

RSVP represents a rainbow of talents and experience serving our surrounding communities: volunteers answering the invitation to get involved and make a difference. RSVP volunteers are everyday heroes willing to do what they can to make the world better. This book is written for those people 55 and older who are a part of the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Richland and Lexington Counties and those who have answered the invitation to serve. RSVP’s goal is to provide meaningful and worthwhile volunteer opportunities at various volunteer stations in the midlands of South Carolina. RSVP volunteers use their special interests and skills to meet community needs.

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WELCOME!

Welcome to RSVP and **thank you** for your willingness to share the skills of a lifetime to support your community.

We hope through RSVP you will discover that age and life experiences DO make a difference in one’s ability to do the tasks that need to be done in surrounding communities. You have the opportunity to answer your invitation to serve and get involved.

In return for your time and energy as an RSVP volunteer, we are pleased to offer you the chance to make new friends, see new faces, learn new skills, participate in social events and receive recognition for your efforts.

RSVP is locally sponsored by Senior Resources, Inc. a non-profit organization that provides coordinated services, resources, and personal choices to promote healthy, independent living through the support of staff and volunteers. Since 1967, Senior Resources, Inc. (formerly the Council on Aging of the Midlands) has provided a variety of services and program choices to senior citizens and their families.



WELCOME to RSVP!

Patricia Gibson, Chairman
RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) Advisory Council

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THE PURPOSE OF THE RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

In 1973 this RSVP for Richland and Lexington counties began working with senior volunteers as a program of Senior Resources, Inc., our grantee and sponsoring agency. The program's main objective as a Senior Corps program is to help develop meaningful lives for older adults through their volunteer service to others.

RSVP, as a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, offers persons who are fifty-five (55) years of age and older the opportunity to use their skills and interests, increasing feelings of their self-worth, and remain in contact with other people, through volunteer activities. The focal point of RSVP is the needs and interests of the volunteer. After completion of a registration form, RSVP staff will try to determine with the volunteer how each individual's abilities and lifetime of experience can be used to impact surrounding communities.

Senior volunteers are currently working in approximately 75 different Richland and Lexington County agencies/non-profit organizations doing a variety of jobs. Participating stations include hospitals, nursing homes, libraries, schools, nutrition sites, senior centers, food bank, civic and social service organizations.

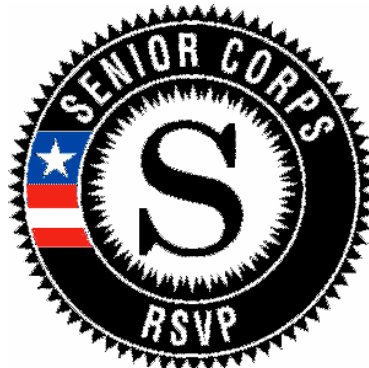
In 2005, more than 600 senior volunteers contributed 80,000 hours of volunteer service in Richland and Lexington Counties. Based on minimum wage, the monetary value of the donated hours is more than \$420,000.

RSVP of Richland and Lexington Counties Staff

Robin McCartha, Project Director

Jennifer Derrick, Program Coordinator

Jack Wright, Office Volunteer



BENEFITS YOU CAN EXPECT AS AN RSVP VOLUNTEER

- To receive a quarterly RSVP newsletter that will inform you of additional volunteer opportunities, stories of motivation, and practical news you can use
- To receive an invitation to the RSVP holiday luncheon if you give at least 50 hours of service in a given year
- To receive an invitation to the RSVP National Volunteer week luncheon if you give at least 300 hours of service in the preceding year
- To have the opportunity to help others and in the process feel better about yourself
- To age healthier physically and mentally as you stay active
- To be assigned a job that is worthwhile
- To use your present skills and/or develop new ones
- To receive orientation, training and supervision for your job from the station you assist
- To know that your time is valued and respected
- To know your work is effective and an encouragement to others
- To have flexible working hours
- To be given recognition for your volunteer contributions of time and effort
- To be protected by accident insurance while in assignment, liability insurance, and secondary automobile insurance if you drive your own vehicle to your assignment
- To receive reimbursement, if necessary, for bus fare or driving your own car
- To receive some meals (depending on assignment)
- To participate in social activities and recognition events

- To make new friends and meet people who are excited about helping others

HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEER

1. Accept appropriate assignments.
2. Respect confidentiality of the volunteer station.
3. Be dependable and on time for all assignments, or notify the proper person so alternative arrangements can be made.
4. Be a good listener.
5. Have a positive attitude.
6. Maintain a professional appearance within the dress code of the volunteer station.
7. Ask questions to ensure that you understand your volunteer duties.
8. Follow the smoking and eating regulations of your station.
9. Provide helpful feedback and suggestions to your supervisor.
10. Be responsible for reporting your volunteer hours in a regular basis.
11. Report any concerns you may have about your position to the RSVP staff or your station supervisor. We would rather iron out small challenges, than overhaul big problems.
12. Remember, YOU are a VALUED member of an important team.

BILL OF RIGHTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. The **Right** to be treated as a co-worker, not just as “free help” nor as a “prima donna.”
2. The **Right** to a suitable assignment with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, education, and employment background if applicable.
3. The **Right** to training for the job, thoughtfully planned and effectively presented.
4. The **Right** to know as much about the agency as possible, its policies, its people, and its programs.
5. The **Right** to continuing education on the job as a follow-up to the initial training, information about new developments, training for greater responsibility if appropriate.
6. The **Right** to sound guidance and direction by someone who is experienced, well-informed, patient, and thoughtful with the time to invest in giving guidance.
7. The **Right** to a place to work, an orderly, designated place, conducive to work, worthy of the job to be done as appropriate.
8. The **Right** to promotion and a variety of experiences, through advancement to assignments of more responsibility, through transfer from one activity to another, through special project assignments if applicable.
9. The **Right** to be heard, to have a part in planning, to feel free to make suggestions, to have respect shown for an honest opinion.
10. The **Right** to recognition and appreciation, in the form of promotion and awards (or some tangible evidence), through day-by-day expressions of appreciation for the donation of time and effort given, and by treatment as a bona fide co-worker.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Progressive Discipline

When a volunteer's work performance or actions are detrimental to the program, volunteer station, or clients served, **progressive discipline** will be performed as follows:

Step 1: Oral reprimand, with note placed in volunteer's personnel folder

Step 2: Note of warning, signed by volunteer and placed in volunteer's folder, with copy to the Project Director

Step 3: Dismissal

Violations Subject to Disciplinary Action

The following is a list of causes constituting a basis for disciplinary action.

- Consistent inefficiency, incompetence, or negligence in the performance of volunteer assignment.
- Insubordination; refusal to accept reasonable and proper assignment from an authorized supervisor.
- Uncooperative attitude which lowers discipline and morale.
- Any other action that is deemed unlawful or inappropriate, and discredits the program's service.

The additional causes will result in immediate dismissal from this program:

- Hitting or hurting a client deliberately or through negligence.
- Misrepresentation or falsification of application for enrollment, time sheets, travel reimbursements, or other records.
- Unauthorized possession or use of drugs; bringing liquor or other intoxicants to work; reporting to work in an intoxicated condition.
- Stealing or unauthorized possession of property belonging to others; destroying or damaging property of others.
- Use of abusive, profane, or threatening language toward a client, staff, volunteer, or others.
- Possession of firearms or other weapons while at the volunteer station.
- Discussing confidential information about the assigned client.

Reassignment.

Although an offense may not warrant dismissal from the program, volunteer station staff may request a volunteer's removal from their station. RSVP staff will try to find another placement

Grievance Following Disciplinary Action

If a volunteer feels that he or she has been disciplined or dismissed without just cause, a grievance may be filed according to the following procedure:

Informal Grievance. A volunteer should appeal to the project Coordinator within three working days after an action he or she feels is unjust.

If no agreement is reached within two working days, the volunteer may then contact the Project Director, who will schedule a conference within five working days. If the volunteer and Project Director cannot reach an agreement within two working days of their meeting, the Project Director will provide the name and address of the Advisory Council Chairperson in case the volunteer wants to proceed with a formal grievance.

Formal Grievance. To file a formal grievance, a volunteer must contact the Advisory Council Chairperson within five working days of his or her meeting with the Project Director. A committee of the Advisory Council will meet with the volunteer within five working days to hear the volunteer's grievance, and will forward its recommendation to the Executive Director of Senior Resources, Inc.

Grievance Procedure Action When No Disciplinary Action Involved

Volunteer Grievance Procedure.

Occasionally a volunteer may have a problem with their volunteer placement. In the event this occurs, the volunteer should first approach his or her volunteer supervisor to discuss the problem. If no resolution to the problem is reached, the volunteer should then contact the RSVP Director. A new volunteer station may be suggested as a resolution to such problems to ensure the volunteer a satisfactory place for volunteer opportunities.

...BUT IS IT DEDUCTIBLE?

Under new tax laws, all expenses must be itemized in order to claim deductions for contributions. However, you do not have to declare RSVP mileage reimbursement as income, it is replacement for an out-of-pocket expense. You also cannot claim mileage for which you have received reimbursement as a tax deduction. For those who do itemize, the following non-reimbursed out-of-pocket expenses incurred while volunteering services to a qualified charitable organization are deductible as contributions:

- Transportation (14 cents per mile Federal) between home and volunteer activity
- Parking and toll fees paid while volunteering
- Uniforms required in volunteer work
- Telephone calls connected with volunteer work
- Travel, meals, and lodging while donating services

Note: The value of the actual service performed as a volunteer is NOT deductible. Below is some additional informal from the IRS Form 526 and you can get more detailed information from the IRS. Publication #526 on Charitable Contributions is available from the IRS Forms Office. Call toll free 1-800-829-3676 and is available online at www.irs.gov. A copy is also on file in the RSVP Office.

From **Form 526**, pages 5 and 6. 'Volunteers' Questions and Answers. If you do volunteer work for a qualified organization, the following questions and answers may apply to you. All of the rules explained in this publication also apply. See, in particular, Out-of-Pocket Expenses in Giving Services.

I do volunteer work 6 hours a week in the office of a qualified organization. The receptionist is paid \$6 an hour to do the same work I do. Can I deduct \$36 a week for my time? The office is 30 miles from my home. Can I deduct any of my car expenses for these trips?

No, you cannot deduct the value of your time or services.

Yes, you can deduct the costs of gas and oil that are directly related to getting to and from the place where you are a volunteer. If you do not want to figure your actual costs, you can deduct 14 cents for each mile.

I volunteer as a Red Cross nurse's aide at a hospital. Can I deduct the cost of uniforms that I must wear?

Yes, you can deduct the cost of buying and cleaning your uniforms if the hospital is a qualified organization, the uniforms are not suitable for everyday use, and you must wear them when volunteering.

I pay a baby sitter to watch my children while I do volunteer work for a qualified organization. Can I deduct these costs?

No, you cannot deduct payments for child care expenses as a charitable contribution, even if they are necessary so you can do volunteer work for a qualified organization. (If you have child care expenses so you can work for pay, get Publication 503, Child and Dependent Care Expenses.)

Car use expenses. If you do not want to deduct your actual cost and expenses, you can use a standard mileage rate of 14 cents a mile to figure your contribution. You can deduct parking fees and tolls,

Travel. Generally, you can claim a charitable contribution deduction for travel expenses necessarily incurred while you are away from home performing services for a charitable organization only if there is no significant element of personal pleasure, recreation, or vacation in the travel. This applies whether you pay the expenses directly or indirectly. You are paying the expenses indirectly if you make a payment to the charitable organization and the organization pays for your travel expenses.

The deduction for travel expenses will not be denied simply because you enjoy providing services to the charitable organization. Even if you enjoy the trip, you can take a charitable contribution deduction for your travel expenses if you are on duty in a genuine and substantial sense throughout the trip. However, if you have only nominal duties, or if for significant parts of the trip you do not have any duties, you cannot deduct your travel expenses.

Example 1. You are a troop leader for a tax-exempt youth group and you help take the group on a camping trip. You are responsible for overseeing the setup of the camp and for providing adult supervision for other activities during the entire trip. You participate in the activities of the group and really enjoy your time with them. You oversee the breaking of camp and you help transport the group home. You can deduct your travel expenses.

Example 2. You sail from one island to another and spend 8 hours a day counting whales and other forms of marine life. The project is sponsored by a charitable organization. In most circumstances, you cannot deduct your expenses.

Example 3. You work for several hours each morning on an archeological dig sponsored by a charitable organization. The rest of the day is free for recreation and sightseeing.

You cannot take a charitable contribution deduction even though you work very hard during those few hours.

Example 4. You spend the entire day attending a charitable organization's regional meeting as a chosen representative. In the evening you go to the theater. You can claim your travel expenses as charitable contributions, but you cannot claim the cost of your evening at the theater.

VOLUNTEER INSURANCE

Each volunteer enrolled in the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program is eligible for three kinds of insurance when volunteering at an RSVP volunteer station:

1. Accident insurance
2. Personal liability insurance
3. Secondary automobile liability insurance

The policies provide coverage for you while you are participating in community service as a volunteer at an RSVP volunteer station.

THIS IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR ANY INSURANCE YOU MAY NOW BE CARRYING AND APPLIES ONLY WHILE TRAVELING DIRECTLY TO AND FROM YOUR VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT OR PERFORMING YOUR VOLUNTEER WORK AS AN RSVP VOLUNTEER. IT IS SECONDARY TO ANY INSURANCE YOU MAY ALREADY CARRY.

The administrator of the insurance is Corporate Insurance Management Associates (CIMA). Brochures explaining benefits and coverage provided by CIMA are available from the RSVP Office.

THIS INSURANCE DOES NOT DUPLICATE EXPENSE PAID BY MEDICARE OR ANY OTHER VALID AND COLLECTIBLE INSURANCE COVERAGE.

IN CASE OF ACCIDENT, PLEASE NOTIFY THE RSVP DIRECTOR, IMMEDIATELY FOR CLAIM FORMS. (803-252-7734)

REPORTING VOLUNTEER HOURS

We are required to keep accurate records of the hours RSVP volunteers work. Therefore, we ask that you list your hours appropriately at each volunteer station or provide your hours directly to the RSVP office.

Stations have “Time Sheets” for hours to be recorded on and then they forward these to RSVP either monthly or quarterly, and you can be provided with individual time sheets if your station requests that you keep your own hours. We do ask that you have your station supervisor sign your time sheets also.

If you are doing individual assignments, time sheets will be provided to you, please fill out and return these to the RSVP office at Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, 2817 Millwood Avenue, Columbia, SC 29205-1261 at the end of each month. When mileage reimbursement is necessary for you to continue to volunteer, your signature as well as your station supervisor’s signature **must** be on each time sheet. Since limited funding is available for mileage reimbursement, the RSVP Director must approve any mileage reimbursement requests. However, this option exists to enable you to volunteer if you would otherwise be unable to do so.

RSVP Federal Guidelines require volunteers who do not report at least one (1) hour of volunteer time during a 90 day period become inactive in the RSVP Program.

Your volunteer hours are **IMPORTANT** to RSVP, surrounding communities, and you as a volunteer. With the massive amount of volunteer effort given by people age 55 and older, and RSVP’s maintained record of your time, combined voices and volunteer efforts are annually making a statement of impact and further defining the value and great resource available through people 55 and older.

WHAT IS AN RSVP VOLUNTEER STATION?

An RSVP volunteer station is a public agency or private non-profit organization to which volunteers are assigned. A written agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) sets forth mutual program requirements and working relationships between RSVP and the organization. RSVP must re-new this written agreement at least every three years to provide active status for a volunteer station.

Volunteer stations are responsible for developing assignments, doing any background checks, supervising volunteers, providing pre-service orientation and assignment related in-service training along with a written outline of each volunteer's duties. Time sheets are provided for station completion and should be sent to the RSVP office by the 10th of each month.

However, each volunteer is encouraged to be responsible for submitting his/her own monthly report to the RSVP office. Our goal in providing volunteers to any station is to assist them in accomplishing their mission in meeting a community need. Because we recognize their staff time is limited, we do not wish to increase their work load. Suggestions on simplification for any station are welcomed to RSVP staff.

Volunteer stations are responsible for the safety and well being of each volunteer assigned to them. They are also responsible for keeping records and preparing reports as needed by the RSVP office. In case of an accident while volunteering, station staff should also notify RSVP staff as soon as possible after the accident.

Annually the RSVP staff provides training for all volunteer stations usually in June or July. Invitations are mailed to the staff contact. Specific topics vary from year to year but relate to volunteerism.

RSVP VOLUNTEER STATIONS

Everyday RSVP volunteers are answering the call to serve others in area schools, hospitals, museums, libraries, and other non-profit organizations. RSVP volunteers are making a difference, giving their time and abilities to help in more than 70 organizations in Lexington and Richland Counties. Every day they are heroes in some of the following places: Alzheimer's Association, American Cancer Society, American Heart Assoc., American Red Cross, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Columbia, Bishop Avenue Wellness Center, Blythewood Wellness Center, Capital Senior Center, Carolina Children's Home, Christopher Towers, City Year Columbia, Communities in Schools of SC, Communities In Schools of the Midlands, Congaree Girl Scout Council , Cooperative Ministry, Crooked Creek Park, Dorn V.A. Hospital, Dutch Fork Elementary School, Easter Seals Society of SC, Eastover Wellness Center, Epilepsy Association Of Midlands, ETV Commission, Food Co-Op, Gilbert Senior Center, Good Morning Line, Greater Cola. Literacy Council, Harbison West Elementary School, Harvest Hope Food Bank, Heartland, Heartland - Lexington, Historic Columbia Foundation, Hopkins Wellness Center, HOSTS Program at Killian Elementary, Humanities Council of SC, Junior Achievement of Central SC, Juvenile Diabetes Research, Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission, Lexington Medical Center Extended Care, Lexington County Guardian ad Litem, Lexington County Sheriff's Department , Lexington Interfaith Community, Lexington Main Library LCPL, Lexington Medical Center, Lexington Senior Center, Lowman Home, LRADAC, MADD, Midlands Regional Center, Muscular Dystrophy Association, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Nursery Road Elementary, Oak Read Wellness Center, Pacific Park Wellness Center, Palmetto Baptist Medical Center, Palmetto Richland Medical Center, Palmetto Senior Care, Pelion Senior Citizen Center, Personal Touch Dept. at Palmetto Baptist, Pine Ridge Senior Center, Prevent Child Abuse SC , Providence Hospital, Respite House, Retired & Senior Volunteer Prog, Richland County CASA, Richland County. Public Library , Richland School District One, Riverbanks Zoo and Garden, Rolling Readers of SC , Ronald McDonald House Charity , S.C. Educational Radio , S.C. Philharmonic, S.C. State Library, S.C. State Museum, Salvation Army, SC After School Alliance, Senior Resources, Inc., Seven Oaks Park, Sexual Trauma Services, Shepherd Ctr-St. Andrews, Shepherd Ctr. Of Columbia, Sistercare, South Kilbourne Elementary, Still Hopes, Swansea Primary School , Swansea Senior Center, The Free Medical Clinic, The Nurturing Center , Transportation/RSVP Grant , Trenholm Road MOW's, Tri-City Senior Center, Tucker Center, United Way Of The Midlands, University of South Carolina, VITA/TCE,

RSVP ADVISORY COUNCIL

The RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) Advisory Council, represents a cross section of the community; including members with special interests, skills and knowledge to provide guidance and assist RSVP staff in achieving program goals. The Council is made up of community, business and labor leaders, representatives from volunteer stations, public and private agencies, and RSVP Volunteers. At least 25% of the Advisory Council is 55 years or over, including RSVP volunteers. In addition to advising and supporting the RSVP staff, the Council is an important link to the community, helping generate community support for the program.

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program for Richland and Lexington Counties' Advisory Council meets the 1st Thursday of the months of February, April, June, August, October, and December (unless members are otherwise notified). Throughout the year, they will be asked to assist with at least three of the following:

Serve as RSVP volunteer with hours and project impact; prepare recognition meal or assist with preparation; assist with serving of recognition meal at either 300+ hours event, full volunteer event, or station event; provide several door prizes for recognition events; obtain some donations of funds and/or supplies for RSVP; assist with coordination and planning of recognition events; distribute angel sale flyers to designated locations; work with fund raising events for RSVP, staffing sales tables; make planned station visits for/with program staff; work on annual program evaluation; seek out and assist with development of funding sources for RSVP; obtain corporate or business sponsorship of program; provide RSVP station support toward community impact with RSVP volunteers; locate or provide a free site for RSVP recognition events; serve as station liaison for staff, pick-up/delivery of time sheets, volunteer sign-ups; provide financial support; find and refer enthusiastic potential RSVP volunteers who would enhance this program; assist with community health fairs upon staff request; offer commitment to RSVP, its purpose, and its focus on community impact.

RSVP also has a liaison from the Board of Directors for Senior Resources, Inc. Billy Way of Grubb & Ellis/Wilson Kibler currently serves as that liaison.

ADVISORY COUNCIL 2006

Thanks to the following for their time and commitment to help the RSVP for Richland and Lexington Counties serve RSVP volunteers and surrounding communities. Our program is better because of their efforts.

Chair: Patricia Gibson, Wellness Center Coordinator

P. O. Box 747
Eastover SC 29044

Marie Daniels, RSVP Volunteer

1906 Liberty Street
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Peggy Hogan, S. C. Dept. of Education, Volunteer Coordinator

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Linwood Holland, RSVP Volunteer

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Cayce SC 29033

Horace Porter, RSVP Volunteer

308 Timber Ridge Drive
West Columbia SC 29169

The real winners in life are the people who look at every situation with an expectation that they can make it work or make it better. --Barbara Hetcher

What is success?

To laugh often and much;

To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;

To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;

To appreciate beauty;

To find the best in others;

To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition;

To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived;

This is to have succeeded.

by Ralph Waldo Emerson

If you rest, you rust. --Helen Hayes

We cannot tell what may happen to us in the strange medley of life. But we can decide what happens in us -- how we can take it, what we do with it -- and that is what really counts in the end. How to take the raw stuff of life and make it a thing of worth and beauty --that is the test of living. --Joseph Fort Newton

People who soar are those who refuse to sit back, sigh and wish things would change. They neither complain of their lot nor passively dream of some distant ship coming in. Rather, they visualize in their minds that they are not quitters; they will not allow life's circumstances to push them down and hold them under.

--Charles Swindoll

The famous author, Alex Haley, kept a poster on the wall of his office of a turtle sitting on a fence post. The caption read, "When you see a turtle sitting on a fence post you can be sure that he didn't get there by himself!" For a turtle to achieve a place on top of a fence post is an out-standing accomplishment. There are certain feats that turtles just cannot accomplish alone. Someone would have to volunteer to assist a turtle in reaching a lofty position a top a fence post. There are many "Turtles" out there that need help in accomplishing what otherwise would be impossible. RSVP volunteers are tutors, mentors, delivering meals to the home-bound, bringing comfort to the bereaved, assisting in disaster relief, caring for those who can no longer care for

themselves, giving respite care to primary care-givers, and an endless variety of other assignments. In other words, helping folks accomplish what they cannot do alone.

Next time you see a “turtle” sitting on a fence post it is quite possible that an “RSVP” Volunteer helped him get there!

-PRS (Taken from National Assoc. of RSVP Directors Newsletter.)

***The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program
(RSVP)
of Richland and Lexington Counties
Volunteer Handbook***

(Revised May 2006)

***RSVP is a part of the Corporation for
National Service and is locally sponsored
by Senior Resources, Inc.
RSVP has a dual purpose of engaging
persons age 55 and older in volunteer service
to meet critical community needs and to provide***

*a high quality experience that will enrich
the lives of the volunteers.*

*RSVP is your invitation to serve and all about
sharing the experience of a lifetime.*