

RSVP of Schuyler and Yates Counties

~ Station News ~

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Volunteering Produces Health Benefits

The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research reports there is a significant connection between volunteering and good health. The report shows that volunteers have greater longevity, higher functional ability, lower rates of depression and less incidence of heart disease. The report is available by visiting the National Service website at www.nationalservice.gov

David Eisner, CEO of the Corporation for National & community service says. "More than 61 million Americans volunteer to improve conditions for people in need and to unselfishly give of themselves. While the motivation is altruistic, it is gratifying to learn that their efforts are returning considerable health benefits."

Research suggests that volunteering is particularly beneficial to the health of older adults and those serving 100 hours annually. According to the report:

- A study of adults age 65 and older found that the positive effect of volunteering on physical and mental health is due to the personal sense of accomplishment an individual gains from his or her volunteer activities.
- Another study found that volunteering led to lower rates of depression in individuals 65 and older.
- A Duke study found that individuals who volunteered after experiencing heart attacks reported reductions in despair and depression – two factors that have been linked to mortality in post-coronary artery disease patients.
- An analysis of longitudinal data found that individuals over 70 who volunteered approximately 100 hours had less of a decline in self-reported health and functioning levels, experienced lower levels of depression, and had more longevity.



RSVP serves as an invitation to volunteer

Wanted!

**Tax
Counselors!**
Age 55+



RSVP needs Schuyler County volunteers to assist with the "Tax Counseling for the Elderly" program this winter. Volunteers receive extensive training, support and guidance.

If you or someone you know likes a challenge and enjoys working with figures, please consider becoming an RSVP tax counselor.

**Contact RSVP
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Corporation for
**NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE** ★★ ★

Yates County Recognition Highlights

November 6, 2007



Gold Award

(500+ hours in 2006)

Beatrice Christiansen - 524 hours

Wanda Wood - 528 hours

Barbara Sutherland - 1,132 hours



(Pictured above, *l-r*) Gold award recipients **Beatrice Christiansen** and **Barbara Sutherland**



(Pictured above, *l-r*) Silver award recipients **Anne Budney, Mary Calvario, Mary Brown, Arlene Corey** and **Milly Bloomquist**

Silver Award

(250-499 hours in 2006)

Milly Bloomquist

Mary Brown

Anne Budney

Mary Calvario

Arlene Corey

Donna Johnston

Erma Mullins

Norma Pealer

Leslie Wood



RSVP Advisory Council members **Jane Honeyman** (*above left*) and **Harold Carley** with **Alberta Henries** in the background

Your Stories

Written by: *Karey Solomon*

When Nancy Davis and Mike Mize made a list of their volunteer activities with RSVP in the past four years, it filled several pages.

“We’re very interesting people,” says Mike.

“Busy ones,” explains Nancy.

When they retired five years ago from professional careers at the Elmira Psychiatric Center, they spent a year building their house in Hector – and then started looking around for other things to do.

Both became members of the Citizen Corps, teaching disaster preparedness; they put in time at the Tourist Information Booth at the Glen, at the Elizabeth Beattie Pert Reading Center (Hector Library) and myriad other places, essentially helping out wherever there was a need, including with the RSVP Advisory Committee.

“It’s important to us to give back to the community,” Mike says.

And it’s also important, Nancy adds, for each person to find the right volunteer work among the many options available. “People who volunteer need to know there’s a lot of things out there,” she says. “You just have to find what’s right for you.”

Currently, Nancy’s favorite volunteer job is her work with the Ombudsman program, advocating for and addressing the concerns of people in long term care. “I love it. It uses skills from my background in nursing, psychiatry and administration,” she explains. “This has all the good things I missed about work. There are professional expectations and it’s a big commitment – but I set my own hours and schedules. It’s a wonderful and greatly needed program that gives me great satisfaction.”

She also volunteers at the Pert Reading Center, serves as Secretary for the VLH Fire

Auxiliary, knits hats and mittens for Seneca Santa and participates in Bone Builders.

Originally from Buffalo, Mike caught the volunteering spirit early, when he helped out at Cradle Beach Camp, a place for disadvantaged children who have a physical handicap. Mike’s brother was had a paralyzed arm and attended as a camper. A dietician and national reservist who served several tours with the military, most recently in the first Gulf War in Oman, Mike most likes being able to share his knowledge with others through lecturing on disaster preparedness, File of Life and fraud prevention. He’s been RSVP Chairperson and has just completed training with Southern Tier Hospice as a hospice

volunteer. When he lived in Chemung County, he was part of the Master Gardener program there as well.

He and Nancy have used these skills to bring a vineyard on their property back to fruitfulness – this harvest season they gave away more than a ton of Concord grapes from well-pampered vines. “It was fun to see people enjoy them,” Nancy says. They both love to garden and work outside. “Hobby or

necessity?” Nancy asks. One of Mike’s many “tinkering” hobbies is grafting fruit trees. After tasting a delicately flavored apple brought back by a visitor to China, he began planning a new apple propagation project. He also restores short-wave radios and military surplus equipment. And together, they enjoy traveling.

Nancy and Mike say they were fortunate in being able to retire while still relatively young, in good health and with energy and skills to offer. With their many interests as well as a commitment to volunteering, they’ve had to work a little at finding a balance between all the activities they enjoy. “It took me a while to find out what was right for me among so many options,” Nancy says. “It’s okay to decline [the offer of a volunteer job] and to know your limits.” And then, when you’ve found the perfect volunteer work, “It’s a joy,” she says.



Mike Mize and Nancy Davis

“Your Stories” provides an opportunity for RSVP volunteers to describe their volunteer activities and what inspires them to volunteer. They are written by other RSVP volunteers.