

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program



Center of Essex & Hudson Counties

Special points of interest:

- Learn about current community needs
- Disaster preparedness and response
- The benefits of community gardens
- Guest article

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Get Involved at Your Local Food Pantry

Have you been to your local food pantry lately? Each day, hunger is experienced in every community across this country. In 2014, 46.5 million people (15 percent) were in poverty, including 16.1 million (22 percent) children under the age of 18. Over 49 million Americans lived in food-insecure households, including nearly 16 million children. In New Jersey 1 in 8 people struggle with food insecurities and hunger.

Ending hunger in America depends on the volunteer work of literally millions of Americans who know that they can make a difference.

During the holiday season, food pantries see a dramatic increase of volunteers and donations. This support helps feed countless families during the holidays. But what about after the holidays? Families' need for food doesn't stop after the holidays. The need for food and the volunteers who package, cook, serve and distribute that food never stops.

Volunteering at your local soup kitchens, pantries and food banks offers an opportunity to directly assist your community. Whether you help prepare

and serve meals, deliver food, or assist with food distribution your time and talent are greatly appreciated. Pantries are a great way to help struggling families near you. It is also a good opportunity to bring a friend or family member. Many pantries will even invite you to bring a child to help you. This gives caregivers a great opportunity to instill good values upon younger generations.

If you or anyone you know is interested in helping fill this ongoing need, start by contacting us today to find a placement in a food pantry near you.



Volunteer Station Spotlight: Neighbor to Neighbor Network

Neighbor to Neighbor Network (NTNN) is a 501 (c) 3 non profit dedicated to connecting volunteers with Bloomfield and Glen Ridge residents in need of support not available through traditional programs. Special emphasis is placed on assisting older adults, some of whom are homebound or isolated, low-income individuals and families, and people with disabilities. Their programs include the Friendly Visitor program, in which volunteers provide companionship and a listening ear

to homebound elderly residents who lack the support of family and friends. Friendly visitors are not obligated to, but are welcome to assist with grocery shopping, errands, minor home care, errands, etc. NTNN also coordinates the Food Delivery program. Volunteers pick up bags of fresh groceries from a local food pantry and deliver them to homebound seniors each week. If you are interested in learning more about this Volunteer Station, please let us know!

“Knowing what to do before, during and after an emergency is a critical part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count.”

Will you help us when disaster strikes?

According to FEMA, most communities may be impacted by several types of hazards during a lifetime. Knowing what to do before, during and after an emergency is a critical part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count. Residents of Essex and Hudson Counties are all too familiar with the after effects of a major storm or disaster.

RSVP recognizes disaster preparedness and response is an important community need to address in our area. There are several ways you can help! Some volunteer stations that help with disaster preparedness include the United Way of Hudson County and local chapters of the American Red Cross.

RSVP is partnering with the United Way of Hudson County to host the RSVP Disaster Kit Volunteer Service Day on Wednesday April 22nd from 10:00AM–2:00PM. Volunteers will help pack and distribute 200 disaster kits at the Secaucus Senior Center. The disaster kits will be distributed to seniors in Secaucus with instructions on how to handle a disaster. Stay tuned for more information on this upcoming service opportunity!

RSVP plans on holding the Disaster Kit Volunteer Service day each year. The location of the event and community the kits go to will rotate throughout Essex and Hudson Counties.

For more information, contact Stephanie Grove at 973-637-1766 or sgrove@jfsmetrowest.org.

Volunteers Needed: Community Gardening

Spring is almost here! That means community gardens will be gearing up for another season. We are seeking volunteers who enjoy the fresh air and would like to get involved. No experience in gardening is needed. There are community gardens located throughout Essex County that need assistance. Some locations currently available are in Montclair, Nutley, Glen Ridge, Upper Montclair and Jersey City.

Volunteer gardeners should be able to commit at least 1 hour per week to this volunteer opportunity. Schedule is generally flexible. Planting is

done in early spring and harvesting takes place mid June—early October depending upon what is planted. Local gardens donate the produce to local schools, food banks, senior citizen buildings and other nonprofits that benefit those in need.

Studies show that gardening is a great way to relieve stress and improve your health. Community gardening gives volunteers a chance to benefit themselves and the community around them!

To sign up or find out more information, contact the Director, Stephanie Grove, at 973-637-1766.



“Save the date on your calendar, formal invitations to come! We hope to see everyone there!”

Save the Date: RSVP’s Annual Volunteer Appreciation Party

RSVP is always looking for ways to thank volunteers for their hard work and dedication. We are excited to announce our first Annual Volunteer Appreciation Party. The celebration will be held Friday April 17th at Daughters of Israel located at 1155 Pleasant Valley Way, West Orange, NJ 07052.

RSVP Volunteers and representatives from Volunteer Stations are invited to come together to recognize the positive impact our volunteers have on Essex and Hudson Counties.

Lunch will be provided along with giveaways, raffle prizes and more! Strict kosher dietary laws will be observed. Save the date on your calendar, formal invitations to come! We hope to see everyone there!



For more information, contact Stephanie Grove at 973-637-1766.

Why I Volunteer by Eileen Bergman

Since September 2014 when I decided to leave the world of Corporate America and develop my home based Professional Organizing business, I have had the wonderful opportunity to meet and network with some really great people. I am especially grateful to the many colleagues in my new-found profession who took the time to speak with me, a "newbie," to give me tips and share their lessons learned from their start up days. I am eager to learn from those who paved the way, and appreciate the time, effort and caring that others have provided me as I soak of their knowledge.

When the opportunity arose to write an article for the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) newsletter, I jumped on it. I offered to write about "why I volunteer" because this is a topic that is close to my heart. To give you some background on my career as a volunteer, I never had much time with my 60 hour workweek and my daily commute to NYC, to volunteer for the community that I live in and love. My volunteer work was limited to getting involved in my local Sisterhood my synagogue. By volunteering at B'nai Shalom, I was able to develop a wonderful network of talented and amazing women who have become an important part of my life. During all our ups and downs, we are there for each other, our "sisters in the hood." J

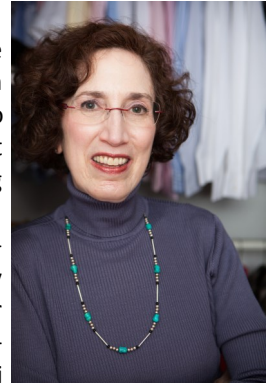
Now that I am in a home based business, I am making the time to give back more to my community than I have in the past. Why? Because that it was I was taught. Ever since I can remember, my parents were involved in the community. My mother was the president of the PTA, she was active in the Jewish Community Center of Verona where I grew up, and she dragged my dad along to shul where he eventually became the Kiddush luncheon prep specialist. Before Dad got too sick with Parkinson's and eventual dementia, you could find him in the dairy kitchen at Congregation Beth Ahm (Verona) on Friday afternoons preparing tuna fish, egg salad and tossed salads for the Shabbat Kiddush. Those memories make me laugh because as a child I never remember my father stepping into the kitchen to do anything except eat. Now when I think of him shopping and schlepping grocery bags, chopping celery & onions, and arguing with the other Kiddush prep team about how much mayonnaise to use in the tuna, it makes me LOL. Who knew he had it in him?

My mother's passion, aside from her family, was knitting and volunteer work. She would bring her knitting along and attend meetings, conduct meetings, and make executive decisions while her knitting needles clicked away. When I read "A Tale of Two Cities," I used to refer to her as Madam DeFarge, as she sat in meetings and knit her encoded messages into the fabric of the beautiful sweaters that she made for me, my sister and brother in law. Mom did not work full time outside the home, but she had many full time jobs.

Many days my sister and I had lunch by ourselves at our home on Gerdes Avenue, because Mom was attending a meeting for one volunteer group or another. One day we locked ourselves out of the house when we were walking the dog, and a neighbor had to help us break in through a front window because we could not reach her (obviously way before the days of cell phones). I never thought anything other than "this is normal." Mom works, but she does not get paid. On my college applications where asked, "mother's profession," I wrote, "volunteer worker." I remember how proud my mother was when she saw that as she looked over my shoulder and proofread my work.

As I work on building my home based business, I am pleased to connect with the JFS as a volunteer to give back to my beloved community, and to pay it forward for all the blessings that I have in my life. I've seen first-hand how illness and aging can impact families, and either break them apart or bring them together. I was on the fortunate side of the latter option and I plan on passing that positive experience on to others in need. Thank you for providing this opportunity for me to give back.

Eileen Bergman, Professional Organizer, resides in West Orange, and may be reached at Eileen@eileenbergman.com.



Good Deeds Day: Community Cookie Bake

Good Deeds Day is an annual celebration of doing good for other people. It takes place throughout the world on March 15th, 2015. This year Jewish Family Service of MetroWest, NJ and Congregation AABJ&D are hosting A COMMUNITY COOKIE BAKE on Good Deeds Day!

The Community Cookie Bake is a volunteer service day where the community can come together and help bake, package, and deliver cookies to homebound isolated seniors. The cookie dough was generously donated by the West Orange Bakery. The event will take place at

Congregation AABJ&D in West Orange, NJ.

We invite all RSVP volunteers to sign up! Volunteers are needed in shifts to help portion out the dough, bake cookies, package cookies, assist with registration or help deliver cookies to home bound seniors. This event is open to all ages and the first 70 attendees will receive a Good Deeds Day t-shirt. Registration required. Space is limited so make sure you sign up now!

To sign up email Suzy Berman at sberman@jfsmetrowest.org.



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Center of Essex and Hudson Counties

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The President's Call to Service

The Retired and Senior Volunteer program is part of the Corporation for National and Community Service and the USA Freedom Corps.

RSVP Center of Essex and Hudson Counties is a comprehensive community service organization through Jewish Family Service of MetroWest New Jersey designed to mobilize members of the community who are 55 years of age and older in giving back to their own neighborhoods through volunteer service. We currently cover the counties of Essex and Hudson.

RSVP is a federally funded program of the Corporation for National & Community Service whose mission is to provide opportunity for individuals 55 years of age and older to provide volunteer service in their community. It has over 500,000 members nationwide.

For the potential volunteer, RSVP provides a single location where they can review a number of local volunteer opportunities and receive the help of a trained Volunteer Coordinator.

RSVP's Current Volunteer Stations

Essex County:

Jewish Family Service of MetroWest
American Red Cross of Northern New Jersey
Bike&Walk Montclair
Bobrow Kosher Food Pantry
Care at Home NJ
Community Food Bank of New Jersey
Daughters of Israel
FOCUS Hispanic Center for Community Development, Inc.
Friendship Circle
Girls on the Run NJ East
Green Hill
Interfaith Hospitality Network of Essex County
JCC MetroWest
Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ
HackensackUMC Mountainside (Montclair)
Holy Trinity-West Orange Food Pantry
HOME Corp
Life Choice Hospice
Meadowlink/EZ Ride
Montclair Child Development Center
National Council of Jewish Women, Essex Section
Neighbor to Neighbor Network (NTNN)
Rachel Coalition
Rebuilding Together
Saint James Social Service Corporation
State Health Insurance Program (SHIP)
Toni's Kitchen

Township of Livingston

Travelers Aid
United Way of Northern New Jersey
VA New Jersey Health Care System
WAE Center
YMCA of Montclair

Hudson County:

Angela Cares
Better Tomorrows
Bike JC
Boys and Girls Club
Grace Van Vorst Church
Garden State Episcopal Community Development Corp
HOPES, Inc
Hudson CASA
Hudson Pride
Jersey City Medical Center
Jersey City Parks
Liberty Science Center
NJ Division of Disabilities
Palisades Emergency Residence Corp
Palisades Medical Center
Rebuilding Together of JC
Secaucus Senior Center
Urban League of Hudson County
United Way of Hudson County