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ABSTRACT

RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) is one program of ACTION--The Agency for Volunteer Service. ACTION, created in 1971, is a Federal agency which administers a number of volunteer programs. Its purpose is to provide a recognized role in the community and a meaningful life in retirement for older adults through significant volunteer service. Senior volunteers must be age 60 or over; there are no eligibility requirements for volunteers based on income, education, or experience. The RSVP program through its policy of reimbursing the volunteer for out-of-pocket expenses, enables the person who otherwise might not be able to volunteer to do so. Today, ACTION supports 660 RSVP projects. This program operates in all of the conventional volunteer stations throughout Lake County, Ohio, and has, in addition, an intensive recruitment of volunteers for an RSVP School Pilot Program which was developed during its first year of operation. The Lake County program has worked very closely with the Career Education Department of the school. This manual provides the information for any school guidance director or principal who desires to introduce a volunteer program incorporating elderly persons into a school. (Author)

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GUIDE FOR R.S.V.P. DIRECTORS  
Interested in  
Involving Schools in Accepting  
Retired Senior Volunteers  
in  
Local School Systems  
Grades K to 12

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School District  
Lake County, Ohio



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December 1, 1974

Dear Friends:

The Ohio Commission on Aging is pleased to publish this guide on RSVP programs in the schools.

This Commission has as its concern the well-being of Ohio's 1.4 million people aged 60 and over. We work with other state departments in Ohio as well as with federal agencies such as ACTION to encourage the development of programs and services for older people.

We are also most concerned with the opportunities for older people to play a full role in society and to allow for the utilization of their years of experience for the benefit of their communities.

The development of Ohio's thirty Retired Senior Volunteer Programs, with the involvement of some 5,000 older people, has been most rewarding for all of us. These programs have demonstrated what role our older citizens can play - and how their lives, as well as those they serve, can be enriched.

The participation of RSVP volunteers with our schools can, and should, be steadily growing. This guide, developed by an Ohio RSVP director, Mildred Foley, should be of assistance throughout the country in the expansion of this effort.

Sincerely,

David C. Crowley  
Executive Director

DCC/CVR:ak

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## INTRODUCTION

This manual has been prepared for the use of RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) directors. However, since it is anticipated that many Career Education Programs and schools guidance directors throughout the United States will be interested in this pilot program of large scale involvement of the senior volunteer in the classroom, an explanation of what the RSVP is, is included.

RSVP is one program of ACTION -- The Agency for Volunteer Service. ACTION, created in 1971, is a Federal agency which administers a number of volunteer programs; namely, Peace Corps, VISTA, the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, University Year for ACTION, SCORE, ACE, as well as RSVP.

The purpose of RSVP is to provide a recognized role in the community and a meaningful life in retirement for older adults through significant volunteer service. Senior volunteers must be age sixty or over; there are no eligibility requirements for volunteers based on income, education, or experience. The RSVP program, through its policy of reimbursing the volunteer for out-of-pocket expenses, enables the person who otherwise might not be able to volunteer to do so.

Today ACTION supports 660 RSVP projects located throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia, through which over 100,000 RSVP volunteers serve. Local sponsoring agencies are private, non-profit agencies as well as local government agencies.

The original decision of the administration department of the schools that older persons have a very real and vital contribution to make to youth was the foremost factor in the decision. The second was the marked success the Career Education Department had seen when older persons were introduced into the classrooms as social models and "hands on" volunteer instructors.

Although this program operates in all of the conventional volunteer stations throughout Lake County, in addition, an intensive recruitment of volunteers for an RSVP School Pilot Program has been developed during its first year of operation.

This local program has worked very closely with the Career Education Department of the school. Joint weekly meetings of the RSVP and Career Education staff are held. The Career Coordinators, because of their interest in and commitment to the RSVP idea are valuable liason persons between the schools and the

Career Education Department is part of the U.S. Department of Education. A letter to the State Department of Education will enable the State Director to determine if there is a Career Education Department within the local AARP program area. The Career Education Department is the ideal partner for the AARP director who desires to work with the schools. This manual should provide the information for any school guidance director or principal who desires to introduce the elderly person into a school.

Although many local school districts are hesitant about accepting the senior citizen into the classroom, the Willoughby-Fairfax City School District Pilot Program of involving the elderly should prove beyond a shadow of a doubt the benefits to both the retiree and the school children.

## SELLING THE ADMINISTRATION

Innovative school districts are always interested in new approaches to education. The first responsibility therefore, of the R.S.V.P. director, in attempting to provide a viable vehicle in which to permit the volunteers to operate, is to impress upon the administration the asset the senior volunteers are to the schools.

The approach to be used should never be accusatory but rather conciliatory. As in all selling, the attitude of the R.S.V.P. director should be, 'what we can do for you', not 'what you can do for us'. The administration should be reminded that the senior citizen is a voter, but is also a voter who has not been in a school for perhaps thirty or forty years. His vote is essential in passing levies which permit the schools to offer the educational opportunities necessary in today's challenging world.

When the volunteer becomes assimilated as a part of the schools, his viewpoint is that of the faculty member. Although he has known how much more the child of the 70's needs to learn than he did in the early years of the century, his knowledge is reinforced as he begins to think of himself as a vital adjunct of the school system. He understands

that today's schools are expensive and expansive learning centers and that requests for more money are not self-indulgent whims on the part of school administrators but a necessity in educating today's youth to the ultimate in preparing them for tomorrow's world. As the senior volunteer's horizon expands he expresses his viewpoint freely to his peer group of elderly citizens and uses his powers of persuasion as he tells them of the things he has learned by being part of and not merely an observer of the local school. Both the senior citizen and the school benefit when the senior citizen thinks of the school as a warm and friendly place where he knows he is appreciated.

Sometimes even the innovative school is reluctant to accept the volunteer into the classroom except in the demeaning role of teacher's helper or cafeteria aide. These roles are not personally rewarding to the volunteer, who soon sees himself as merely a convenience. Some schools have stipulations and conditions for accepting volunteers which are ridiculous, i.e.; degree in education, no physical handicaps, perfect grammar, etc. Yet, the Willoughby-Eastlake R.S.V.P. Project will show in case histories that volunteers with the most severe handicaps are accepted by both students and teachers and indeed often become the most

loved and respected people in the school.

The key to involving the school in a meaningful relationship with the senior volunteer is total school involvement. The project approach was a workshop to which administrators, principals, guidance directors and the most dedicated and innovative teachers were invited.

At this workshop, the background of R.S.V.P. and its relationship to ACTION was explained. The participants were apprised of the fact that most of the volunteers would be people of limited education, but possessing skills attained through a lifetime of learning. The fact that the social values which these people had acquired would also have a beneficial affect on the lives of the young people, with whom they would associate, was also stressed. It was suggested that they visualize ways in which older persons could become a part of their classrooms and also that they discard old stereotypes and think of new and imaginative ways in which the services of these older persons could become a vital part of their classrooms.

Those attending the conference were divided into elementary, junior high and high school groups. These

groups were further divided into small six to eight member groups gathered around tables. These groups wrote their suggestions without discussion. The ideas were then read and further elaborated upon. Since most of the teachers had acquaintances or relatives in the golden age group, they were able to visualize the affect the older person would have in their classrooms and the beneficial effect the volunteer would have upon the students. The excitement of the teachers was very evident and augered well for the ultimate success of the program. The fact that the administration was already sold on the idea of inviting the senior citizens into the schools was also a plus factor in the teachers' acceptance.

The list of suggested activities proposed by the teachers is listed in the appendix. Most of these activities have been carried to successful conclusion during the initial year of school and R.S.V.P. involvement.

PREPARATION OF THE CLASSROOM  
FOR THE R.S.V.P. VOLUNTEER

Placing a volunteer in a classroom is the most time-consuming volunteer placement an R.S.V.P. director has; however, it is also the most rewarding.

Early in the school year the R.S.V.P. director should request to speak at a faculty meeting and also at a PTA meeting. At these times the R.S.V.P. director can explain the broader aspects of R.S.V.P. and how it can be utilized within the schools. Not only does this give everyone connected with the school a working knowledge of how the senior volunteer will fit the school and classroom, but often produces very good leads to volunteers. Members of the PTA and faculty often know seniors who would make excellent volunteers. At the end of the faculty meeting the director distributes request forms to the teachers. (Request form in appendix)

The director usually receives many request forms after a presentation to faculty members. Since these requests are always for a person with specific skills, it is advisable to space presentations at various schools. The R.S.V.P. director should also immediately contact the teacher after receiving a request for a volunteer and

explain that a search will be begun for a volunteer who meets the requirements.

The volunteer is carefully screened as to his likes and dislikes, his hobbies and interests, his age preference in students, and his compatibility with the teacher with whom he will work. When the winning combination has been reached, the volunteer identifies with his class and the teacher and is integrated into the school.

The volunteer is accompanied by the R.S.V.P. director on his first visit to the school and is introduced to the school principal and the school secretary. The secretary will be the person who will record the hours he spends in the school, so it is important that the volunteer meets her. The principal then takes over and introduces the volunteer to the teacher who makes the classroom introduction and thus prepares the children for the volunteer's first working visit.

The R.S.V.P. director should not then forget about the volunteer, but continue in a strong supportive role. Occasional visits to the station, notes of encouragement, etc. will all help the volunteer to fit into his new volunteer role comfortably.

It is important with school volunteers to start slowly. Very few are willing to initially commit large segments of time. This should cause no concern. Most of the Willoughby-Eastlake R.S.V.P. volunteers started on the very limited basis of one hour a week. Nearly all are now giving two or three and sometimes even more times each week. As soon as the volunteer realizes that he is needed, is wanted and is performing a very worthwhile service, he voluntarily and without prodding suggests that he will be willing to give more time to the schools.

## WHERE DO YOU RECRUIT SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS?

When you have sold the administration, the teachers and the school community on using senior volunteers, where do you get the volunteers?

The project's first recruitment spot was at senior centers. After talking about R.S.V.P. and explaining the program, the recruiter would say, "We need a man whose hobby is woodworking" or "a lady who loves to crochet", or whatever request needed to be filled.

Sometimes the answer was dead silence. In that event, the next question was, "Don't any of you know of a person who can do this?"

The answer was always, "Yes, Edith or Harriet or Tom or Jim are really good at that".

The next step, of course, was to persuade the individual that he or she had something to offer.

Sometimes, however, a pleasant surprise occurred after a meeting when an individual would come up to us and shyly say, "Could you possibly use a retired baker, or photographer, etc?"

It was always possible, because even if there had not been a specific request, all that was necessary was to mention that a specialist was available in one area or another and a teacher would say, "Just what I need for my class".

Church groups are always a fertile field in which to recruit volunteers. These people have been volunteering in one way or another all their lives, and the idea of volunteering in a new field usually excites their imagination.

Contrary to popular belief, retired teachers are usually not willing to be school volunteers. After a lifetime of teaching, most teachers would like their volunteering to be in a different field. Experience indicates that most teachers do volunteer, and hospitals, Red Cross, etc. are excellent stations for them.

An extensive amount of recruiting should also be done through R.S.V.P. brochures. These can be placed in restaurants, banks, grocery stores, etc.

Newspaper publicity is an excellent recruitment tool. As soon as one or two volunteers have started in a

school, the local newspaper should be called. Newspapers usually respond beautifully when they are called to arrange for a story about a volunteer working in the schools. After all, children and old people are the stuff of which human interest stories are made. Every time a newspaper story about school volunteers appears, the R.S.V.P. office telephone will ring. The article will stimulate people who think they might like to try this type of volunteering, or else have a father, a mother or neighbor whom they think should be approached.

The first volunteers are the hardest to enroll. By far the best volunteer is the one who has been told about school volunteering experiences by a friend. The joy that his friend is finding in working with children is usually the catalyst needed to encourage the hesitant person to volunteer.

## THE R.S.V.P. SCHOOL VOLUNTEER

R.S.V.P. school volunteers are all as different as the assignments they are asked to fill, but in one respect they are all alike. The first question every volunteer asks is, "Do you really think I can do this job?"

The older people of this country have become so inhibited by the youth culture of the times that they usually find it hard to realize that they have something uniquely their own to offer. Therefore, the first job of the R.S.V.P. director is to assure them that they are wanted, they have a valuable contribution to make and that their talent and maturity are enviable qualities.

The positive benefits of association between youth and age are being recognized by gerontologists and youth behavior specialists. The strong ties that existed between grandparents and children of a previous generation can be reinforced through the introduction of an older person into the classroom. This reinforcement is not an artificial one. Observation has proved that when a volunteer becomes a part of the school, both the teachers and children usually desire a closer relationship than would

be expected. In most of the schools in which Willoughby-Eastlake R.S.V.P. functions, the volunteers have become known not as Mr. or Mrs. Doe, but Mr. John or Mrs. Jane.

They need reassurance that they need not be teachers, need not be experts, need not even be well educated. The work many of them do with their hands is something the younger generation is not familiar with. In addition to this, many children and young people today have never known the warmth and comfort of grandparents. In our fragmented society, grandparents have retired to other states or young parents have been transferred away from their elderly parents. Many youngsters have never known the joy of learning from a patient, kindly older person. The grandparents too, in their separation from youth, are deprived of the joy of young minds and hearts. Many have never known the thrill of having a child gaze in awe struck amazement as the oldster shows him a skill that perhaps he learned from his own grandparent.

The well educated volunteer is often more hesitant than the uneducated in offering his services. He has just been through a traumatic experience. He has stepped down from a position of authority and has been suddenly relegated to the sidelines. Formerly, his every word was law and

he was listened to with respect and admiration; now he has become a tiresome old man. His bruised ego is suddenly healed when he is asked to be a resource person in the schools.

He is an authority in his particular field of endeavor and when he speaks of his work specialty, he is listened to with respect by both the teachers and the students. He can fill a very unique volunteer assignment. It is difficult, and often impossible, to arrange for a working person to leave his busy schedule and arrange to spend a day or an afternoon in schools telling the students about the work he does. The retired person, on the other hand, is delighted to talk to a class and is flattered to be asked back on a return engagement as many times as the teacher deems necessary.

The volunteer with little formal education is very humble. He is usually eager to tell the interviewer about his children or grandchildren who have degrees, and it is obvious that he feels he is very inferior. The thought of working with educators overwhelms him. When he starts his volunteer work, he is surprised and gratified when not only the students, but also the teachers admire his skills and seek his advice on a "work with hands" project.

After the R.S.V.P. volunteer has become a part of the school setting, the comment most often heard is, "Send me more volunteers like Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. He is such a marvelous addition to my classroom".

Another frequently heard comment is, "Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ is such a wonderful person, my students love her. Of course, I realize that she is a very unusual person. I'm so lucky to be able to work with her."

The volunteer may not be an unusual volunteer, but through careful screening has become the perfect volunteer for the teacher's particular classroom and project.

Usually the teacher regards the volunteer as a valuable aide and welcomes the senior as a colleague in education. This reinforcement helps to complete the total commitment of the volunteer to the children, the teacher and the school. In turn, this positive support develops a real sense of self-worth and pride in the older person.

In the school situation, the fact that a volunteer is considered an asset by the teacher and the class creates an incentive among other teachers within the building to request volunteers for their classrooms.

After the volunteer has been serving within a school for several weeks, an evaluation form is sent to the teacher and the R.S.V.P. director is able to decide how capably the volunteer is performing, and if the volunteer is weak in any particular area, to tactfully discuss this with him. (Evaluation form in appendix)

The fact that volunteers can be successfully assimilated within a school system has been proved by this one-year pilot program. At the end of the first year all schools in which volunteers had given their services requested that even more volunteers be assigned to them during the next school year.

## CASE HISTORIES

The case histories of those senior citizens whose lives have been enriched and the contributions they have made to the younger generation would fill several volumes.

The following are a few examples. These are not unusual but have been picked at random.

It is noteworthy that there has never been a serious problem with any senior volunteer in the Willoughby-Eastlake School District R.S.V.P. pilot project. Even the severely handicapped have been assimilated and have made significant contributions in the schools in which they serve.

## Case History

### "THERE ARE NO BAD KIDS IN THIS SCHOOL!"

K\_\_\_\_\_ 's wife had read about our program in the schools in our local newspaper.

She called us and asked, "Would your schools R.S.V.P. accept a blind man?"

She went on to say that her husband was a wonderful man, a retired machinist who had retained his ability to repair machines through the sense of touch. She added that he had just finished repairing her washing machine, and that neighbors were always asking him to help them in repairing household appliances. She said, however, that he was becoming bored with too many empty hours to fill by listening to the radio and visiting senior centers.

We told her that we would check back with her in a day. The next step was a visit to one of our local junior high schools where they had requested a volunteer in the industrial training center.

We were doubtful about the reception the principal would give us, however; we thought all we could do was ask,

and if he said no, we would try to place our blind volunteer in some other kind of station.

The school principal and the industrial arts teacher both decided that they would like to try this as an experiment, even though we explained that his wife would accompany K\_\_\_\_. She said she would lead him to the classroom and take him to the lunchroom.

This was the beginning of the school year, and the young people in this class were ninth graders. They were learning to take motors apart and put them back together again. They watched in amazement as K\_\_\_\_ felt the motors and told them the approximate year the motors were made.

At the end of the week, the students informed Mrs. K\_\_\_\_ that her presence was no longer necessary; they would have someone waiting when K\_\_\_\_ was dropped off, they would escort him to the lunchroom and would see him to the car when he was through with his volunteer work.

K\_\_\_\_ spends three afternoons a week in the school. He has given the young people he is working with and the teachers so much more than his knowledge about motors. He has proved that a handicap need not sour

a disposition or bar anyone from active involvement with others.

K\_\_\_\_\_ assists with a class both before and after the lunch break. Originally after finishing his lunch, he would wait in the teachers' lounge until time for his second class. The kids soon put a stop to that. They decided that they would take turns reading the daily newspaper or books to K\_\_\_\_\_.

In every way the youngsters and teachers at that school show their spontaneous love and admiration for K\_\_\_\_\_. For his birthday, they gave him a party. Several times, when his wife had to be away from home, they arranged with her that they could come into his home and prepare surprise dinner parties for him. At the close of the first school year, the students presented him with a shop jacket with the school insignia.

One day when I visited the school, I noticed one of the youngsters walking down the hall with K\_\_\_\_\_. Very earnestly, the boy was telling him, "Now, you see, K\_\_\_\_\_, it's just ten steps to this door, then three to the next, then you reach this corner and just keep going until you touch the next door, and that takes you right to the classroom."

I asked a teacher if the boy had been appointed to do this. The teacher told me that that particular boy had been on the borderline of delinquency, but had developed such a strong familial relationship with K\_\_\_\_\_ that his attitude toward school and responsibility had changed. He has now changed from a troublemaker to a dependable student.

After K\_\_\_\_\_ had been volunteering for several months, he told me that originally he had been terrified at the idea of going into a junior high school. All that he had heard about modern kids came back to him and he envisioned being teased, tormented and perhaps even physically abused.

"I don't know where the bad kids are", he said, "but they certainly aren't in this school. These kids treat me as if I were their own grandfather."

## Case History

### FROM VOLUNTEERING TO COLLEGE

When Mrs. S\_\_\_\_\_ was suggested to us as a possible school volunteer, my first thought was that she had failed our only requirement; she couldn't possibly be sixty years old. I was amazed to find that this chic, attractive lady was sixty three years old.

She had worked most of her married life, but had spent the last several years caring for a husband with terminal cancer. She said her only skill area was knitting, so we placed her in a school teaching elementary children how to knit. Not only did she establish a fine relationship with the children, but she also formed a good social, out-of-school relationship with several of the teachers.

We could see that she was a lady who enjoyed variety, so when a new project was started at another school involving several volunteers, we switched her to that project. The project concerned studying several foreign countries and culminated in the students preparing a smorgasbord-type dinner featuring native foods of the countries they had studied.

Her next project was to work with slow fifth grade

readers to bring them back to class level.

By now we know that this remarkable lady is ready and willing to tackle any volunteer job as long as it is something that involves children. She has no objection to switching from one school to another, or one grade level to another.

Encouraged by her teacher friends and discovering that she has a real capacity for learning, her latest project is going to college.

Our hearts were really warmed when she told us that she had arranged all of her classes so that they would not interfere with her volunteer work in the schools.

This volunteer job, which started with a vague, uncrystalized idea of finding something to do, has changed the whole direction of this lady's life.

## Case History

### A JOB THAT'S REWARDING

Mr. B \_\_\_\_\_ was the answer to a prayer. We had been sitting on a request from one of our elementary schools to send them a volunteer who would help them set up a photography lab. A small room with running water was available, they had several old cameras and developing trays, but needed someone with photography know-how to set up and supervise the project.

Mr. B \_\_\_\_\_ was a retired executive who was determined that he was going to find something to do that would be personally rewarding as well as contributory. He had read about our program, and asked us to tell him about the various activities we might have to offer.

As is our procedure, we encouraged him to talk about himself and discovered he was an avid photography hobbyist. We introduced him to the school personnel and he was off and running. He really needed very little help from anyone, and as he was in on the planning stage of the lab, it became in a very real sense, his station.

The children in the school who have expressed an interest in photography are being taught to operate the cameras

and all dark room procedures. All events of importance within the school are being photographed, and the pictures displayed on bulletin boards are very positive evidence to Mr. B\_\_\_\_\_ and his young associates that in addition to the new skill being taught by the senior citizen and learned by his students, they are contributing by recording all the pleasant events of the school year.

Mr. B\_\_\_\_\_ is another person who has become such an integrated part of the school that it is hard to imagine the school without him.

## Case History

### "A REASON TO GET UP IN THE MORNING"

We first became acquainted with J\_\_\_\_\_ when his daughter called us and said she was desperate about her father. He had been widowed the year before and spent nearly every afternoon at her mother's grave. Although he was a young retiree, in his early sixties, he had become old and his family feared, close to suicidal.

His daughter told us she had read about our program and hoped that we would have something to offer him. She had prevailed upon him to enroll as a volunteer in the local hospital and although he went, with docility, two mornings a week and filed record cards, she knew he was doing it solely to please her.

J\_\_\_\_\_ broke his first two appointments with us and on the day of his third appointment we called him and suggested that if he could not visit our office we would be glad to visit him. He then said that he would come to our office.

His first words to his interviewer were, "If you can find a reason for me to get up in the morning, I'll bless you the rest of my life."

"I came in because my daughter asked me to but there isn't a thing in the world I can do. I never did anything but work on an assembly line all my life", his voice was low and he was obviously ill at ease, as he spoke humbly and yet defiantly.

We took him to our high school Industrial Training Center. The center is a factory, in miniature, where students, who are educable but mentally retarded, are taught useful trades.

The director of the Industrial Training Center is a person of great natural sensitivity. He had been apprised of our visit and was very cordial and offered to take J\_\_\_\_\_ on a tour of the facilities.

As we went through the place J\_\_\_\_\_ 's attention was caught by a teenager counting out washers in stacks of 100. He turned to the director and said, "I could make a box that would hold exactly 100 and would eliminate one step of this assembly line".

At the conclusion of our tour he said, "Well, I'd be willing to work here for an hour or so, once a week".

We enrolled him as a volunteer on that basis. Within a week he was volunteering from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., five days a week. His true personality returned to him. He became expansive, loquacious and showed a real interest in the center and the work they were accomplishing.

As the year progressed J\_\_\_ became as much a part of the facility as the teachers and students. As his interests expanded so did his skills and in order to be of more help in the educational process he learned to operate every machine in the center.

He was invited to attend a vocational educational workshop along with the rest of the faculty from the center. The workshop participants accepted him as an equal who had new and sometimes original ideas to offer.

During the school year he was absent for only one week. He called our office and explained that he hated to leave his job but he had been invited to a wedding in California. It was only after reassurance that the center could spare him for a week that he decided to go.

We had another call from his daughter in which she

expressed her gratitude for, as she put it, "Bringing my father back to life again."

She said, "Before he started his volunteering at the center he would never have had enough interest in life to want to take a trip."

She told us that before he had started his volunteer work he had not bothered with visiting even old friends and the idea that he would voluntarily take a long trip half way across the continent had finally reassured his family that he was ready to resume his normal, cheerful outlook on daily living.

This man is finding a reward in service to others that he had never been able to find in his previous wage earning job. The love that he has earned from the students and the respect given him by the faculty are the largest paycheck he has ever had.

## Case History

### "ANYONE WITH A SKILL SHOULD PASS IT ON"

We met Mr. and Mrs. C\_\_\_\_\_ at a senior citizens meeting where we spoke to the group about the advantages of being an R.S.V.P. volunteer.

They were a bit dubious about volunteering in a school. Their social life was filled with senior center activities, and Mr. C\_\_\_\_\_ was serving on many advisory boards related to elderly Americans. Besides which, as Mr. C\_\_\_\_\_ said, "I don't know what I could teach the kids. Of course, I do a lot of woodworking, it's my hobby, and Mrs. C\_\_\_\_\_ does a lot of sewing. But teaching kids, that's something else. Besides, we don't have much time....maybe one day a week....we'll try it, but I'm not making any promises."

This couple became an R.S.V.P. director's dream volunteers. Mrs. C\_\_\_\_\_ 's girls learned to sew, and these children were only fifth graders. Mr. C\_\_\_\_\_ started with first and second graders. He brought in a huge tree stump and began at the beginning by teaching them how to hammer a nail in straight. Eventually, most of the boys in the school had come under Mr. C\_\_\_\_\_ 's guidance. The woodworking and sewing rooms became the

most popular in the school. One day the school principal heard about an old church that was being demolished, and after school Mr. C\_\_\_\_, the assistant principal and a group of sixth grade boys went over and talked the workmen into giving them some beautiful old wood which eventually became recipe holders, key holders and picture frames.

Mrs. C\_\_\_\_ taught the girls to make stuffed animals and little aprons. This solved the Christmas shopping of many.

Mr. C\_\_\_\_ had another talent which we heard about indirectly from the children in his woodworking class. He was an artist on the mouth organ and also the banjo. When our junior high music teacher heard about this talent, Mr. C\_\_\_\_ was invited to play for the music classes. He was such a hit that the other junior and senior high schools requested a visit to their music classes. We then heard about a group of six elementary school children who were working with their teacher in an afterschool project. They were learning to play ukeleles, banjos and mandolins. We asked Mr. C\_\_\_\_ to visit this group and he soon had adopted them as his own special project in addition to his woodworking

students. The group has now grown to eighteen members. Mr. C\_\_\_\_\_ has become so much in demand that he is perfectly at home in every school in the district. He is so beloved that for his birthday the students baked him a cake, decorated with the inscription, "To Our Good Friend, Mr. C\_\_\_\_\_"

Although the C's\_\_\_\_\_ had a full and happy life before they began their school volunteering, their lives have been enhanced since they began working with the school children. Being needed and feeling that they are contributing has brought them a great sense of satisfaction. As Mr. C\_\_\_\_\_ said, "Anyone with skills has a duty to pass them on to the next generation."

## Case History

### SHE WILL BE REMEMBERED

Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ is no longer a school volunteer, and yet the presence of Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ lingers on.

Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ 's fingers were crippled with arthritis and her hands shook from Parkinson's Disease. She loved to crochet and was delighted to be asked to teach crocheting to a group of junior high girls.

Twice a week she was taken to the school, and the girls she taught became not only proficient, but outstanding in crocheting. She had started in September and never missed a day. In January, however, we received a call and she told us her doctor had ordered her to go to the hospital.

She said, "Well, the girls know the basics of crocheting now and even if I don't get well they can go on by themselves".

Her girls were so worried about her that we were all touched. Little gifts were sent to the hospital, and letters and cards helped continue the friendship between these girls and the tiny lady with the

indomitable spirit.

Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ 's Parkinson's Disease had become more progressive, her doctor said, and her volunteering days were over. The little widow is now confined to her apartment, but the affection and love she inspired continues. Her girls call her on the telephone and visit her.

One of the girls she had taught said, "I love to crochet and I will probably do it all my life. When I'm an old, old lady, I'll still remember Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ because she started me doing this. Isn't it strange that fifty or sixty years from now Mrs. D\_\_\_\_\_ will still be remembered?"

Retired Senior Volunteer Program

R E Q U E S T F O R V O L U N T E E R S

Agency or  
Volunteer Station \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator of Agency or Volunteer Station \_\_\_\_\_

Person requesting volunteers \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteers report to (Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Recorded by \_\_\_\_\_

WILLOUGHBY-EASTLAKE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
 RETIRED SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM  
 301 East 293rd Street  
 Willowick, Ohio 44094

VOLUNTEER EVALUATION

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

Agency or School \_\_\_\_\_ Description of Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Service \_\_\_\_\_ Approximate Time Served \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK ONE

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR
Contribution to Agency or School Activity				
Dependability				
Willingness to accept supervision				
Initiative				
Judgment				
Personal Appearance				
Sensitivity to Needs of Others				
Growth on the Job				

COMMENTS:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Position & Title \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to R.S.V.P. office. Thank you.

Sample Lesson Plans  
for the incorporation of  
Retired Senior Volunteers  
in Career Education Activities

WILLOUGHBY-EASTLAKE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Office of Career Education  
301 East 293 Street  
Willowick, Ohio 44094

GOALS:

To help primary grade children make better use of the library.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Children will use cassette recordings to gain a broader knowledge of children's literature.
2. Children will listen to stories read, in an informal setting, by senior citizens for enjoyment and greater appreciation of value of books.
3. Children with reading handicaps will read to a senior citizen on a one-to-one basis to increase reading ability.

ACTIVITIES:

1. A library schedule will be made to specify times when primary children can make use of audio equipment (cassettes and listening posts).
2. A senior citizen (if possible, retired librarian) will be made familiar with equipment and recordings available and help children sent by teachers to use equipment and select suitable recordings during scheduled times.
3. The senior citizen will be available to discuss the story after child has heard it.
4. A senior citizen will read library books to small groups of children sent to the library by teachers.
5. The senior citizen will help individual children to read material sent by the teacher.

EVALUATION:

Is there an increased use of the library?

Have the children shown an increased interest in children's books?

Do children with reading handicaps show an improvement and increased interest in reading?

GOALS:

1. Senior citizens would be involved in the elementary Social Studies program.
2. Students and senior citizens will interact during the study of Eurasian countries.
3. Groups involved will learn more about interests and abilities of each other.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Acquaint senior citizens with the prospective Social Studies program.
2. Discover the ancestry, knowledge, and interests of senior citizens as relating to Eurasia.
3. Group students and senior citizens into time-line placement.
4. Plan activities with senior citizens and students.
5. Plan culminating activities:
  - a. Television time-line
  - b. Costuming
  - c. Smorgasbord

ACTIVITIES:

1. Select countries to be studied during specified period.
2. Use senior citizens as speakers to introduce country.
  - a. Bring articles for display purposes (clothing etc.)
  - b. Show slides
  - c. Demonstrate arts and crafts
  - d. Conduct question and answer periods.
3. Use senior citizens in the class room as resource people, slides, and supervisory personnel. Work might entail:
  - a. Student question and answer periods
  - b. Research and reporting help
  - c. Map making aide
  - d. Constructive help in assembling of cookbook
  - e. Planning of Smorgasbord
4. Each group works on a particular country, preparing native recipes.
5. Execute plans for smorgasbord.
  - a. Each group should be dressed in national costume.

- b. Television time-line presentation
- c. Administrators, parents, senior citizens, and students attend function with supervision by senior citizens.

EVALUATION:

1. Written reports, given orally and taped, will demonstrate scope of knowledge student has gained.
2. Television time-line will indicate students' understanding of the progress of civilization.
3. Interrelating of students with senior citizens can be evaluated through planning and executing the culminating activities.
  - a. costuming
  - b. time-line (television)
  - c. smorgasbord

GOALS:

Increased use of library for individual research and enrichment utilizing RSVP supervision.

OBJECTIVES:

RSVP personnel will guide and supervise upper elementary students (Grades 4,5,6) in individual research in library.

Students will use library facilities and multi-media for personal enrichment and research.

Students and senior citizens will relate to teach other in one to one or small group situations.

ACTIVITIES:

During unscheduled library periods, senior citizens will be scheduled as resource people to aid child in use of library facilities.

A multi-media center will be set up in library. Senior citizens will be trained in operation of hardware (if necessary) and will train and/or supervise students in its use.

The schedule will be available to 4th, 5th, and 6th grade teachers so they may plan to use these. Time periods (Assigned reports in content areas, committees to watch film strips - use listening post, etc.)

Students will be sent to library for individual research projects in content areas. RSVP personnel will aid in use of card catalogue, selection of materials, etc.

Provisions could be made for disadvantaged students to read orally to a senior citizen on a one to one basis for a certain time period each week.

EVALUATION:

Teacher assessment of value of program as evidenced through students research reports and increased ability to use library facilities.

Records of incidence of use of various items of equipment and numbers of children using research facilities will be kept.

GOALS:

The children will learn to relate with senior citizens.

The children will learn some basic skills in chosen areas, example; cooking, needlework, sports, drama, photography, woodworking, games, sewing, and grooming.

The children will be personally enriched through the development of a hobby.

OBJECTIVES:

The children will conduct a program that will acquaint the senior citizens with our school and its needs.

The children will indicate interest preferences along hobby lines.

The senior citizens will also indicate interests and aptitudes in various hobby areas.

Mini-clubs will be organized.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Bring senior citizens into the school
  - a. Use various avenues of publicity, assisted by Mrs. Foley, (ex., newspaper, radio, fliers, and church lists).
  - b. Make each child responsible for the name and address of at least one senior citizen. Send this list to the office.
  - c. Have the RSVP office issue written invitations to these senior citizens.
2. Allow the senior citizens to spend the morning in the school, meeting children, teachers, etc.
3. Senior citizens, children, and teachers will attend a luncheon in the cafeteria.
4. Have several children introduce the concept of RSVP aide in the school. (Introduce mini-course concept.)
5. Conduct a brainstorming session with senior citizens and parents, both contributing to possibilities for RSVP involvement in the school.
6. Have the senior citizens sign a register, possibly mentioning areas in which they would be willing to assist.

7. Conduct a survey of class interests on basis of step 6 results.  
Note: Mildred Foley would work with all results of steps 5 and 6.
8. Utilize their capabilities in mini-courses and/or other group and individual endeavors.

EVALUATION:

1. After implementation, a survey of continued pupil interest would be conducted.
  - a. Students will be asked to note first, second, and third choices of clubs.
  - b. Certain clubs might be expanded while others would be eliminated.
2. Involved senior citizens might express interest in program through written appraisal.
3. By means of a culminating activity, each club will demonstrate skills acquired:

Example:

arts and crafts	- fair
drama	- play
cooking	- refreshments for fair
games	- chess tournament
sports	- exhibition

4. The children will demonstrate one or more basic skills acquired in the chosen area. (knit a scarf)

GOALS:

1. Children will be working with senior citizens in a group project where both are striving for the same end result.
2. Children will be working with their peers.
3. Students will be exposed to actual work and see the profits or losses.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Senior citizens and students will build a greenhouse.
2. Use senior citizens to share their expertise in gardening.
3. Consider use of the profits toward RSVP benefit programs or possibly just a profit organization.
4. The students will construct a greenhouse.
5. The students will market their product.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Planning activity with senior citizens, students and experts in the field to discuss the procedure in building the greenhouse.
2. Decide what is to be grown in the greenhouse. Research on different plants, flowers, vegetables and purchasing of supplies.
3. Actual building, all technicalities in production.
4. At this time we would begin the advertising campaign making people in the area aware of our project.
5. Purchasing of secondary equipment, packaging supplies.
6. Producing samples of the product to judge costs against expenses. Example: hanging planters, floral arrangements, terrariums, handbook.
7. Have senior citizens judge the products they have helped to produce.

EVALUATION:

1. The students will construct the greenhouse after they have made up the plans.
2. The student will have a marketable product to sell.
3. Senior citizens will come into the classroom to help.

GOALS:

Provide senior citizens and students the opportunity to work cooperatively in the re-decorating of classrooms.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will be able to select paints and materials to be used in painting masonry and wood surfaces.
2. Students will understand the proper use of brushes, rollers, tape etc. when re-decorating a classroom.
3. Students will gain an understanding of the proper selection of colors for classroom decorating.
4. Students take greater pride in caring for a building they have had a part in decorating.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Discuss the proper types of paint to use on surfaces to be re-decorated with a local paint salesman.
2. Discuss proper use of materials with retired painter and senior citizens in charge of the operation.
3. Discuss the best colors to be selected with a designer of schools and one who is knowledgeable in this area (PCT)
4. Survey areas to be painted or re-decorated to discuss best procedure to follow in the re-decorating process.
5. Discuss the child's responsibilities and how it effects the whole process.
6. Paint the areas to be re-decorated.
7. Discuss ways to keep the re-decorated areas neat and unmarked.

Follow-up Activities or other possibilities

1. Visit paint manufacturing firm
2. Visit to buildings to check color and design.

EVALUATION:

1. Children will demonstrate the proper use of materials to be used.
2. Children will be able to discuss the use of colors relative to reflection, beauty etc.
3. Children will understand the importance of preparation and team work.
4. Children will demonstrate a pride in their accomplishment and a willingness to preserve those accomplishments.

GOALS:

1. To involve the retired senior citizens within the school setting.
2. To develop the student's respect towards the senior citizens as being worthy individuals.
3. To bring about the students' awareness and knowledge of the community in which they live.
4. To develop a better relationship between the school and community.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Given a list of retired senior citizens, the school will identify those who could become involved.
  - a. The school with the help of the Career Education Office, RSVP staff will record the names of those senior citizens who would be willing to help.
  - b. The school will decide which senior citizens will work on the program.
  - c. The school will acquaint the senior citizens with the school program.
2. The students will be working with the senior citizens in developing an awareness of the contributions of all individuals.
  - a. The students will work with the senior citizens.
  - b. The students will demonstrate a respect for the age differences.
  - c. The student will see the relationship between the retired senior citizens and themselves.
3. The students, teachers, and volunteer senior citizens will formulate a program together on the respect for property.
  - a. The group will define problems of disrespect for community property.
  - b. The students will display community "spirits".
  - c. The group will define the program that they wish to use in developing a better relationship towards the school and community.
4. Working with the school and community related program, the students will demonstrate their respect for the community.

ACTIVITIES:

1. The school with the help of Mildred Foley will locate those senior citizens who might wish to help in a school program.
  - a. List names and other pertinent information on card.
  - b. Telephone call from school to interested senior citizens.
  - c. Letter to senior citizen about school program.
  - d. Luncheon or meeting set up to bring senior citizen into the school.

2. Senior citizen becomes familiar with the residents in the school neighborhood
  - a. personal visit
  - b. telephone call
3. Senior citizen and resident define problems inherent in living near the school.
4. Senior citizen and teachers discuss problems and further define program which helps to alleviate problems caused by students.
5. Senior citizens and students define problems
  - a. individual discussions, interviews
  - b. panel discussions
  - c. class discussions
  - d. reports
6. Senior citizens acquaint students to neighborhood and residents
  - a. map making
  - b. labeling
  - c. neighborhood walks
  - d. introduction to neighbors in community
7. Senior citizens, teachers, and students identify further programs they wish to participate in to help make the school community a better place in which to live.
  - a. safety rules
  - b. clean-up campaigns
  - c. tree planting
  - d. enhancing property
  - e. abiding by community rules
8. Extended activities to enhance cooperativeness of community living.
  - a. speaker
  - b. enhancing pride in school and neighborhood property
  - c. simple fix-it campaigns
  - d. discussion with Sanitation Department
  - e. discussion with agricultural extension agent
  - f. discussion with Mayor
  - g. interviews
  - h. values clarification activities

#### EVALUATION:

1. Participation in discussions, interviews, panels and class room activities.
2. Development of questions related to program.
3. Contribution to the planning of the program.
4. Effort exerted in executing the program.
5. Attitudes of students towards senior citizens and residents of the community.
6. Students' respect for community before and after program.
7. Residents' reaction to program.
8. Development on students' part of on-going activities to enrich program.

GOALS:

1. To provide students and senior citizens with experience by associating with each other.
2. To provide opportunities for students and senior citizens to discuss and reflect mutual experiences.

OBJECTIVES:

1. The student will experience enrichment opportunities with senior citizens.
2. The senior citizens will experience enrichment opportunities with students.
3. The student will communicate his experiences with senior citizens in a discussion group.
4. The senior citizens will communicate their experiences with students in a discussion group.
5. The student will display an increased awareness of self and others through association with senior citizens.
6. The senior citizens will display usefulness to the students, community and self.

ACTIVITIES:

WEDNESDAY RSVP PROGRAM

Every Wednesday beginning the first week in November:

1. Senior citizens will lead student group in extra curricular "Mutual Interest Sessions"
  - a. occupations
  - b. crafts
  - c. hobbies
  - d. nationalities
2. Senior citizens will participate in classroom discussions in which he may share personal experiences with students.
  - a. changes of manners and morals
  - b. impact of inventions on society
  - c. how styles have changed
3. Students will participate, periodically, in discussion groups, led by students, to share experiences they have had with senior citizens.
4. Senior citizens will participate, periodically, in discussion groups (RSVP meetings) to share experiences they have had with students.

EVALUATION:

Records will be kept in the following areas:

1. Activities
  - a. Interest groups
  - b. Discussion groups
  - c. etc.
  
2. Participants
  - a. Senior Citizens
  - b. Students
  - c. Teachers

GOALS:

To create a workable crossfile of the elderly; their former careers; their knowledge of crafts, hobbies; and other talents and their ethnic background.

To develop the student's appreciation of the contributions of the elderly to our life style and customs.

To bring about the students' understanding of the problems of the aging.

To have a Folk Festival with the elderly acting as planners, consultants, and instructors.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To compile a crossfile of the elderly; their interests, careers, crafts, and hobbies.
2. To list the various ethnic groups of the community. To compare their similarities and differences in:
  - a. language
  - b. dress
  - c. foods
  - d. Holiday celebrations
  - e. crafts
3. To research the local opportunities for the elderly.
4. To chart the problems (and their possible solutions) of the elderly.
5. To learn a craft, a hobby and to reinstate ethnic customs in everyday life.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Each student will research the elderly in family, neighborhood or family circle of friends.
  - a. Information listed on card for filing.
  - b. Cross-filed - interests, crafts, hobbies, former careers, possible contributions to students.
2. Student will invite elderly to the school for interview, panel discussion, brainstorming, or just to visit school.
3. Groups will research countries and enthuse groups involved in community.

4. Craft, hobby, and special interest classes (after school) begin.
5. Planning (steering) committee for festivals
  - a. elderly and parent of student
  - b. students
  - c. city officials
  - d. administrations
6. Actual staging of Folk Festival with elderly having a booth.

Social Studies: (On-Going Activities)

1. Research opportunities for elderly
2. Chart problems and solutions of the elderly
  - a. Discussion with Mayor
  - b. Discussion with city council members
  - c. Round table discussion with elderly.

EVALUATION:

1. Record the attitudes expressed during discussion periods by students and retired persons.
2. Maintain anecdotal records of retired persons participation in the activities.

GOALS:

To develop an awareness and appreciation of the various ethnic backgrounds and cultural regions which have enhanced the American culture using the retired people from RSVP as resource people.

Time - 1973-74 School year  
Festival in April or May

Personnel - Students (8th grade) Teachers (8th), RSVP and hopefully students relatives.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To involve students in various ethnic and cultural arts and crafts activities.
  - a. learning to cook "old work style" without standardized recipes.
  - b. learning short cuts and tricks from the older people in sewing, cooking, household chores, mechanics, etc.
2. To identify, thru the senses, those cultural traits which we owe to other cultures.
  - a. tasting real Italian spaghetti
  - b. dancing an old style Polka or folk dance.
  - c. making an ethnic folk costume
  - d. identifying religious customs common to various groups
3. To clarify those values which ethnics and cultural groups hold:
  - a. marriage
  - b. burial and death
  - c. family

ACTIVITIES:

1. Identification of each student as a member of an ethnic or cultural group.
  - a. discussion in class, with parents and relatives at home.
  - b. last names may lend themselves to this purpose.
2. Research Project (either written, oral, or illustrated with optional methods).
  - a. students will trace family history trying to find out where their family originated from and form hypothesis as to why they came to America or this part of the country. Many times for jobs.
  - b. students may option to adopt a group in place of his or her own personal one.

GOALS:

1. To clarify the work ethic value in American Society and make it a consideration in Career Research for 9th graders.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To give students an opportunity to discuss their values on work with groups which hold similar and different values.
2. To involve RSVP persons in useful and meaningful relationships with younger people through discussions in class.
3. To enable students to interview former workers (RSVP) and obtain information which will be used in career research activities.

ACTIVITIES:

1. Lecture - RSVP person to class on what work means to older people followed by a discussion period.
2. Tapes - students will be trained to interview and sent to elementary schools to obtain 1-6 impressions of the value of work.
3. Classes will listen to tapes and discuss any changes in their views since elementary school.
4. Parents - students will interview working parents using basis questions asked of each group.
5. Senior High - taping program.

EVALUATION:

A before and after teacher-made questionnaire will be used.

A final student reaction in essay form will be required as part of the research in careers. Students will be asked to analyze their own feelings based on the exposure to the various different group values.

- c. part of the research will involve an interview with a member of RSVP or family elder to procure information.
  - d. the library resources will provide general background information on ethnic immigration and regional migration.
3. Grouping - students of similar backgrounds will be formed into committees.
    - a. group discussions will be held for an exchange of information.
  4. Heritage week - each month a different committee will be placed in charge of sponsoring a program which will include:
    - a. displays of ethnic and culture arts and crafts
    - b. nationality and regional music will be piped in to general student activity areas such as the cafeteria.
    - c. food specialty days featuring famous ethnic and regional dishes can be offered in the cafeteria menu. Committee will assist the cafeteria staff in planning and cooking specialty dishes.
    - d. RSVP personnel can supervise and guide committees. A RSVP person can be assigned to a committee and hold their own meetings.
  5. Old Town Festival - featuring the best from the year program under one roof.
    - a. booth selling or displaying arts and crafts
    - b. entertainment - folk dancers (students in costumes) and music for public dancing and listening pleasure.
    - c. refreshment stands featuring favorite old world dishes and pastries etc.
    - d. flags and symbols (student made) representing the ethnic and cultural heritage of the student body and community.

#### EVALUATION:

1. The total number of participants in the program and festival can serve as a measure of success.
2. At the conclusion of the program a questionnaire can be given to those students who participated.
3. (RSVP) people can be polled, questioned, or simply allowed to react to the entire program and their role in it.
4. Appreciation for ethnic and cultural heritage is an effective goal which is difficult to evaluate or measure. The scope and quality of each heritage week and the culminating Old Town Festival would be good indicators to use in evaluation.