



NH STORIES

About the Retired Senior
Volunteer Program (RSVP)



THE FRIENDS PROGRAM

The Friends Program, a non-profit organization in Concord, partners with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) to connect with older adults in the community. Volunteers provide transportation, shopping assistance, exercise classes, and more.



Name: **Martha Bouley**

 Pembroke

I have been using the Friends Program for rides for a couple of years. When I live in Pembroke with no bus service, it's especially helpful to have the Friends Program for rides. Several months ago, I needed a ride from the Concord ER back home in the middle of night. It was \$32 with a tip. Ouch. **The Friends Program is free. It has awesome drivers who are always prompt. They are always pleasant and helpful.** I use them for doctor appointments that I won't be able to drive after (such as eye dilation). **It's comforting to know that I can call for a ride and that's one thing off my to-do list before a procedure.** I'm sure people who don't drive find this especially helpful. I've told numerous people about them. Please, please keep the funding going to them—**this is an essential service and needs funds.**



Name: **Linda Hooper**

 Bow

I personally have used the Friends Program in Concord last winter when I shattered my shoulder and was not able to drive for several months. **The Friends Program provided me with a ride to my physical therapy appointments twice a week, freeing my friends and family to provide me with rides to appointments outside of the Bow/Concord area. This has been a lifesaver for me,** and I myself hope to volunteer with them once I am comfortably driving again.



CHORE CORPS



Chore Corps is part of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Volunteers assist with chores, repairs and safety modifications in and around homes.

Name: **Susan Brown**

 Enfield

I count on the RSVP morning call as my kids live far away. I participate in Chore Corps and I am also grateful for their help with small chores around the house. **Since I live alone, their services and help are an absolute necessity.** A lot of the world's work is done well by retired people.

FRIENDLY CALLER PROGRAM

The Friendly Caller Program is part of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). Volunteers connect with older adults through weekly phone calls, providing friendly conversation, socialization, and connection with others about common interests.

Name: **Thomas Bobowski**

 Concord

I retired in late 2020 and have been in the RSVP Friendly Caller Program since late 2021. Over the last three years I have been honored to provide support for typically elderly or physically limited people in their own homes by weekly phone calls. I have been in touch with eight clients during this period who have had a variety of physical, emotional, financial, and day-to-day issues that I am fortunate to not have in my own life. **These people appreciate the calls of connection to share their day-to-day struggles but also to laugh, cry a little, and to have a human connection that might not otherwise exist for them.** The RSVP Friends Program is an excellent way to keep our physical and mental health in the forefront of what it means to be a community of caring people. **I have had direct benefit as well participating. Keep the RSVP fully funded and keep the community enriched and supported!**

eeeeee

AMERICA READS

*America Reads is part of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).
Volunteers tutor children in schools who need extra help with reading.*

Name: **Kathryn Gibson**



Keene

I am an America Reads volunteer in a second-grade classroom in Keene. **It has been rewarding to see the two students I meet with weekly look forward to reading with me.** We discuss geography, lifespans, words, and history. The little boy I work with struggles with finding the key idea in a short book, as he gets caught up in details. His teacher hopes that by having this extra attention he will be able to keep up with the rest of the class. The little girl reads quite fluently, but also has trouble finding the central idea. Emphasizing questions to ask and reminding them both of what we have read seems to help. **It is helpful for both of them to spend this time each week with someone devoted solely to their individual learning needs. I urge you to vote for continuing funding for RSVP, which provides seniors the opportunity to continue to serve our communities in such meaningful ways.**

Name: **Linda Taylor**



Keene

I have been a Volunteer with the America Reads Program/RSVP for several years; all of it at the Winchester NH Elementary School. I've assisted with reading in various grade levels from Kindergarten to Fourth Grade. **The impact the reading assistance provides to our children cannot be overstated in my opinion. Many of these children have few or no books in their homes; or if they do, they may not receive encouragement to further their reading skills.** At each and every level I've been involved with, I've observed that children benefit from the extra attention they get from the time spent with the America Reads volunteer. **It's a very rewarding experience to help our kids read more confidently and increase their comprehension of reading skills. Without this program, many kids would be reading only during the allocated times to do so during the school day.** Being in a position to witness improvement and success in reading makes my day!



Bone Builders



Bone Builders is a free senior strength training and balance exercise program taught by RSVP volunteers. It can prevent and reverse osteoporosis and improves muscle strength, balance and bone density, along with helping with energy and general health.

Name:

Anne Williams



Charlestown

As a Bone Builder Class Leader for RSVP, I witness firsthand the benefits of this program. As participants are improving their balance and strengthening their bones, they are working to avoid falls which can cause debilitating fractures. **As hospitalization and rehabilitation costs put a significant strain on our health care system, programs such as this are invaluable and should be continued at all costs.**



Name:

Ugis Gruntmanis

 Plainfield

I am Director of Bone Health and Osteoporosis at Dartmouth Hitchcock Hospital and I urge you to support HB 704. **One out of two women and one out of four men will break their bones due to osteoporosis.** Through RSVP Bone Builders, a community of hard-working women and men with osteoporosis participates in regular exercise programs that play a pivotal role in reducing fractures. **This important work helps reduce the need for state-funded social assistance that would otherwise be required for those who become unable to care for themselves after suffering fractures.**

Please see below what real participants of NH Bone Builders say about it:

- At age 92, I know I need to keep moving or else! RSVP Bone Builders keeps me exercising and I know I'm missed if I don't go.
- I'm thankful to have been able to join RSVP Bone Builders three years ago. I got my balance and strength back, otherwise I would be on a walker or even in a wheelchair now. Many thanks to BB.
- I went to support my wife and keep her attending but found how helpful it is for me. The routine keeps me looking at my health.
- At 90 years of age, I credit RSVP Bone Builders with my flexibility, balance and falls without breakage.
- It has made things easier to do - therefore makes me want to do more. Thank you for making this available!
- I know I would have fallen more if my balance was not as good and think because of the BB class I don't get hurt when I do fall.
- RSVP BB builds confidence, conditioning, ability, and coping with aging.
- RSVP Bone Builders puts me in touch with other seniors who are passionate about health, fitness and walking.
- My doctor was pleased I was healing in places she didn't think would heal. But after a few month of RSVP Bone Builders, it did. At the last visit, my doctor said, "Get back to Bone Builders. Doctor's orders!"



Name:

William Fontaine

 Lebanon



I am an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer with the Grafton County Senior Center and a 2016 recipient of New Hampshire's Vaughn award. **I became a volunteer as a way to help pay back the kindness my parents received from their neighbors, which enabled them to stay in their home.** While I visited regularly to help with chores, it was a 600-mile trip by automobile. Without their neighbors, my father would have ended up in a nursing home. They had the good fortune to live in town so their neighbors would see them every day and quickly know if something was wrong.

In New Hampshire, many people live in rural parts of town where they don't see their neighbors every day. Many of them are on limited incomes and cannot afford to pay tradesman. As was the case for me and my parents, their children did not live nearby and weren't able to help on short notice.

I have installed and removed countless air conditioners for elderly citizens. I have helped stack wood, cleared drains and toilets, delivered food from pantries and supermarkets, and coordinated repairs for seniors with other non-profit organizations such as COVER Home Repair. I have also done tech support, re-establishing internet connections, reconfiguring modems, and getting their computers working again.

Sometimes the seniors I help are lonely or anxious, and as a result, they talk to me. I feel privileged to hear their stories. One person I helped is handicapped and can only get around in her wheelchair. As I put together her electric scooter, she showed me the diorama she made depicting her son, an Afghanistan War veteran, along with his platoon members. Her son died by suicide two years ago, and she deals with feelings of isolation and depression. **While I worked, I realized that the most important thing I was doing was listening to her and being there.**

I have many other stories, such as the senior woman who was a victim of abuse and was dealing with serious medical issues to whom I delivered food at the safe house where she was staying. She was feeling isolated and needed to tell her story. **On another occasion, I, along with other RSVP volunteers, helped a veteran avoid eviction by helping to remove trash from his apartment to a dumpster. These people were feeling as though there was nowhere to turn for help, but RSVP volunteers were there for them.**

I continue to serve as a volunteer because I believe that it makes a difference to the people I help. I think that many seniors struggle and often feel that the world is indifferent to them. I ask that you support HB 704 to allow me and my fellow volunteers to continue helping New Hampshire's seniors. Without the support and coordination of the RSVP staff, we would not be able to connect with people in need.

William Fontaine



Support the Retired Senior Volunteer Program in NH



For every \$1 invested in senior
volunteer programs, there's an
estimated return of \$11.80.

Storybook brought to you by:

newfutures»»
SOLVING PROBLEMS THROUGH POLICY CHANGE

NHAA
NEW HAMPSHIRE ALLIANCE
FOR HEALTHY AGING
ADVOCACY

