



## Celebrating You, the Volunteers!



April is National Volunteer month and we wanted to say 'Thank You' to all of our amazing volunteers! Central Iowa RSVP simply connects you, our volunteers, with the needs in our communities through these opportunities. Your collective impact and work is astounding! In our last quarterly newsletter we shared some numbers from our

annual report, but I would like to highlight those again. In the 2024-2025 fiscal year...



**807** RSVP Volunteers  
aged 55 and over



Served **35,341** hours  
in their communities



Valued at  
**\$1,020,648**

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We also want to highlight some of our volunteers and why volunteering is important to them. We asked a few of our volunteers to tell us what motivates them to give back to the community and what they enjoy most about volunteering.



“ I enjoy serving people in a capacity that benefits them, whether it be driving, delivering commodities, or working with my therapy dog. Volunteering has opened doors to meeting new people and given me a sense of purpose as I ease into retirement. Practically, it helps to fill up my time and keep me as busy as I want to be. What I enjoy most is meeting people I wouldn't normally in my daily life. People are so appreciative and grateful, which confirms my belief that we need each other. - Michelle Soderstrum ”

“ What motivates me is the great feeling it gives me to know that I can help somebody along the way. It makes me feel better about myself, and about helping the community. One of my most rewarding activities was working with the SNAP food distribution at Emergency Food Box this summer. RSVP is a good resource for finding volunteer opportunities in places that really need me. - Rita Frederick ”

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**SENIOR EXPO**  
PRESENTED BY *Seniors in Story*

**FRIDAY, MAY 8TH, 2026**  
**9:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.**  
**GATEWAY HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER**  
2100 GREEN HILLS DR, AMES  
**SENIORSINSTORY.ORG**

### The 2026 Senior Expo is fast approaching!

Come and connect with many exhibitors serving “seniors” in Central Iowa and/or attend informative presentations. Everything is free, including beverages, refreshments, and lunch! Stop by the RSVP booth to say “Hi” and get a gift!

We are also looking for volunteers to assist in making this event a success. Contact Kim for more information at (515) 292-8890 or [story@rsvpvolunteer.org](mailto:story@rsvpvolunteer.org).

## Staff Updates

We have had several changes within our small staff! Two of our long-time, dedicated employees recently retired! Kalen (Director) retired December 31, and Linda (Marshall & Story County Volunteer Coordinator) retired January 15. Please welcome our staff in new roles...

- Laura Severson, who has been the Office Coordinator for the past few years, is the new Director, located in Story City
- Shari Reilly, who started January 5, is our new Marshall & Story County Volunteer Coordinator



**Laura Severson**  
Director



**Shari Reilly**  
Volunteer Coordinator

## Call for Groups to Present To

We have several educational programs that our volunteers present to groups. We love to provide education to our communities, especially on these important topics. However, **we are in need of groups to speak to.**

**If you belong to a group, or know of some local groups that might be interested in these topics, let us know!**



**LEARN,  
PREVENT,  
& PROTECT**

- **Fraud Fighters:** educate older adults about how to avoid being a victim of financial scams and fraud
- **Disaster PrepWise:** educate older adults about how to prepare for an emergency and shelter in place
- **SPAN:** Seniors Preventing Addiction to Narcotics - provide information about this epidemic and how to spot and prevent this in those around you

Contact Paul at (515) 292-8890 for Story County

Shari at (641) 752-0279 for Marshall County, or

Becky at (515) 832-2525 for Hamilton & Webster Counties



## *A Note From Kalen...*

Thank you for all of the retirement well-wishes I received! I so appreciated the "stops by the office," email messages, phone calls, cards, gifts, and all who attended my retirement party.

Thanks, also, to the amazing RSVP staff for their thoughtful planning of such a special celebration.

Thank you to the SCSC, Inc. Board of Directors for the wonderful gift and plaque (displayed proudly in my home).

RSVP and all of the incredible people I have had the privilege to know will always be a part of me. That being said, retirement is pretty good! God bless you all. - Kalen

## Facebook Opportunities

We have updated the appearance of our volunteer opportunities posted on Facebook, in an effort to make it easier to identify which county they are in. Let us know what you think!

<p><b>Story County</b></p> <p><b>VOLUNTEER opportunity</b></p> <p><b>Fraud Fighters Presenter</b> Schedule varies based on presentation dates.</p> <p>Fraud Fighters is a program through the Iowa Insurance Division to give presentations to community groups to educate the public about common scams and more.</p> <p><b>Details:</b> Following training, lead or assist with presentations to community groups following the Fraud Fighters booklet and PowerPoint.</p> <p>Central Iowa RSVP - 503 Elm Ave, Story City If interested, contact Paul at (515) 292-8890</p>	<p><b>Marshall County</b></p> <p><b>VOLUNTEER opportunity</b></p> <p><b>Kindness Calls</b> Weekly, as your schedule allows</p> <p>NEI3A's mission is to empower older individuals, caregivers, and those with disabilities to remain independent and in their homes as long as desired.</p> <p><b>Details:</b> Will provide companionship and social contact to older adults through weekly phone calls.</p> <p>NE IA Area Agency on Aging - 123 W Main St, Marshalltown If interested, contact Shari at (641) 752-0279</p>	<p><b>Hamilton County</b></p> <p><b>VOLUNTEER opportunity</b></p> <p><b>Child Care</b> Once a Week, 10:00 - 11:30 AM</p> <p>ACE is enhancing the social and economic well-being of communities by empowering people to communicate and connect.</p> <p><b>Details:</b> Take care of children while parents participate in ESL classes.</p> <p>All Cultures Equal - 1440 Second St, Webster City If interested, contact Becky at (515) 832-2525</p>	<p><b>Webster County</b></p> <p><b>VOLUNTEER opportunity</b></p> <p><b>BASE Senior Fitness Leader</b> Times and Dates will vary</p> <p>A free, fun and safe senior exercise program that focuses on balance, agility, strength, and endurance. It is designed to improve physical and mental wellness of people age 55 and older.</p> <p><b>Details:</b> Lead senior fitness classes, training provided. Many locations, times, and dates to choose from.</p> <p>Central Iowa RSVP - 308 Central Ave, Ft Dodge If interested, contact Becky at (515) 832-2525</p>
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## Call for Advisory Council Members

We have recently lost several members of our Advisory Councils and are seeking new members. We are looking for members for both our Story/Marshall and Hamilton/Webster groups.

### What is the Advisory Council?

The Advisory Council is an impartial, objective group separate from the Sponsor and Project Director, giving input to the operation of AmeriCorps Seniors programs.

### What does an Advisory Council member do?

- Meets quarterly with the Director and RSVP staff
- Serves as Ambassadors for RSVP
- Assists staff with
  - Marketing & technical support
  - Project management
  - Special events
  - Volunteer management
  - Fiscal guidance

If you are interested, or know of someone who may be a great addition to our group, please reach out to either Becky at (515) 832-2525 or hamweb@rsvpvolunteer.org or Laura at (515) 310-7323 or director@rsvpvolunteer.org.

## Board of Directors

Andy Webb, President  
Pat Hashman, Vice President  
Travis DeRidder, Treasurer  
McKenzie Alvarado Lopez, Secretary  
Tim Kadolph  
Joe Lucas  
Laura Loots  
Warren Straszheim  
Kathy Thorson

## Advisory Council Members

Thank you to these great groups of RSVP Advisors and Ambassadors for your service!

### Story & Marshall Counties

Marlys Barker, Nevada  
Nic Briseno, Ames  
Marsha Hegland, McCallsburg  
Arlyss Peterson, Cambridge  
Maryna Salas, Marshalltown  
Diana Schwendinger, Ames  
Gaylan Scofield, Story City—Chair  
Jeff Sodt, Nevada

### Hamilton & Webster Counties

Paula Brownell, Webster City  
Tom Carlson, Dayton  
Danielle Moore, Webster City  
Bonnie Reck, Dayton  
Susan Schmitz, Webster City  
Billie Shelton, Stratford

# Story & Marshall Counties Updates

## Volunteer Drivers - We Need You!



Our Volunteer Driver Transportation Program in Story County is booming! Our program provides older adults with safe and reliable transportation to and from medical appointments and other essential services.

We have seen a significant increase in transportation client applications recently. However, in order to meet the needs of those older adults, **we need more drivers!** If you have even a few hours a week and you would like to make a difference, consider signing up as a driver.

Drivers are covered by our supplemental insurance while driving, are eligible for mileage reimbursement, and get to spend time meeting new people, making friends, and making a difference to those in need!

Call Shari with any questions at (515) 292-8890 or Melissa at (515) 733-4917.



# WELCOME

## New Arrivals to Central IA RSVP

Beth Bachman Caulfield, Ames

William Britton, Slater

Diana Broshar, Slater

Phillip Cochran, Webster City

Linda Doyle, Story City

Rick Hackett, Cambridge

Carol Hart, Maxwell

Nancy Iles, Webster City

Donald Johnson, Story City

Marcy Kaufman, Colo

Ken Kwilos, Norwalk

Richard Martin, Slater

Rhonda Olson, Fort Dodge

Thomas Russell, Ames

Diana Sampson, Nevada

Mary Severseike, Garden City

Brian Stall, Huxley



## BASE Leaders Needed

Last December we started our first BASE (Balance, Agility, Strength, and Endurance) Senior Fitness class in Story County. This (free) class is located in Colo and is doing great! The group has continued to grow and is even drawing people from neighboring communities.

We would love to be able to expand this class to other rural communities in Story County, but in order to do that we need more leaders!

If you would be interested in learning more about becoming a BASE leader and/or starting a class in your community, please contact Laura at (515) 733-4917 or [director@rsvpvolunteer.org](mailto:director@rsvpvolunteer.org).

**BASE**  
Senior Fitness  
BALANCE | AGILITY | STRENGTH | ENDURANCE

Below: our BASE class in Colo on its first day, leader: Susan Hayes



**Clockwise: 1)** Kalen at her retirement party; **2)** Kalen and Andy Webb, SCSC President, at her retirement party; **3)** New BASE class in Colo led by volunteer Susan Hayes (wearing the hat); **4)** participants in the Colo BASE class exercising, **5)** Judy Jones volunteering at the Salvation Army Toy Shop at Christmas; **6)** Paul Litscher delivering gifts with Santa to a Senior; **7)** David Loupee delivering gifts with Santa to a Senior; **8)** Diana Schwendinger & Paul Litscher at the RSVP booth at a volunteer fair in Ames; **9)** Patricia Ewing, Shelly Rivera, Kim Anderson, and Linda Wild making tie blankets to donate to Suncrest hospice patients.



## Hamilton & Webster Counties Updates



SPAN the Generations is an educational program created by Central Iowa RSVP with the help of a number of professional agencies that deal with drug usage. SPAN stands for Seniors Preventing the Abuse of Narcotics. The focus of the SPAN program is on opioids and our goal is to inform people about opioids, safe use and disposal, and warning signs of misuse.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that the number of opioid-involved overdose deaths in the United States in 2024 was 54,743. That is 150 people dying each day. That would be like a jet airliner full of passengers falling out of the sky every day. We would be pretty alarmed if that were happening.

Opioids, pain killers made from the poppy plant or made synthetically in a lab, are necessary to manage pain following an injury or surgery, as the body cannot heal properly if pain is intense and not controlled. Opioids may also be used for long term pain control with certain illnesses. It is important to use opioids as directed, to store them in a safe place, and to dispose of what you don't use. Proper disposal is also discussed in our SPAN presentations.

SPAN presentations are done by trained RSVP volunteers, and are offered free of charge to any sized group. If you know of a group that would like to learn more about the safe use of opioids and the dangers of opioid abuse, please contact RSVP.



## Hamilton & Webster Counties Brag Book

**Top row:** BASE class at Fuller Hall; **Bottom left:** Mark Dohms at VanDiest Medical Center; **Bottom right:** new Tai Chi class in Fort Dodge led by RSVP volunteer Jo Berkland



Continued from page 1



“ My motivation comes from seeing people who are unable to carry out everyday activities on their own. Ordinary tasks can be hard or impossible. Driving for the RSVP transportation program helps meet important needs of so many in our communities.

What I enjoy most is the people I help, ranging from young to old and coming from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. A simple “thank you” or a genuine smile is meaningful and reminds me that someone felt cared for. Giving of oneself enriches the lives of both the giver, and the recipient equally. - Marsha Scofield

“ Giving back has always felt as simple as doing the right thing, which makes me feel good. Becoming an RN and taking care of people was an extension of that.

Once I retired, I knew I couldn't walk away from helping others. Volunteering is a gift to those who need help. But if I'm able to make a difference or help others feel safe, happy, or give hope even for a short time, I feel useful; that is a gift to me.

- Anne Kohler



“ I genuinely like helping people and I really like working through RSVP because there are so many opportunities to help in a meaningful way and without pressure. - Susan Frances

“ As a hospital volunteer I greet patients and visitors, give directions to various patient rooms and departments, take people to the specific locations, or assist with wheeling them in a courtesy hospital wheelchair. The work is in a clean, friendly environment and volunteers are respected and well treated by hospital staff and visitors alike. I have performed this role for almost fifteen years and hope to continue. - Mark Dohms

“ The clients I drive to appointments are so very grateful. I feel like I am helping people when I drive them to an appointment, but in reality the driving opportunity gives me purpose. - Rhonda Ostrem

“ I was able to become a certified instructor for Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention recently, thanks to Elderbridge. It has been such a blessing to me and many others. My class has over 40 attend each week. Tai Chi has had such a positive impact on their lives! - Jo Berkland

“ I find it very rewarding to help others stay active and to be of value to the community. For me, volunteering enhances both my physical and mental health. - Peggy Barkhaus



“ My mom and I love volunteering because we get to meet a variety of people who also like to make a difference in other's lives. We enjoy having a lot of different things to do from writing pen pal letters, to greeting people events, addressing envelopes, hanging fliers, and making cards, just to name a few. We enjoy meeting new people and can see how appreciative they are when we get involved. Without volunteering, my mom and I would not know nearly as many people. - Heather & Mary Lou Sanders



# RSVP Volunteer Opportunities in Webster County:

## **BASE Senior Fitness**

Exercise leaders are needed to lead senior fitness classes. Training is provided by RSVP.

## **Blanden Memorial Art Museum**

Docents needed to lead groups and help with crafts

## **Elderbridge**

Errand Buddies may assist with and provide transportation to and from day-to-day activities such as shopping

Medical Transportation Drivers provide transportation to medical appointments.

Telephone Reassurance Callers provide friendship and companionship.

Volunteers are needed for delivery of Santa for Seniors packages in December

## **Fort Dodge Public Library—Books on the Go**

Deliver books to nursing homes and shut-ins in Fort Dodge

## **Fort Dodge Elementary Schools**

Help students in a variety of classroom and extra-curricular activities, tutoring, mentoring, reading partners

## **Fort Museum**

Bingo runners, tour guides, work on displays

## **Friendship Haven**

Volunteers needed to help with Bingo and a variety of other nursing home activities

## **LifeWorks—New!**

Volunteers needed to help with activities for disabled adults in the Connections Program

## **Make a Wish Iowa**

Coordinate with families and children to make a plan to fulfill their wish, help with fundraising

## **The Lord's Cupboard**

Help facilitate the food pantry, help with unloading boxes. Pantry is open Tuesdays 9:30-11:30 and 4-6pm,

Thursdays 9:30-11:30.

## **Southeast Valley School District**

Pen pals, Reading Partners, tutors are needed

## **The Key on Central**

The Key on Central is a thrift store which supports the Domestic/Sexual Assault Outreach Center in Fort Dodge.

Volunteers are needed to sort and fold donated items, dust and vacuum, set up displays, carry boxes and bags.

## **Marion Home**

Read to residents, play card games, help with activities.

## **One Vision**

Sort incoming donations, stock shelves, run cash register

## **United Way of Fort Dodge**

Volunteers needed to help pick up/deliver furniture and household items for Bridge the Gap program

## **Webster County Conservation**

A variety of indoor and outdoor activities available, tasks can be suited to volunteer's interests

## **Webster County Genealogical Society**

Volunteers would enter data into computer, Use microfilm reader, scan and index documents

## **Youth Shelter Care**

Play games, do a movie night, do a craft, do some baking, done with a group, as often as you choose. Located at 301 Ave. M West, Fort Dodge.

# RSVP Volunteer Opportunities in Hamilton County:

## All Cultures Equal

Food pantry at ACE, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday each month, help distribute food.

## BASE Senior Fitness

New BASE leaders are needed. Training is provided. Many locations to choose from.

## Community and Family Resources

CFR helps people overcome addictions of all kinds. Volunteers are needed to label brochures. Work can be done at home.

## Crestview Nursing and Rehabilitation

Elderly activities—Bingo, one-on-one visits, sing-along leaders, pet visits, etc.

## Elderbridge

Errand Buddies may assist with and provide transportation to and from day-to-day activities such as shopping  
Medical Transportation Drivers provide transportation to medical appointments.

Telephone Reassurance Callers provide friendship and companionship as well as checking on participants.

Volunteers are also needed to create and write in greeting cards for Elderbridge clients every 6-8 weeks

## Food Bank of Iowa

The Food Bank of Iowa is seeking help with food distribution at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, W.C.

Food distribution takes place every other month.

## Gateway Home Health and Hospice

Volunteers are needed to sit with patients in hospice care

## Head Start

Work with 3-5 year-olds—play time, small group activity time, rest/reading time. M-F 9:00-1:15, you choose how much time you wish to spend.

## Kendall Young Library

Volunteers make book marks on a monthly basis for the children's department—lots of fun!

## Pen Pals

Pen pals write to young students once a month throughout the school year. Please consider this next fall.

## Reading Buddies

Schools are seeking people to read one-on-one with young students to improve reading skills.

## Southfield Wellness Community

Elderly activities—Bingo, crafts and cards, one-on-one visits. Flexible times.

## Veterans Affairs, Hamilton County

Driving veterans to doctor's appointments in Fort Dodge or Des Moines. \$.41/mile reimbursement.

## Youth and Shelter Services

Youth Mentor—new program for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Webster City Middle School. Meet with a student one day a week for about 35-45 minutes at the school.

Books and Beans bags for children at YSS

Becky Koppen, Volunteer Coordinator

Central Iowa RSVP

Phone: 515-832-2525

Email: [rsvphamco@cirsvp.org](mailto:rsvphamco@cirsvp.org)



## Office Locations

### Business Office

503 Elm Avenue  
Story City, IA 50248  
(515) 733-4917

### Ames Office

205 S Walnut Avenue  
Ames, IA 50010  
(515) 292-8890

### Marshalltown Office

2608 S 2nd Street  
Marshalltown, IA 50158  
(641) 752-0279

### Webster City Office

749 Second Street  
Webster City, IA 50595  
(515) 832-2525

### Fort Dodge Office

308 Central Avenue  
Fort Dodge IA 50501  
(515) 573-3477



We are trying out a new format for our quarterly newsletter. We have included information from all four counties that Central Iowa RSVP covers. We hope this will give you a better idea of all the

amazing work going on throughout central Iowa, as well as a broader picture of what Central Iowa RSVP does. We hope you enjoy this, and would appreciate any feedback you have! Just send a note to us at [office@rsvpvolunteer.org](mailto:office@rsvpvolunteer.org).

Want to learn more about Central Iowa RSVP?

Visit us online at:

[www.rsvpvolunteer.org](http://www.rsvpvolunteer.org)

Stay up-to-date between newsletters with volunteer opportunities, events, training opportunities, pictures, and more at:

[www.facebook.com/rsvpcentraliowa](https://www.facebook.com/rsvpcentraliowa)

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CENTRAL IOWA  
**RSVP**  
Connecting People To Purpose

hello  
SPRING



**UNITED WAY**  
Story County



Marshalltown  
Area  
**UNITED WAY**



**AmeriCorps**  
Seniors