

## RSVP helps seniors stay connected to the community

**T**hough Addie retired from her job at IBM 15 years ago, she never retired from life. Since her retirement, Addie has been an active volunteer through the **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)**, an organization that provides numerous volunteer opportunities for seniors and retirees. The more than 1,000 hours she has volunteered through RSVP have been devoted to helping people of all ages in our community, including:

- Serving meals to seniors at the First Ward Senior Center.
- Sewing clown dolls and bookbags for children in the Headstart preschool program.
- Sewing walker bags and clothing protectors for area nursing home residents.
- Working 10 to 15 hours a month at the Catholic Charities Food Pantry.
- Contributing her time and skills to a variety of nonprofit organizations, including the Roberson Center, the American Cancer Society, the Binghamton Philharmonic, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the Girl Scouts, Indian-Hills Council, and the United Way of Broome County Campaign—just to name a few.

Addie tries to do as much for her community as possible. “If I can do it, I will,” she says. “My volunteer experience has given me the opportunity to assist many different organizations, increasing my awareness of our community and what it has to offer.”

### Volunteering helps senior citizens stay active and socially connected

Another important benefit of volunteering for Addie is the opportunity to increase her social contacts. Addie has met many wonderful people through her volunteering over the years, and she says it’s extremely rewarding to see people benefiting from her volunteer service and to feel their appreciation. Recalling the time she made the clown dolls for the kids at Headstart, Addie says, “After seeing those little faces light up after receiving their clown dolls, I realized the importance of volunteer work for others.”



**Addie, above, has been an RSVP volunteer for 15 years, putting in more than 1,000 hours volunteering for the community. Staying active and socially connected helps seniors live longer, healthier lives.**

Volunteer work is not only beneficial to those who receive the services, but also to the volunteers themselves. Volunteering allows seniors to remain socially active in their communities long after retirement. According to research gathered by the Aging Futures Project (a project developed in part by United Way of Broome County describing the needs of local seniors and how to address them), seniors who remain socially active, especially through volunteering and community involvement, live longer and healthier lives. Social connections are integral to not only emotional and mental health, but physical health as well. And with seniors living longer and the local elderly population rising as a result, it is more important than ever that seniors stay actively involved in their communities, and that there are organizations like RSVP that provide them with opportunities to volunteer and make social connections.

**The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)** connects seniors and retirees with volunteer opportunities in Broome County. To learn about the many exciting volunteer opportunities offered by RSVP, call (607) 231-0726.

To make a contribution to United Way and do “what matters” for the senior citizens in our community, call (607) 729-2592, e-mail [info@uwbroome.org](mailto:info@uwbroome.org), or donate online at [unitedwaybroome.org](http://unitedwaybroome.org).

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