

WestArk RSVP Newsletter

WestArk RSVP is a program of the Western Arkansas Counseling & Guidance Center, Inc.

Special points of interest:

- RSVP members invited to volunteer for tax season.

Our Partner in Education—Sutton Elementary School needs Friday volunteers for:

- the Fall Festival evening of October 30th and
- Thanksgiving Celebration on November 21st (during lunch).

Top Volunteers for the 1st and 2nd Quarter

The names of WestArk RSVP members who ranked in the “Top 35” for the First *and* Second Quarter follow. These sixteen members volunteered over 15,000 hours of service during the first six months of 2008.

Bobby Abbott
First Tee

David Callahan, Sr.
St. Edward Mercy Medical Center (SEMMC)

Clyde Chaney
Lorina Garner
Golden Rule Clothes Closet

JoAnn Flocks
Good Samaritan Clinic

Fred Hander
Baker Center, Girl Scouts, First Presbyterian Church, SEMMC

B.G. Hendrix
AARP

Anita & Don James
Crawford County Volunteers for Literacy (CCVL)

Ellen Karatzou
Mercy Hospice, Reynolds Cancer Support House, SEMMC, Ft. Smith Classic

Jeanne McKim
Ft. Smith Schools, Good Samaritan Clinic, Little Theatre, St. Paul United Methodist Church (UMC), COTS, Christ the King School

Mary Jean Moore
Midtown Senior Center

Don Palmatary
Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE), RSVP Advisory Council, Barbara’s Computer Lab

Jim Rose
Goddard UMC, Habitat for Humanity

Zeta Smith
Wesley UMC, Project Compassion, Reynolds Cancer Support House

Blanche Smith
Ragon Family Center

Iyla Stranahan
Heart to Heart, Project Compassion, SEMMC, Sparks

Preston Swofford
Mary Tausinger
SEMMC

Sister Dolorita Thompson
Mercy Hospice

Rod Tschetter
Southside Senior Center

Nancy Zornes
Peachtree Hospice, Mercy Hospice, Project Compassion, RSVP Advisory Council

The names of the RSVP members who ranked in the “Top 35” for the First Quarter are:

Robert Cockreham
American Red Cross, TCE

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New RSVP Members



Membership
in

WestArk RSVP currently stands at 891. Welcome our newest members...

- Stephanie Ahrens**
- Velda Armstrong**
- Jean Boyett**
- Dian Brisco**
- Larry Brisco**
- Grace Brossman**
- Angelene Carter**
- Alice Caulkins**

- Tricia Davis**
- Barbara Day**
- Jamie DeBates**
- Carol Edwards**
- Ellen Edwards**
- CeCe Gitthens**
- Helen Hart**
- Faye Hicks**
- Bob Laser**
- Natascha Lee**
- Suzanne Lewis**
- Dell Manus**
- Ruth McElroy**

- Nadine Mowris**
- Susan Nelson**
- Elwyn Parks**
- Shirley Rowe**
- Herschel Rye**
- Margaret Sanders**
- Florence Severosn**
- Ivanell Sides**
- Norma Stockton**
- Reba Toon**
- Hazel Triplett**
- Steve Tyler**
- Barbara Watt**
- Richard Watt**

“Top 35” members are the RSVP members who reported the greatest number of volunteer hours in service outside their home.

“Top 35” Volunteers *continued*

- Sid Donalson**
- Richared Kutschall**
- James Nusser**
- Bob Prough**
AARP TaxAide

- Doug Fletcher**
TCE, Church on the Streets (COTS), St. Paul UMC

- Chuck Gartner**
TCE, Lavaca Senior Center

- Larry Ichniowski**
- Larry Kennedy**
- Henry Oliver**
- Joseph Reznik**
TCE

- Bill Johnston**
TCE, RSVP Advisory Council, CCVL, Community Service Clearinghouse

- Jo Leach**
TCE, Project Compassion, AARP, RSVP Community Outreach

RSVP members who ranked in the “Top 35” for the Second Quarter are:

- John Brown**
- Pauline Cole**
Baker Senior Center
- Karen Carr**
Children’s Service League, Ft. Smith Schools, RSVP Advisory Council

- Trev Howard**
First Presbyterian Church, Sparks Regional Medical Center (SRMC)

- Dimple Johnson**
Scott County Senior Center
- David Kerr**
- Bradley Martin**
Trolley Museum

- Ruth Ann Lucker**
First Tee, Community Service Clearinghouse, Fort Smith Classic

- Kathy Luedloff**
WAC&GC, RSVP

- Berine Rozelle**
- Forest Slavens**
SEMMC

- Beverly Smith**
American Cancer Society

- Ava Zachary**
We Care Foundation. Reynolds Cancer Support House



Hurricane Gustav Evacuees at Fort Chaffee

WestArk RSVP members pitched in at Fort Chaffee the week of September 1st to help folks from Louisiana who were evacuated ahead of Hurricane Gustav.

Following a phone call from State Director, Opal Sims on Tuesday, September 2nd, our program made contact with Major Richard Watts of the Northwest Arkansas Salvation Army. The assistance of 10 volunteers was requested to help serve meals at lunch (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.) and supper (4 p.m. to 9 p.m.) to hurricane

evacuees at Fort Chaffee.

WestArk RSVP members (Mary and Doug Fletcher, Chuck Gartner, Liz Robinson, Lois Eldredge, Jeff Nusbaum and our two AmeriCorps VISTA (Sandy Pearson and Marsha Brown) responded and provided lunch volunteers through Saturday, September 6th. All hurricane evacuee left Fort Chaffee to return to their homes by Sunday morning.

Volunteer assistance

included serving food to 800+ evacuees and cleaning up the dining room and serving area.

WestArk RSVP member, Bob Cockreham, who volunteers with the American Red Cross assisted at a American Red Cross shelter for hurricane evacuees who drove to Fort Smith at Grand Avenue Baptist church from Sunday to Thursday.



Birthdays

OCTOBER

1 Helen Epperson
 1 Ann Williams
 2 Gin Fisher
 2 Norma Gibbs
 2 Carl Kastenbaum
 2 Bob Laser
 3 Lois Brandon
 3 Clarence Dewitt
 3 Betty McLendon
 4 Shirley Freeman
 4 David Jones
 4 Suzanne LaFontaine
 4 Miles Taylor
 4 Pauline Thomas
 5 Wanda Daniels
 5 Martha Parsons
 5 Sylvia Varnadore
 6 George Fritz
 6 Trev Howard
 6 William Mohn
 6 Louise Nelson
 7 Ruth Moser
 7 Susan Nelson
 7 Johnnie Porter
 7 Ruth Robbins
 7 Marcella Robertson
 7 David White
 8 Pat Coleman
 8 Bobby Dean
 8 Junetta McCoy
 9 Robert Thompson
 10 Cecil Greene
 10 L.A. Robinson
 11 Bea Zemansky
 12 Mel Santos
 13 Mary Jo Abernathy
 13 Alda Rae Epperson
 15 George Beattie
 15 Sue Bohnenkamper
 15 Lou Moreland
 15 Donna Prough
 15 Edward Wofford
 16 Jim Edwards, Jr.
 17 Gordon Chitwood
 17 Shirley Jacks
 18 Thomas Barnhardt
 18 Vyrl Nelms
 19 JoAnn Flocks
 19 Mary Jean Moore
 20 Ursula Raney
 21 Katsie Gibson
 21 George Jensen
 21 Judy Oliver
 21 Nancy Peacock
 21 Sue Rainwater
 21 Mary Smith
 22 Rose Lyons
 22 Wanda Meadors
 23 John Gibbins
 23 Mamie Mann
 24 Steve Huffman
 24 Delois Spoon
 25 Tricia Davis
 25 Vester Hutchens
 25 Nadine Mowris
 26 Ruth Morrison
 27 Ebba Jarvis
 27 Forrest Slavens
 28 Betty Blair
 28 Martha Jones
 28 Dorothy Sullivan
 29 Mary G. Smith
 29 Carol Youngblood
 30 Barbara Day
 30 Amelia Parks
 31 Nancy Zornes

NOVEMBER

1 Genell Graham
 1 Grace James
 1 Steve McEntire
 1 Leland Pitsch
 2 William Craig
 2 JoAnn Jackson
 3 Paul Anderson
 3 Margie Evans
 3 Ann Grimes
 4 Glenda Wofford
 5 Esther Cook
 5 Betty Etzkorn
 5 Joicie Gilbreath
 5 Pamela June Sutton
 6 Warren Gardenhire
 7 Carl Grizzle
 8 Judith Hayward
 9 Maizie Jones
 12 Ludema Anderson
 12 Kenneth Brisco
 12 John Brown
 12 Denver Clement
 12 Don Manuel
 12 Sue Yancey
 13 Audrey Clemons
 14 Joyce Jagers
 14 Alice Wright
 15 Dorothy Calderera
 15 Bradley Martin
 16 Carole Hargrave
 16 Doris Johnson
 16 Cecelia Kramer
 18 Mardell McClurkin
 19 Joy Bailey
 19 Linda Bucher
 19 Nancy Carolan
 19 Mildred Deal
 19 Patricia Gunselman
 19 Jim Kitchen
 19 Leta Underwood
 20 Hazel Stitsworth
 21 Wanda Cash
 21 Rose Marie Duffy
 21 Dimple Johnson
 22 Larry Brisco
 22 Elizabeth Gardenhire
 22 Fred Stecher
 22 Nettie Todd
 23 Susan Chaney
 24 Betty McSwain
 24 Iyla Stranahan
 24 Katherine Tookey
 24 Hazel Triplett
 25 Bette Childers
 25 Smokey McPhail
 26 Patricia Fellner
 26 Veroma Hiatt
 26 Jan O'Leary
 27 Laverne Fast
 27 Helen Jetton
 28 Donald Fast
 28 Sue Frey
 28 Irene Michael
 28 Evelyn Sallee
 30 Betty Bowlin
 30 Berna Dean Inklebarger
 30 Susan Shields



Who Will Volunteer When Gas is \$6 Gallon?

The rapidly increasing price of gasoline is being felt by RSVP members across the USA. For some it is changing the way they volunteer. Seniors on fixed incomes have to take a hard look at their budget and decide how much they are willing to spend to donate their time to a local charity.

There has already been a change in the way members of RSVP volunteer. During the first half of 2007 and the first half of 2008 just about identical numbers of WestArk RSVP members volunteered (801 vs. 805).

There was a significant decrease in the total number of volunteer hours (16,800 fewer hours in 2008) and a decrease in the number of volunteer assignments. Volunteers put their time and their transportation dollars toward those causes closest to their hearts.

During 2007, the total number of volunteer hours donated by WestArk RSVP members equaled 104 full-time equivalents (FTE); this year it looks like the gift to the community will be closer to 80 FTE.

The number of WestArk RSVP members requesting transportation tickets to use city bus service to get to their volunteer assignments has not increased.

Staff at WestArk RSVP are seeking out grant opportunities that allow volunteers to receive travel stipends. The 2008 TCE grant from the IRS enabled the tax volunteers to receive small travel stipends.

Changes are being proposed in Congress to increase the value of the deduction for volunteer travel from 14 cents to the same rate as medical. This increase would only be helpful to volunteers who itemize on their tax returns.



Prices at the pump affect availability of volunteers.

“Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another.”
Erma Bombeck

Minimum Hours for Breakfast of Champions Invitation

Beginning with the 2009 Breakfast of Champion, invitations will only be sent to RSVP members who have 48 reported

hours of service in the preceding year (July 1, 2008—June 30, 2009)—an average of four hours per month. New members will need to have a pro-

rated amount equal to 4 hours of service for every month they were a member and will be made aware of the requirement at enrollment.





University of Arkansas
Fort Smith

Helping Hands are Needed

UA Fort Smith Athletic Department needs volunteers to assist with: database input, answer telephone, filing, mailing preparation, assist with research on internet, assist with preparations for athletic events. Computer knowledge using Excel,

Word and Internet, preferred. Positions available Monday-Friday. 8 am- 6 pm.

UAFS also needs volunteer concession stand workers during the home games. Volunteers will be responsible for working at the assigned conces-

sion stand, receiving monies for purchases, giving correct change, serving food products and possibly preparing deposits. Volunteers will report to the Athletic Director or Assistant Athletic Director, Beth Presley, to schedule hours and duties for the days working.

Starting November 1st you can contact the RSVP Center for an appointment to review your choices for 2009.

Medicare Open Enrollment Starts Nov. 15th

Making a choice from 50+ Medicare Advantage or Part D plans is not easy and many folks just let last year's plan turn into this year's plan. Some people don't want to think about being seriously ill and the financial hardships a chronic illness could cause them.

cost and/or decrease coverage. Major changes should be expected.

Use common sense when choosing what type of Medicare coverage you want. Make all insurance decisions with at least the same diligence that you would use when purchasing a used car. Be aware that the average commission for selling you a Medicare Advantage Plan is significant to the insurance agent who gets you to sign on the dotted line.

current coverage you owe it to yourself to at least review what is available for 2009. The Medicare insurance market is extremely competitive—companies are fighting for your business.

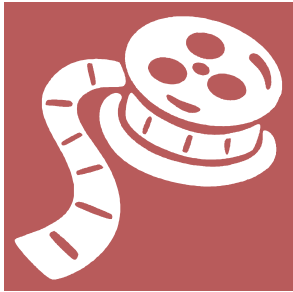
The unbiased way to compare Medicare plans is to start with the Medicare.gov website. Starting November 1st you can contact the RSVP Center for an appointment to review your choices for 2009. Open enrollment starts Nov. 15th.

Major reform will occur in 2010—this year is buyer beware.

By the time you receive this newsletter the Medicare plans for 2009 will have been made public. There is a good chance that most of the Arkansas Medicare plans are going to increase in

Even if you are satisfied with your





News Reehl . . . by Susan Peacock Reehl

I read an interesting article recently. The premise was that we shouldn't try to recruit volunteers—instead we should invite folks to work for a cause they can support. So here goes. . .

While doing research for a grant (which we didn't get) I came across some interesting information. In our six county area there were 5,500 families in 2008 who were eligible but did not apply for an Earned Income Tax Credits (EIC). The EIC for those families amounted to \$10.7 mil-

lion. That is a lot of money left on the table by working families—many of whom are struggling to make ends meet.

There are many reasons those families didn't apply for EIC. Some couldn't read well enough to fill out the forms (25% of adults in our area are illiterate). Some don't know EIC exists. Not everyone can afford to pay a tax preparer.

This is an area where RSVP members can make a difference. By providing free tax preparation and electronic filing our volunteers can put extra cash in the pockets of working families with modest incomes.

WestArk RSVP is sponsoring a two day

EIC event in late January. If we get a VITA grant from the IRS we will also be able to provide assistance outside of Fort Smith.

RSVP needs volunteers who are interested in helping working families. You don't have to be an accountant to help—but *accountants* are very welcome. Training is provided and you will only prepare tax returns for which you are qualified. Nobody prepares returns alone—veteran help is always available.

Training can start immediately. If you are interested in helping please contact Trish Walker. She will work with you individually and you can learn at your own pace. Once

you've mastered the basics you will complete your training with the veteran preparers in January.

Thank you for volunteering—your efforts are appreciated!

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This edition of the Newsletter was sponsored by State Representative Tracy Pennartz:



Vote - It's Your Right!

Early Voting (at the Courthouse) starts October 20th
General Election is November 4th

State Representative Tracy Pennartz, District 65, P.O. Box 10441, Fort Smith
AR 72917 Office Phone 479-285-4800 pennartzt@arkleg.state.ar.us

WestArk RSVP
401 North 13th Street
Fort Smith, AR 72901

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WestArk RSVP

401 North 13th Street
Fort Smith, AR 72901

Phone: **783-4155**

Fax: 782-2269

E-mail: rsvp@ipa.net

Web site:

www.WestArkRSVP.org

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

Hours of Operation

Monday—Friday

8:30 am—4:00 pm

Staff

Susan Reehl

Program Director
susiersvp@ipa.net

Trish Walker

Volunteer Manager
trishrsvp@ipa.net

VISTA

Sandra Pearson
sandyrsvp@ipa.net

Marsha Brown

Advisory Council

Karen Carr
Marsha Brown
Fred Hander

Ginger Helton
Anita James
Bill Johnston
Sandi Klein
Dorothy McCartt
Kiel Norgard
Don Palmatary
Mary Lou Pointon
Tim Randolph
Nic Wintory
Liz Robinson
Nancy Zornes
Mayor Ray Baker
Gary Luedloff
Teresa Schlabach

RSVP
Getting Things Done.