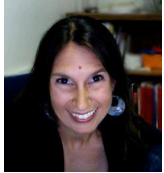


Local Seniors Provide a Lifetime of Experience Through **SERVICE**



CHRISTINE LOEWE
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS,
VOLUNTEER CENTER OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Since the inception of the Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County over 50 years ago, the organization has maintained a host of programs supporting seniors. At the heart of each program has been the drive to help seniors remain actively engaged in the life of the community through volunteerism, providing opportunities for community connections, and enhancing local seniors' ability to remain independent as they age.

Among their Senior Programs, the Volunteer Center has been a hub for the National Senior Corps Program known as the Monterey Bay Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for more than 30 years.

RSVP is a national service program for Americans 55 years and older where volunteers commit their time to address critical community needs. Each year Senior Corps Programs like RSVP engage more than 220,000 older adults in providing community service across the country.

At the local level, the Volunteer Center RSVP program works with more than 300 volunteers annually from the Tri-County areas of Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito

Counties and in the last year these individuals provided 76,235 hours of service.

“Older adults in our community are leading the way with their acts of kindness and their participation. Our RSVP volunteers provide an

invaluable service to local agencies by sharing their lifetime of skills, talents, and knowledge. Last year they gave their time to 52 local agencies,” states Volunteer Center Senior Programs Director Tara Ireland.

“AND, It turns out this giving is not only good for our community but it is also good for giver. Researchers have discovered giving not only makes you feel better, it

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Seniors Supporting Seniors Through the Volunteer Center Transportation Program
Photo by Linda Tullett

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leaves you with the perception of more free time and it makes you feel more connected,” continues Ireland.

In a study completed by The Corporation for National and Community Service, senior volunteers reported improved health after just one year of service. Volunteers reported decreased anxiety and depression, decreased loneliness and social isolation, enhanced physical capacity, and higher life satisfaction.

“If you are looking for ways to stay happy, healthy, and care-free in your retirement, we are here to help by connecting you to meaningful volunteer

opportunities,” states Ireland.

RSVP volunteers choose how, where, and how often they want to serve, with commitments ranging from a few hours to 40 hours per week. Seniors can choose to be placed with a non-profit in the community or work directly with the Volunteer Center through one of their 16 programs.

“This year we have been very excited to work with RSVP volunteers in the launch of A Matter of Balance, our newest Senior Program initiative,” states Ireland.

RSVP volunteers have taken the lead as volunteer coaches, to help the Volunteer Center offer A Matter

of Balance, a National Program developed by the Administration on Aging. The program is designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels among older adults through an 8-week class offering goal setting, safety awareness, and simple exercises to increase strength and balance.

“We are proud to continue offering these classes throughout the next year and are looking to train more coaches to support the effort. Given that falls are the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for older Americans, this class as been an invaluable new resource for our senior community,” states Ireland.

“This initiative represents

just one example among many of seniors stepping up to help fellow seniors. It is a fabulous aspect of the RSVP program. While RSVP volunteers offer their time to a wide range of programs for all ages, there is no doubt that seniors are fierce advocates for one another and this shines through in the RSVP program,” states Ireland.

Individuals who would like to learn more about supporting and connecting with fellow seniors through the RSVP Program or any of the senior programs offered by the Volunteer Center can do so by contacting Tara Ireland at 831-427-5070 or visiting www.scvolunteercenter.org.

RETIREMENT GOALS

WHY VOLUNTEERING SHOULD BE AT THE TOP OF YOUR LIST.....



Research shows that seniors who volunteer are happier & healthier.



Share your lifetime of skills & knowledge with those who need it most.



RSVP
Lead with Experience
Retired Senior Volunteer Program



Stress free
DAYS AHEAD

Learn More:
SCVOLUNTEERCENTER.ORG



Thank You...

Santa Cruz for making Sunshine Villa the number one Assisted Living and Memory Care Community. For 27 years we have provided outstanding service to our Residents & Families. We are privileged & honored to be able to offer quality of life with enriched activities and a staff committed to outstanding services.



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