



**AmeriCorps
Seniors**

NEWS FOR YOU

A News Brief for AmeriCorps Senior Members who volunteer in the RSVP program of Northern Cook and Northern DuPage



Sponsored by HandsOn
Suburban Chicago

February 2021

My tenure with HandsOn Suburban Chicago, as Director of AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP, is almost 5 years and I remain in awe of our RSVP volunteers and their *heartfelt service* to others. It is remarkable how so many of you have improved the literacy, educational and emotional outcome of adult and school-aged students. You have painted homes and improved the self-esteem of some of our most vulnerable population. You have knitted items for newborns and recovering patients; sorted clothing and items for thrift stores; organized receipts and documents and provided tax services; stocked community pantries with food and essentials, delivered meals, and transported seniors, persons with disabilities and veterans to medical appointments. You have provided necessary and sought-after skills and been the cheerful greeters and information givers at many



Matters of the Heart

of our community partners. The awesome list of volunteer service you have *provided from the heart* goes on.

COVID-19 has not been a kind or welcomed experience. Perhaps its greatest impact has been on those with the *heart to serve*. As we look ahead in 2021, hope and fruition are really on the horizon and coming closer daily. We hope to see each of you back in safe and healthy volunteer service soon. Some may be doubtful but not you, our intrepid RSVP volunteers. All of you have already proven that when it comes to *heartfelt service*, so much is possible. As Madame de Stael once said, "*In matters of the heart, nothing is true except the improbable*".

Carolyn Roberts

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Project Director

It's Tax Time

Need help preparing your taxes? We have some options for you! AARP is again offering tax preparation assistance this tax season. But due to COVID-19 restrictions, there won't be any face-to-face sit-down meetings. Instead, you will drop off your tax documents and the tax preparer will complete your taxes remotely. To utilize this service, you must call and make an appointment at any of these locations:



- **Palatine Township Senior Center** 847-991-1112
- **Arlington Heights Senior Center** 847-253-5532
- **Des Plaines Frisbie Senior Center** 847-768-5944
- **Mount Prospect Senior Center** 847-870-5680
- **Wheeling Township Office** 847-259-7730

Another one of our community partners, Center of Concern in Des Plaines is also offering this service. To make an appointment with their tax preparer, please call 847-823-0453 or email tax@centerofconcern.org.

MLK Food & Essentials Drive

Thank you to everyone that helped us stock the shelves of our community partners -- Wheeling Township, Palatine Township, Elk Grove Township, Journeys the Road Home, Hanover Township, Schaumburg Township, and Wings -- that provide food and essentials to families in need. We kicked off this drive on Martin Luther King Day. If you missed the opportunity and would still like to contribute to a food pantry or organization near you, visit our website: [HandsOn Suburban Chicago | RSVP Community Food & Essentials Drive](#) which lists the most pressing needs at each location



Laura Lapp, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program Manager stocking the shelves with Kailee Tomasic, Manager of Elk Grove Township Food Pantry.

I'd Like to Phone a Friend...

Wishing you could connect more with others without leaving your home? We have a way you could do just that. We are thinking about putting together a **Tele-Pal** program – to match an RSVP member with a senior to provide socialization and support over the telephone.



Tele-Pals would check in with each other once a week by phone -- Shoot the breeze. Share coping strategies. Swap Stories and Support. Would you be interested in becoming a **Tele-Pal**? This is in the early planning stages, so let us know if this would be of interest to you by sending us an email at rsvp@handsonsuburbanchicago.org or giving us a call at 847-228-1006

And the Winners Are

Congratulations to these winners who entered the drawing for AMC Gift cards: Maureen Clark, who tutored at Plainfield School; Francine Norling, a tutor with District 214 Read to Learn program; Marilyn Jamora and Suzanne Poeschel, both writers in the Intergenerational Pen Pal program; and Karen Parsons, a Driver for Meals on Wheels Northeastern Illinois. They each received a \$25 AMC gift card that can be used to watch new movies on demand.



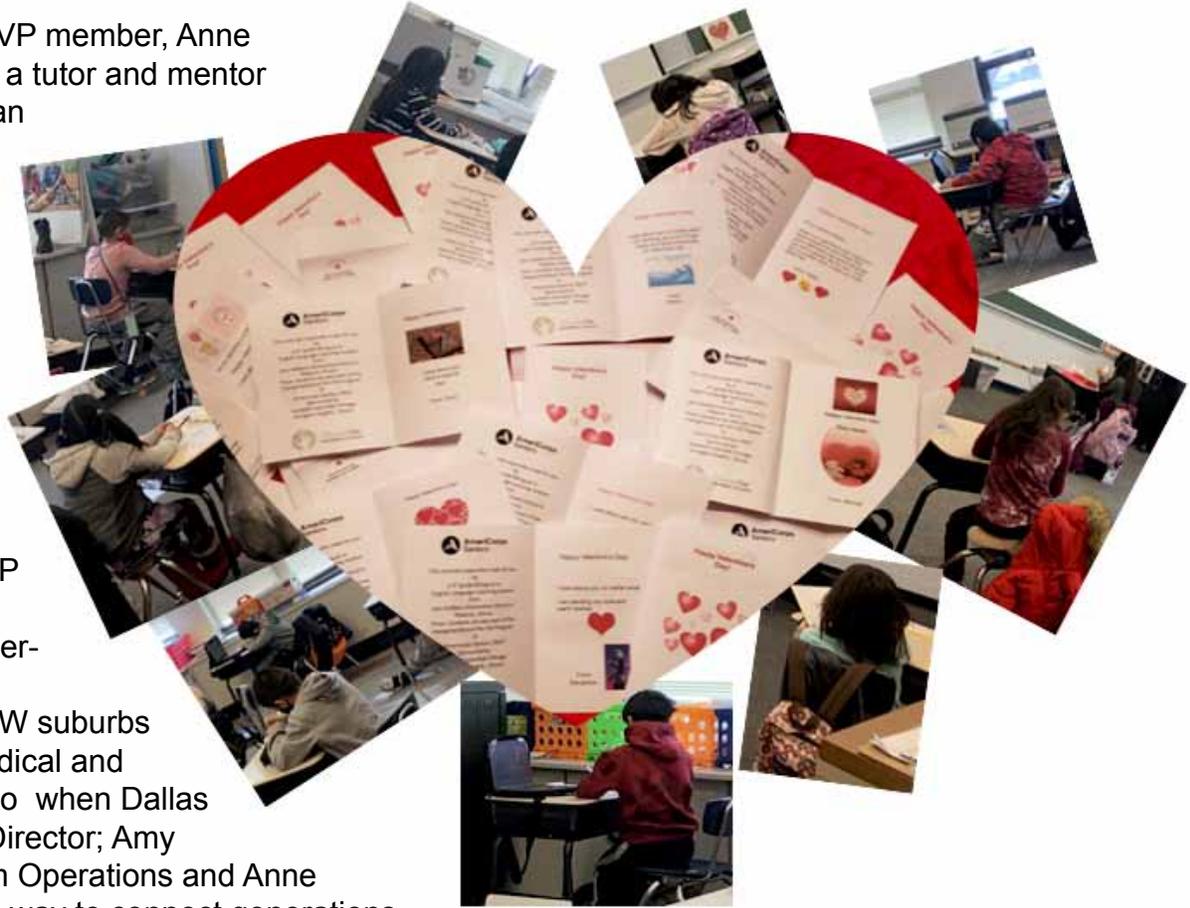
And these lucky individuals were randomly selected in December and won a \$20 Jewel gift card: Marny Anderson, volunteers at Annie's Resale for the World Thrift Shop; William Kerber, volunteered at the front desk at Amita Health, Alexian Brothers; Anne Wall, a writer for the Intergenerational Pen Pal program; and Alexandria Moran, volunteers as a tutor for the District 214 Read to Learn Program.



Being Connected Has Heartwarming Results

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP member, Anne Wall had volunteered as a tutor and mentor in the HandsOn Suburban Chicago (HOSC) School Programs for some years before she joined the RSVP Intergenerational Pen Pal program when it began 4 years ago. Anne is also the Associate Executive Director of Escorted Transportation Services (ETS), an RSVP community partner. ETS provides reliable volunteer-based transportation to seniors residing in the NW suburbs of Chicago to critical medical and dental appointments. So when Dallas Tomlin, ETS Executive Director; Amy Gall, Director of Program Operations and Anne wanted to find a creative way to connect generations of people for Valentine's Day, they looked to HandsOn Suburban Chicago because they are a great connector organization with effective School Programs.

Specifically, the ETS team was looking for students who would be willing to create Valentine's Day cards that would be sent to the ETS clients. The best HOSC program for this assignment turned out to be the RSVP Intergenerational Pen Pal program. RSVP partner teacher, Heather Howard at Jane Addams Elementary in Palatine, was contacted about the ETS project and immediately responded with a resounding "Yes!". In just a week's time, the students in Heather's morning and afternoon bilingual classes had produced 26 uniquely beautiful Valentine's Day cards. According to Heather, this was a learning experience for her students who have been using software to create their letters to



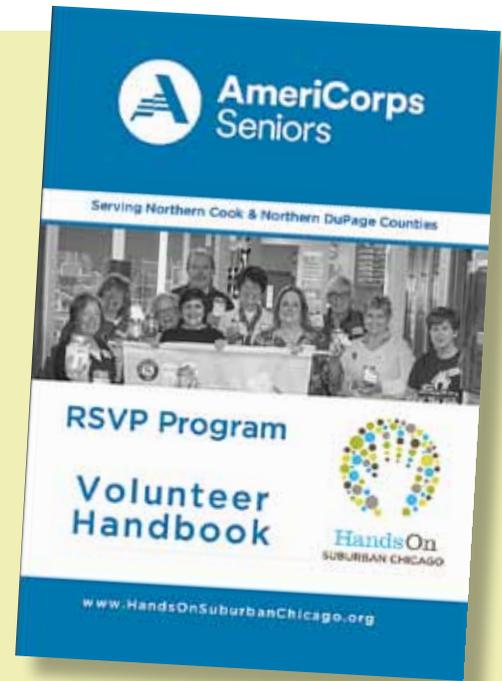
their RSVP pen pals. Apparently, making cards and learning how to download pictures was a new skill they enjoyed learning. Additionally, the students were able to participate in a service-learning project aimed at those in another generation.

3rd, 4th and 5th grade Pen Pal students at another community partner, Tarkington Elementary in Wheeling, will also participate in a service-learning project. Under the direction of partner teacher, Jennifer Costa, they will create hand-made wellness cards for ETS to distribute to their clients.

If you are interested in volunteering as an AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Intergenerational Pen Pal or a driver for ETS, send us an email at RSVP@handsonsuburbanchicago.org or call us at 847-2218-1006 and we will connect you!

AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Handbook Available

Did you know that as an AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP member, you are part of a national community of over 65,000 volunteers age 55 and better making a positive impact throughout the country? This fun fact and others are now available in the newly revised AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP handbook. The handbook shares a little bit of our history and tells you everything you need to know about AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP and how you can use us as a resource. You can obtain an electronic copy here: [Handbook link](#). If you prefer to have a hard copy, email us at RSVP@handsonsuburbanchicago.org or give us a call and we will mail one out to you.



Just Checking In

If you had a drivers license that expired this past year, and you haven't heard from us, you will soon. You will be receiving an email or phone all from AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP staff to update our records. More importantly, we will want to know how you are doing and what your current volunteer plans are.

Thank you for being part of AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP.



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