell Cox
9 Gladys Walz			31 Donna Carrier
11 Joseph Borden			31 Ezra Hodgson
11 Ethel Gibbs			31 Ann Lee
11 Edna Olienyk			31 LoKiel Norgard





Volunteers Needed

All of our partners are being asked to submit all their request for volunteers through our website: www.WestArkRSVP.org. RSVP members wanting to check out available volunteer position should look on the website under the VOLUNTEER heading on the left side of the home page for "Volunteer Opportunities".

Fountain of Youth Adult Day Center in Fort Smith needs Activity Volunteers one day a week

for an hour or two to help with crafts or games. Assistance is needed in the mornings starting at 10 a.m. or the afternoons at 2:15 p.m. If interested contact Evie Craig at 484-7782.

Literacy Council of Crawford County needs administrative support in their Van Buren office. Volunteers would be asked to answer the phone, great visitors and welcome the students on weekdays from 9 a.m. until 3p.m.

Lifeline of Northwest Arkansas is seeking an office volunteers for their Bentonville office.

Typical volunteer duties include answering the phone, filing and helping with mailings. Week-day hours are 8 a.m. to noon or noon to 4 p.m.

Assistance is also needed to install Lifeline equipment. Training will be provided and a background check is required. Contact Melanie at 479-254-0100 to volunteer.

Please let RSVP know your email address. If you are not currently receiving email messages monthly from RSVP, please contact us at bridgetrsvp@ipa.net
Thanks!

Sebastian County Sheriff's Office

The Sebastian County Sheriff's office is our newest RSVP volunteer station. With a new sheriff and tight budget due to economic conditions volunteers are needed in several areas to assist employees. Those interested in volunteering with the Sheriff's office should contact Trish

Walker at 479-783-4155 for additional information about the these volunteer jobs:

Secretarial: Office support including phones and filing.

Control Room Assistant: Working with an employee aid in maintain video surveillance.

Greeter: Act as customer service rep-

resentative.

Telephone Operator: Relay incoming, outgoing and interoffice calls.

Medical Chart Helper: Assembling and organizing patients' medical info.

Tutor: Assist students academically.

Handyman: Assist with repairs, property maintenance and renovations.





News Reel

by Susan Peacock Reehl

The 20% federal cut in 2010 funding for RSVP programs is going to be a huge challenge for WestArk RSVP. The decrease in services listed on the front page of this newsletter as a cost savings is just a first step. Additional cuts may be needed before the end of the year.

Every effort is being made to raise additional funding for WestArk RSVP. I will be spending the month of June and part of July preparing grant applications for funding from the IRS and several private foundations. Trish Walker is going to focus on obtaining sponsorships for activities like the Breakfast of Champions and Holiday Open House and for items such as the annual calendar and RSVP newsletter.

If our efforts are successful WestArk RSVP will be able to continue to operate through the end of March 2012. I have no idea what to expect after that date. As you may know, once again a budget resolution approved by the U.S. House of Representative calls in 2012 for the “substantial reform or

elimination of CNCS (Corporation for National and Community Service).” That would result in the closure of RSVP programs.

These drastic changes are all the more upsetting because we haven’t done anything wrong. In comparison to all other CNCS programs RSVP is the biggest bang for your federal dollars. Our members do not receive stipends—they are volunteers in the truest sense of the word.

WestArk RSVP has always been in compliance with all federal grant requirements. Our program has been growing and we can demonstrate the positive impact of our program on our community. We have skilled volunteers who are making a difference.

While much is unclear about the future of WestArk RSVP I know one thing with certainty. Unless our members, partners and supporters indicate to our elected representatives that they support WestArk RSVP continuing to operate we will cease to exist on March 31, 2012.



Despite our grim prognosis we plan to continue to do what we do best in the coming months—recruit, place and reward volunteers - until we have to turn off the lights. We will host a volunteer recruitment event in Rogers to commemorate the outstanding outpouring of volunteer service following the events of September 11, 2001. In Fort Smith we are continuing to grow our RSVP Community Outreach program. Tax assistance will continue throughout the summer and we are planning on how to meet the needs of Medicare recipients this fall with the changes to Medicare Open Enrollment and the influx of new Boomer Medicare recipients.

Thank you to our members for your volunteer service.



VITA/TCE volunteers on a typical tax season Saturday.

WestArk RSVP

401 North 13th Street
Fort Smith, AR 72901

Phone: 783-4155

Fax: 782-2269

Hours of Operation

Monday—Friday
8:30 am—4:00 pm

Web site:

www.WestArkRSVP.org

Staff

Susan Reehl
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rsvp@ipa.net

Trish Walker
Volunteer Manager
trishrsvp@ipa.net

Cyndi Najar
Volunteer Coordinator
Benton, Carroll & Madison Co.
cyndirsvp@ipa.net
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Bridget Schmidt
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AmeriCorps VISTA

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WestArk RSVP is sponsored by
Western Arkansas Counseling
& Guidance Center, Inc.

RSVP
Getting Things Done.