



RSVP Newsletter
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RSVP
Retired & Senior Volunteer Program
Blair and Huntingdon Counties
1-800-323-9997

sponsored by



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RSVP Volunteer Opportunities

RSVP of Blair and Huntingdon Counties partner with local organizations to provide many opportunities for AmeriCorps Seniors to volunteer in their communities. The partner organization must be a public agency, secular or faith-based private non-profit organization, or proprietary health care organization. A formal agreement, called a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), is created between the organization and RSVP to outline the responsibilities and contributions of each. Once the MOU is signed, the organization becomes known as an RSVP station.



RSVP stations choose a representative to accept the responsibility for assignment and supervision of AmeriCorps Seniors who will serve at their location. Once the representative is chosen, they are known as the RSVP station supervisor. RSVP station supervisors are the acting liaisons between the organization and RSVP. There can also be more than one station supervisor at a station to help with RSVP duties. They assist in reporting AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer hours and other service statistics to the RSVP office.

Currently, there are 12 RSVP stations in Blair and Huntingdon counties:

1. Altoona Food Bank
2. Blair Senior Services, Inc.
3. Center for Community Action
4. CONTACT Altoona
5. Fort Roberdeau
6. Garvey Manor
7. Huntingdon County Emergency Management Agency
8. Huntingdon County Register and Recorder Office
9. James E. Van Zandt VA Medical Center
10. Meals on Wheels of Huntingdon
11. Penn Highlands Huntingdon
12. United Way of Blair County

The RSVP stations for Huntingdon and Blair counties offer 40 volunteer activities that AmeriCorps Seniors can choose from, including preparing and distributing food to homebound people, transporting veterans to medical appointments, providing tax preparation services, responding to emergencies, recording old documents, providing educational learning, and much more. These services are important to the community, and they cannot be done without the AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers that are stationed there.

Overviews of RSVP stations will be shared in this and future newsletter editions. This newsletter will highlight two of those RSVP stations: Penn Highlands Huntingdon and Blair Senior Services, Inc. To learn more about RSVP stations and the volunteer opportunities at each, contact Danielle Ochs by phone at 814-643-4202 ext. 4202 or by email at dochs@ccaofpa.org.



RSVP Station – Penn Highlands Huntingdon



In 2015, J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital partnered with RSVP to become an RSVP Station. Then in 2019, J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital joined the Penn Highlands Healthcare system and was re-named Penn Highlands Huntingdon. Joy Weidel, Marketing & Communications Coordinator of Penn Highlands Huntingdon said, “Penn Highlands Huntingdon is one of eight hospitals in the Penn Highlands Healthcare System, which also includes Penn Highlands Brookville, Penn Highlands Clearfield, Penn Highlands Connellsville, Penn Highlands DuBois, Penn Highlands Elk, Penn Highlands Mon Valley, Penn Highlands Tyrone -- that have served area communities for the past 100+ years. Penn

Highlands State College, a new, state-of-the-art, technically advanced hospital, is slated to open in 2024. The health system’s business continuum also includes a home care agency, long-term care facilities and residential senior living communities, as well as durable medical equipment companies and retail pharmacies.”

Joy continues saying, “Penn Highlands Huntingdon partners with the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Blair and Huntingdon counties to provide additional support to volunteers who serve at the information desk, in hospitality, escort services and assist in multiple hospital departments. Volunteers answer inquiries, provide directions to departments, communicate with the operating room when an outpatient arrives, escort patients to appointments and bring patients to the doors when they are discharged, serve as patient advocates, and assist in office related duties in various hospital departments.” Penn Highlands Huntingdon currently has 10 AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers.

“The volunteers at Penn Highlands Huntingdon are a compassionate group of individuals who work together for the care of our patients,” said Amanda Swindell, Human Resources Coordinator and RSVP Station Supervisor. “They are great ambassadors for the hospital, and they provide a much needed and appreciated service for the community. The hospital would not be the same without them!”

For more information about Penn Highlands Healthcare, visit www.phhealthcare.org. To learn more about volunteering at Penn Highlands Huntingdon, please email aswindell@phhealthcare.org or call 814-643-8801.



Penn Highlands Huntingdon Volunteers:
Kathryn (Kitty) Lucas (right) and Martha Hinton (left)

RSVP Station – Blair Senior Services, Inc.



Blair Senior Services, Inc. became an RSVP station in 2015. The Station Supervisor, Crippen Taylor, who is also the HDM Program Supervisor said, “Blair Senior Services, Inc. provides seniors with transportation, farmer market vouchers, home delivered meals, as well as counseling seniors about PA MEDI, and doing income tax preparation for VITA.” Cathie Yingling, AmeriCorps Senior volunteer at Blair Senior Services, Inc., gave me a tour of the building where they had a billiard room for seniors to play pool, a craft room, an exercise room, a room that provides light aerobic classes, a computer room, and many other rooms where seniors can relax and do activities.

There are 19 AmeriCorps Senior volunteers at Blair Senior Services, Inc. Crippen lists the activities that the AmeriCorps Seniors perform, “They distribute the farmer market vouchers, deliver meals, answer questions regarding PA MEDI, prepare VITA taxes, and distribute commodity food boxes.” For the farmer market vouchers, Crippen describes, “Seniors who qualify for the farmer market vouchers in Blair County need to be over the age of 60 and receive an income less than \$26,973.00. The farmer market vouchers are distributed every year through July to September and they do not expire until November. The farmer market vouchers assist seniors in need of food and helps the local farmers.” He further states, “Seniors who would qualify for the farmer market vouchers would also qualify for the commodity surplus food boxes. The commodity box is a box that contains a large variety of food, and it is distributed twice a month.”

Cathie assists with issuing the farmer market vouchers along with preparing VITA taxes. Cathie explains what a volunteer needs to do to become a VITA tax preparer, “Volunteers need to go through a training program in November and December where they are given a workbook and have to pass a couple tests to do tax preparation.”

The programs that are available for seniors at Blair Senior Services, Inc. are mostly run by volunteers. Crippen says, “For the programs that we have, we would not be able to serve the number of consumers without the help of the volunteers. And without their help, we would not be able to touch so many people’s lives in the right way.” Cathie adds, “I enjoy volunteering because it is nice to meet people and see how appreciative they are when they receive the help that we give them.”

If you would like to know more about this station, please visit their website at blairsenior.org or call their number (814) 946-1235. They can be located at 1320 12th Avenue, Altoona, PA 16601.

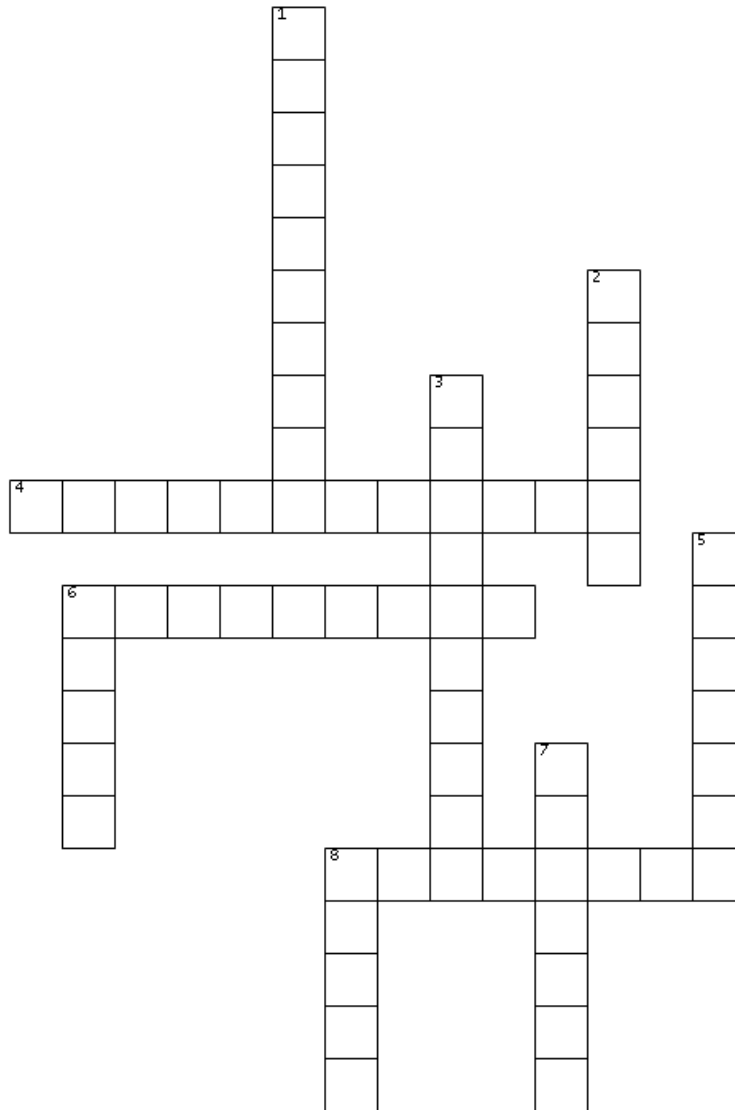


Crippen Taylor, HDM Program Supervisor and RSVP Station Supervisor of Blair Senior Services, Inc. (left)



Cathie Yingling, AmeriCorps Senior volunteer at Blair Senior Services, Inc. (right)

Fall Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

4. This popular carnival food on a stick was created by Kraft Foods employee, Dan Walker, by experimenting with candy and other fruits. (2 words)
6. A fall plant that grows tall and tracks the sun.
8. The first full-size one of these fun fall activities was created in Annville, PA to attract tourists. (2 words)

DOWN

1. Historically, this dessert was made with whole pumpkins stuffed with assorted spices and apples then baked. Now canned pumpkin filling is usually baked in a crust. (2 words)
2. They change color when fall arrives.
3. A fall beverage that can be warm or cold. (2 words)
5. Usually occurring at a farm, people sit on straw and go for a ride.
6. It keeps your neck warm when the air gets cooler.
7. A fruit that is popular to eat and carve in the fall.
8. This treat was first made 2,000 years ago in Egypt by combining honey and fruit.



September Birthdays

1-Laura Shope
5-Rick Kalos
7-Monica Marko
9-Ruth Noel
10-Barb Purdy
12-Jim Phillips
12-Robert Nicholl
16-Susan Witmer
25-Elaine Buchanan
26-Art Speck
28-Barb Henry
29-Diane Yost
30-Des Hanlon



October Birthdays

1-Sandy Morelli
6-Star Gardner
12-Marian Dietz
14-Charlotte Ames Eichelberger
17-Larry Bowers
20-Pat Reidy
20-Rose Huntsman
24-Sr. Jane Miller
30-Karen Morrow

Answers To What do you know about RSVP?

Following are Answers to the June/July newsletter quiz:

- 1. What does RSVP stand for?** RSVP stands for Retired and Senior Volunteer Program.
- 2. Who is the sponsoring agency for RSVP of Blair & Huntingdon Counties?** Center for Community Action is the sponsoring agency for RSVP.
- 3. How old must a person be to enroll in RSVP?** Anyone aged 55 or older can enroll in RSVP.
- 4. What does it cost to enroll in RSVP?** There is no cost to enroll in RSVP.
- 5. Does a person have to be retired to enroll in RSVP?** A person does not have to be retired to enroll in RSVP.
- 6. What are volunteers who serve in RSVP called?** Volunteers serving in RSVP are referred to as AmeriCorps Seniors.
- 7. What 3 insurance benefits does RSVP provide to volunteers for free?** AmeriCorps Seniors are covered by supplemental accident, personal liability, and excess automobile liability insurances while actively serving in RSVP.
- 8. Name one other benefit RSVP provides to volunteers.** RSVP provides an annual volunteer recognition event for AmeriCorps Seniors and a mileage reimbursement benefit for their travel during service.
- 9. What skills does a person need to serve in RSVP?** There are no special skill requirements to serve in RSVP. AmeriCorps Seniors are connected to service activities that they are comfortable doing or learning how to do. Many options are available through RSVP's partnerships with local organizations.
- 10. How can a person enroll in RSVP?** To enroll in RSVP, contact Danielle Ochs, RSVP Project Coordinator at 814-506-5267 or dochs@ccaofpa.org.