

Volunteering News from



New Members

A big welcome to all those new members who have joined RSVP West since the last edition of Volunteering News. We hope you are enjoying the activity you have chosen to support.

Recruitment

Please keep telling your friends and family about RSVP. Many new members join via our own website and others, but we know that word-of-mouth is still by far the most effective recruitment method.

Newsletter

I am delighted that one of Jan Snook's Musical Activities Sessions volunteers, Sandy Mackintosh, has agreed to take over the Editorship of Volunteering News.

Please send copy for the next edition to Sandy (newsletter@rsvp-west.org.uk) - maximum 200 words, emphasis on people (clients and volunteers), the purpose and benefits of our projects and, preferably, a photograph.

Please also let Office Coordinator Hilary (office@rsvp-west.org.uk) have the names of people (with their email addresses) that should be added to our Newsletter External Contacts list.

New RSVP West brochure

We are awaiting the imminent arrival of our new brochure which will cover the work our projects do and be available for everybody - volunteers, clients, founders etc.

Dementia Training

(see details later)

Just to say how pleased we were to be able to invest in the recent Reality Dementia Training for our members via a mobile unit at The CREATE Centre. The sessions were rated an outstanding success and will enable those involved with people with dementia to provide an even better service.

We hope to be able to provide further training if necessary – please let your Organiser know if you are interested.

Fundraising

We have recently received generous donations from the John James Foundation, the Clarion Futures Housing Association and AXA Simplyhealth. Also, as a result of the outstanding work of Joan Whitehead's Schools team, we have been promised two-year funding via NESTA and Bristol City Council.

Expenditure this year is going to be especially high because of plans to release a new version of our website and a new RSVP West brochure so any potential-donor suggestions you may have will be very welcome.



Season's Greetings and Happy Volunteering in 2020!

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Bristol Reading in Schools Consortium

At the end of June, a group of RSVP West reading volunteers and school organisers attended a BRISC event hosted by the University of the West of England. This was part of Bristol City Council's NESTA-funded project to increase reading in the city's schools and to celebrate the contribution made by volunteers. Several organisations in addition to RSVP were represented, including volunteers across a range of ages and backgrounds.

There were interesting talks from Councillor Anna Keen, who is Bristol City Council Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and a local primary schoolteacher (a busy lady!), and Inger Callaghan, the headteacher at Glenfrome Primary School.

They both stressed the importance of volunteers' support in schools and how much this is valued by teachers and Bristol City Council.

The talks were followed by round-table discussions in which volunteers shared experiences, good practice and their motivation for becoming reading volunteers. I was struck by the diverse strengths that people bring to the role: bubbly 'millennial' volunteers from local businesses provide role models for school pupils who are not that much younger than themselves, whilst RSVP volunteers bring a more 'mellow' and reflective approach based on a life-long love of reading, which they enjoy sharing with future generations.

RSVP West is a valued partner in BRISC and we, in turn, value the opportunity to be part of a larger and varied city-wide network of reading volunteers.



RSVP reading trainer (Angie Osmand), reading volunteer (Maria Banks) and Schools Organisers (Mina Malpass and Judy Harris) with their BRISC certificates

Angie Says 'Yes'

When Angie Osmand, our 'school reading volunteers' trainer was asked by a friend, 'Would you consider bringing your wealth of teaching experience to RSVP? Angie's immediate reply was 'Yes! The thought of a new opportunity to enthuse a whole new group of eager volunteers was an offer I could not refuse'.

It is such a pleasure to meet new volunteers and to share my teaching experience and volunteering stories. The knowledge that virtually every volunteer will go on to light up the lives of so many children,

and the fact that the children will bring such pleasure to our volunteers, is so very satisfying.

My past experience in primary schools has taught me that the ways in which children learn to read, are not 'one size fits all' and the volunteers are lucky enough



Angie in Action

to have time and patience on their side to support and encourage.

I mainly taught in primary schools in and around Bristol, and for a year in Jamaica. Volunteering after retirement in Hartcliffe for several years, gave me the opportunity to concentrate on the difficulties some children have with reading and comprehension, as well as the skills to develop practical solutions. Sharing and discussing those solutions with new, and sometimes more experienced volunteers is a delight in every training session.

Virtual Dementia Tour for our volunteers

This turned out to be everything it was cracked up to be and more; extraordinary, challenging, fascinating and very engaging. It had been described as the best possible training for volunteers and staff working with people with dementia, even life changing. It certainly lived up to that reputation.

One of the challenges for our volunteer lay assessors working with Bristol City Council is trying to understand if care services meet the needs of older people including those living with dementia. So, we booked the mobile unit from Training2Care to deliver the 'tour'.

Almost everyone who attended thought it was



just great; it exceeded their expectations. During the course of the event we were taken into the mobile unit and with certain aids, experienced a simulation of life as a person living with dementia. I found myself doing things and behaving in a way I have seen in people with dementia. It was both scary and very informative. We all reacted differently to the experience,

which really demonstrated to us all that everyone with dementia is different.

The feedback session with the dynamic Sooby running it, used our experience in the mobile unit to help us explore why people with dementia behave and react in the way they do, and how our behaviour towards them can help and hinder them; a real eye opener.

We will all see dementia in a completely different light and perhaps have more understanding and empathy towards people living with dementia in the future. What an amazing, brilliant day.

Ken Dolbear
RSVP Organiser
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RSVP Surgery Projects: Making new friends

RSVP West Volunteer Organisers assist GP Surgeries in encouraging some of their (over 50 years old) patients to get to know and support other, usually lonely or isolated patients. Support can range from offering companionship, going for walks, driving them to their surgery appointments, taking them for a drive in the countryside or any other social activities. Many lasting friendships – valued by the volunteers as much as the recipients – have been forged and appreciated also by families who cannot visit their relatives as often as they would like to.

Currently, we have 6 Volunteer Organisers supporting about 28 surgeries between them. We are constantly expanding into new surgeries and are always looking for more volunteers, especially in North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and B&NES but also in Bristol.

Staying connected and interested in others and offering some time and compassion to elderly or housebound people all contributes to ageing actively and healthily.

All our volunteers are DBS checked and receive training before taking up their role.

They also become part of an enthusiastic team and are much appreciated members of their surgery.

If you are interested in meeting other patients of your surgery or in helping us to get new surgeries on board, or if you would just like some more information, please mail us at: surgeries@rsvp-west.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.



Sylvia Carpenter
Regional
Surgery Schemes
Organiser

Congratulations

to all those who have completed ten years as a volunteer with RSVP West. Your hard work over all this time is much appreciated and we could not exist without you.....

Ken Dolbear

Barry Knight

Nicholas Choremi

Patricia Thomas

Wendy Bennett

Sheila Vickers

Mildred Miller

Barbara Cook

Ann Mulholland

Mina Tanner

Nina Craven-Francis

Anthea Craddock

Barbara Calvert

Jeanne Wood

Chris Clarke

Irene Thresher

Adrian Sisman

Mary Humphrys-Smith

Phyllis Forster

From now on we will include these anniversaries in each newsletter.

Stop press: Stop press: Stop press: Stop press: Stop press:

We are looking for drivers who would be prepared to deliver the newsletter to libraries, GP surgeries, hospitals etc in Bristol and the surrounding area. It is published twice a year and we would be very grateful for help in distributing it to any part of the area. If you are interested please contact Bob Maggs: office@rsvp-west.org.uk

Contacts for RSVP West projects

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VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme) is a part of Volunteering Matters. Charity number 291222.

RSVP West is on Twitter

