



United Way of Johnson &  
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**AmeriCorps**  
Seniors

# 55+ RSVP Newsletter

## Engaging Volunteers 55+ in Johnson County, IA

July 2021

### 55+ RSVP Good-byes and Transitions



Erin Balvanz, 55+ RSVP Director, joins the Sound of Music's Von Trapp family in wishing you a fond adieu.

I hate to go, I cannot tell a lie. Yet, as life will do, I'm being pulled in a new direction and I'm off to use my mental health skills in a school-based program. I have established some lovely connections with many 55+ RSVP volunteers, station coordinators, and other community members. My last day with 55+ RSVP is July 16th. Before I go, I wish to lend a fond, adieu to you, and you, and you!

Our 55+ RSVP program is also going through some restructuring with the addition of Washington County to our grant. Stay tuned for more information on the new 55+RSVP contact for Johnson County. In the meantime, for all things related to 55+ RSVP, you may contact Patti Fields, VP of Community Impact and Engagement, [patti.fields@unitedwayjwc.org](mailto:patti.fields@unitedwayjwc.org).

Thank you all for making the 55+ RSVP magic happen!

## ENGAGE: Station Spotlight—Miracles in Motion



33 years ago a man named Vern Upmier, lover and keeper of horses, noticed a child near his farm who had multiple sclerosis. Vern went to the child's mother and asked if she would be willing to put her daughter on one of Vern's horses. The mother agreed, the child loved it, and that was the beginning of Miracles in Motion.

Located near Swisher, services have grown over 33 years and include adaptive therapeutic riding and hippotherapy for children with disabilities. They also have grant based programs to service Veterans through an equine therapy program.

If you are looking for a little tranquility in your life, I'd suggest volunteering with Miracles in Motion. They could use volunteer help as a side-walker for their PATH program that assists children with neurological disabilities. Volunteers must pass a criminal background check and go through a training. Volunteers can also sign-up to garden or as a barn assistant and help with horse related chores. Volunteer groups are welcome to sign-up and schedule a time together to help with odds and ends around the farm.



**Miracles in Motion's Director of Operations, Deb Leichsenring, is seen above petting one of the geldings. Only geldings are used at the farm as they have a calmer demeanor.**



*Miracles in Motion*  
THERAPEUTIC EQUESTRIAN CENTER

## Engage: 55+ RSVP Volunteer Stations

- **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
- **Shelter House**— Shelter Support Volunteer
- **Ronald McDonald House Charities EIWI**— Volunteers for front desk.
- **Miracles in Motion**— see page 2.
- **Jo Co Historical Society**—The Secret 1883 Octagonal Barn is rich in history and has volunteer opportunities in a wide variety of restoration tasks.



**A little Horse Humor: Horse walks into a bar, bartender says, "Why the long face?"**

- **International Women's Club**— English as an added Language Teacher & Childcare Helper
- **Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity**— Construction Volunteer or ReStore Volunteer
- **Iowa City Free Medical/Dental Clinic** - Volunteer Spanish Interpreters as well as volunteers trained in phlebotomy for the lab and PharmD or Pharm Tech volunteers for the dispensary.
- **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 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
- **Aging Services/Pathways**— Adult Day Health Volunteer or Chore Volunteer
- **ArtiFactory**—volunteers needed for administrative work, programming and special events

**To learn more or sign-up for any volunteer opportunity,  
contact: Patti Fields, VP of Community Impact & Engagement  
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## CELEBRATE – 55+ RSVP in pictures



Clockwise from top left: Residents of Oaknoll & 55+ RSVP Volunteers have fun with masks. Community Strategies Coordinator, Wendy Nolan, models the new RSVP t-shirt.

55+ RSVP is sponsored by



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**55+ RSVP Stations: 27**  
**55+ RSVP Volunteers: 174**  
**Total Hours: 2756**

\*July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

