March is the season for READING!

On March 2, The National Education Association sponsors Read Across America, an annual reading motivation and awareness program that calls for every child in every community to celebrate reading on or around the birthday of Dr. Seuss.

For our inner child, this RSVP Newsletter features a couple readings by RSVP volunteers. One non-fiction, about living during the COVID-19 pandemic. Another story/fable by RSVP volunteer and member of a local writing group, The Grey Hawks.

Prepare: RSVP Virtual Storytime on YouTube!

Last March, 2020, volunteer programming at schools stopped due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and many RSVP volunteers lost their connections with the students. Unfortunately, we still cannot connect in person at the schools, but let’s not let this stop us from reading to our young buddies.


Sign-up to check out a pre-selected book & choose to record on your own smart phone/ipad or via Zoom with Erin.

But I’ve never done this before!

Yes, and it will put you in the position of a young learner again and take you on a new adventure! Plus, help will be provided along the way.

How will students view videos? Links will be provided for teachers to distribute to students.

OK, I’m interested, how do I learn more?

Email: erin.balvanz@unitedwayjwc.org or call Erin at 319-338-7823*303
ENGAGE: Current Volunteer Opportunities with 55+RSVP Stations

AmeriCorps - Getting Things Done for America, since 1994

Date: March 10, Time: 1pm  
Zoom Link: https://zoom.us/j/94717284987?pwd=dmtFr310QytIY0VKWhK01TcV5QT09  
Meeting ID: 947 1728 4987 Passcode: 540233

Join us as we celebrate AmeriCorps Week, March 7-13, with a presentation featuring the local 55+RSVP Program, a program of AmeriCorps Seniors. Tell your friends to join the gathering to learn how they can have fun through volunteering with RSVP.

- **Table to Table**—Route Volunteer
- **TRAIL of Johnson County**—Volunteer Opportunities in Transportation, Home Services, Medical Advocacy, Wellness Callers, Programming, and as a Board or Committee Member
- **Miracles in Motion**—Help with horse related chores as a volunteer barn assistant.
- **Jo Co Historical Society**—The Secrest 1883 Octagonal Barn is rich in history with drawings and photographs and needs a volunteer who is interested in helping develop a website for this historic attraction.
- **Heritage Area Agency on Aging**—Volunteer with one or both groups:  
  Task Force on Aging—participate in discussions with local residents and community providers to create awareness of older adult issues. Community Focus Groups—give input on gaps and strategies to improve services to older adults. Issues include: elder rights, caregiver support, transportation, and many more.
- **HACAP**—Mercer Park Mobile Food Panty—hand out food on location to families and children in need and assist with unloading the pantry truck as needed.
- **Horizons Meals on Wheels**—Volunteer Driver
- **Crowded Closet**—Support local and global relief, development & peace projects by assisting with thrift shop operations as a Retail or Warehouse Volunteer.
- **Coralville Community Food Pantry**—Food Pantry or Delivery Volunteer
- **CommUnity Crisis Services and Food Bank**—Food Pantry Volunteer

Interested in volunteer opportunities?  
contact: RSVP Director Erin Balvanz  
erin.balvanz@unitedwayjwc.org  
319-338-7823*303
Reflection: Life In the COVID-19 Pandemic

Written by 55+RSVP Volunteer Lucy Murphy

Living through a Pandemic was certainly not in the plan when I moved from Missouri to this interesting college town in Iowa.

Knowing only my daughter and her family here in the Iowa City-Coralville metropolis, I had to find a lifestyle. Melrose Meadows was our choice for our new life. My husband and my dog were with me; I am thankful neither has had to deal with the challenges of COVID-19.

Before moving to Iowa, I was very active in RSVP in a small town in Missouri, (my best friend was the RSVP director, so of course I was certain to be involved). I reached out to RSVP in Johnson County soon after our arrival. Almost immediately I found myself volunteering with nursing students at the University. What a joy! Horn School Pen Pal program was a new program that really clicked for me. Monthly letter writing with second graders, along with visits to their classroom, was just great. It was easy to recruit friends to join Pen Pals. After that, volunteering with medical students became a favorite event. Yes, RSVP in Johnson County welcomed me and gave me purpose.

Under the restrictions of COVID, life is very different. Physically I cannot help with many opportunities with RSVP. Volunteer responsibilities here at Melrose Meadows are curtailed as we are so very, very careful to follow the protocols for safe living.

When 55+RSVP Director offered the MLK Day project of Fleece Tie-In blankets, I knew that our Pins and Needles group would be happy to participate. We did it—with arthritic fingers that were slower to cut and careful attention to matching strips, we worked at a safe distance while wearing masks.

Perhaps a new project will be presented for our assistance. We hope so. Staying involved, new challenges and good time spent with friends are all benefits of RSVP.

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COVID-19 VACCINE IN JOHNSON COUNTY

Join United Way of Johnson & Washington Counties as we present a panel discussion on the COVID-19 vaccination hosted by Barb Thomas, UI Tippie College of Business, Executive Director of Communication, Alumni and External Relations. This event is open to the public, designed as an informational session for those who have questions about the current status of the COVID-19 vaccination in our community. The event is FREE to attend, however, registration before the event is required to receive your meeting link. Please post questions in advance - Questions will be addressed pending time restraints and no questions will be taken during the call.

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021 11 AM—12 PM
FREE REGISTRATION & QUESTION SUBMISSION:
UnitedWayJWC.org/form/covid-19-panel-discussion
Event Pre-Registration is Required
INSPIRATION—A Fable: The Boy The Goat And The Boat

The Boy The Goat And The Boat --by Deanna Wortman

The boat belonged to the goat.

The boy found the boat one sunny day. The boy was surprised and delighted to find the little, red sailboat with the bright white sail floating in the pond. He stopped to play with it. He took off his shoes and rolled up his pants and waded out into the pond. He made waves with his hands and sent the boat sailing across the pond again and again. He was happy playing with the little boat.

He did not notice the goat.

On the same morning, after a breakfast of grass and flowers the goat walked down to the pond to play with his boat. As he came to the top of the hill he saw the boy in the water. As he came down the hill he saw that the boy was playing with his boat in the water. The goat stopped at the edge of the pond. He looked at the boy and the boat. Being a goat he lowered his head and shouted, "Hey! You! That's my boat!"

The boy was startled. He hadn't heard the goat coming and, anyway, a goat had never spoken to him before. The boy stopped making waves with his hands.

The goat stamped his hoof and shook his head. His ears and his beard flopped from side to side. He snorted.

"Leave my boat alone!" He shouted louder and stamped his hoof harder.
The boy misunderstood the goat's gestures and the sound of his voice and his intention. The boy fled the pond and took refuge in a nearby tree, climbing onto a branch that reached out over the pond. He was quite sure that goats could not climb trees so he felt relatively safe.

He was not as knowledgeable about trees, however. The tree was old and tired. It had been standing by the pond holding its branch out over the water for 150 years. It had supported birds and squirrels and occasionally a coon or a possum but never a boy. The boy's weight was too much and with a sigh the tree let go of the branch.

The boy and the branch dropped straight down into the pond, creating a tsunami that capsized the boat, dunked the boy, and soaked the goat.

"And I thought that I was good at leaping and jumping! Was your mother a goat perhaps? Let's be friends!"

The boy was amazed. He had never descended so rapidly into water! He stood up in the middle of pond dripping wet and muddy. He grinned.

The boy and the goat became friends-for-life. They met at the pond on weekdays after school and on weekends after lunch. On sunny days they sailed the boat. On gray days they sat under the tree and talked.

The goat was amazed. As he watched the Olympian descent of boy and branch he raised his head and flicking his tail he cheered enthusiastically.

The boy grew up and went to sea. He sent postcards to the goat from exotic, faraway places. The goat saved them. Sometimes he would take them out and sit under the tree by the pond and look at them. The goat lived a long and happy life, never going anywhere but traveling around the world.

The tree still stands beside the pond. It has grown a new branch.
CELEBRATE

Stations: 23
Volunteers: 169
Hours: 1499
*July 1 2020 - January 31, 2021

Left, ManBat, enjoys his new blanket—made by 55+RSVP volunteers during the MLK Day Service Project. —Photo by Lisa Bragg, Volunteer Coordinator, Iowa City Animal Care Center.

Right, Sloane Terrill, VISTA Volunteer Coordinator of Shelter House, holds up one of 20 fleece blankets made by 55+RSVP volunteers during the MLK Day Service Project. —Photo courtesy of Shelter House.

Are you a 55+ RSVP Volunteer with something to share? We want to hear from you! Send your poems, stories, photos, etc. to 55+ RSVP Director: erin.balvanz@unitedwayjwc.org