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Volunteers are the Heart of the Community**

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Annual

Report
10th
anniversary
2009



Volunteer Center
of Racine County

Volunteers are the Heart of the Community

Ten Years of Caring

As we reflect back on the Volunteer Center of Racine County's history, we have envisioned the future through the partnerships we have developed and a strategic planning process. In the year 2000, Michelle Olley, O.P., was the Executive Director of the former Center for Community Concerns, which then birthed the Volunteer Center. The need then, as it is today, is for a greater call to action to volunteerism. Research shows that communities with Volunteer Centers achieve a higher volunteerism rate, more effective resolution of community needs, and a greater sense of individual self-esteem and fulfillment.

Today, ten years later, we see that reality. The Volunteer Center of Racine County assists to fully maximize the gifts of our citizenry, benefiting the many individuals and organizations in need, as well as the individuals who find the joy that comes to those who give to a cause greater than themselves.

We post our over 400 volunteer opportunities on our website and provide hard copies at the Volunteer Center, as well as in many school settings. Our staff is always available to assist individual volunteers to select opportunities that fit both their time and talents. This personal touch is our signature mark! We collaborate directly with about 200 agencies by posting their opportunities through the generosity of the *Journal Times* each Saturday.

In 2009, the Volunteer Center touched 31,271 lives through volunteer service! We are most grateful to all our volunteers and donors for their generosity of time, talents and money. No gift is ever too small, whether it is an in-kind donation from our Wish List of office supplies or equipment that helps provide needed essentials and grant match, to corporate and individual sponsors.

We are so appreciative for the past ten years of caring, and look forward to continued growth. We are grateful for the time and skills of each volunteer and their willingness to share them with our community.

The Volunteer Center continues to be a community leader, a catalyst in the development of community responses to needs, a connector between people and community resources, and an advocate and support for programs that promote the value of volunteerism. In order to continue to provide another 10 years of caring, we are depending upon the generosity of Racine County to keep on sharing their time, talents and treasures. We are most grateful to be a part of the Racine community and look forward to the next ten years of caring!

Michelle Olley, O.P., President
Marilynn Pelky, Executive Director

Youth Volunteers

The Volunteer Center of Racine County has had a successful year in part due to 3,702 youth volunteers. The young people have come together in many different ways in order to help those around them.

Over the past year, the Volunteer Center programs have promoted leadership and community support. The Youth Leadership Program was established to help recruit young people who are interested in becoming active volunteers in their community. They were encouraged to learn valuable leadership skills, meet new friends, build self confidence, while developing ownership in their community.

In addition, youth service-learning camps were held and included six weeks of volunteering activities for the young people ages 11-18. Each week was at a different location needing service. Programming was held at:

- Dr. Martin Luther King Community Center, where they completed a liter walk, learned team building skills and learned about social injustice.*
- Eco-Justice Center, where they walked alpacas and leaned sustainability.*
- Racine County Food bank where they sorted food, assisted in the food pantry and learned to budget money.*
- Lincoln Lutheran Adult Day Care Facility where young people helped elderly people.*
- Community policing house camp, where participants learned about safety, gang resistance and drug resistance.*
- Lakeside Curative, where youth learned to assist people with varied abilities and disabilities*

Earth Day had a great deal of youth support. The Environmental Education Community Center had "adopt a beach" training for students. Many young people participated in invasive species removal at a number of Racine county parks while others planted trees, mulched flower beds and cleaned facilities. "Make a Difference Day" provided youth involvement in trash pick up, landscaping, and gardening work. Other youth volunteers lent a hand at the reuse-a-shoe drive, and sock drive for the homeless. On "Martin Luther King Day, youth provided presentations, poems, and dance to help promote racial equality.

RSVP

RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program) is America's largest volunteer network for people age 55 and over with nearly 500,000 members across the nation.

RSVP members are encouraged to use their talents, time, and life experiences to make a difference in everything from tackling tough community issues to helping the neighbor next door.

Commitment in Racine County is tangible and far reaching. 558 volunteers have recorded volunteer placements with various groups and organizations.

For 2009:

- 330 RSVP members logged at least one hour of volunteer service
- Total hours served: 27,055
- Groups and agencies served: 79
- 44% are in the 64-74 age group
- 94% serve up to 4 hours per week
- Greatest number of hours served by one volunteer: 1,692

There are many program areas in which RSVP volunteers play important roles.

- Senior Safety and Well Being – SafeAssured ID, TRIAD, Senior Companion Program
- Emergency and Disaster Preparedness – VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters), CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training, ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Services)
- Hunger Issues – Meals on Wheels, Food Bank, Food Pantries, Empty Bowls, food drives
- Education – "RSVP Mentoring," tutoring, "Generations on Line" (introductory computer classes for seniors)

95% of surveyed agencies AGREE that participation by RSVP member volunteers helps the organization meet its mission objective and goals.

Volunteer Solutions

The Volunteer Center of Racine County updated and improved its website. One of the biggest and best new features is our interactive website that connects volunteers with over 400 regular volunteer opportunities.

We provide listings of more than 200 nonprofit agencies and groups in Racine County, and work diligently to keep them up-to-date and accurate. Our website also includes a wide list of upcoming events, one-time events and special or urgent requests from a variety of agencies in the area.

Southeast Wisconsin Citizen Corps

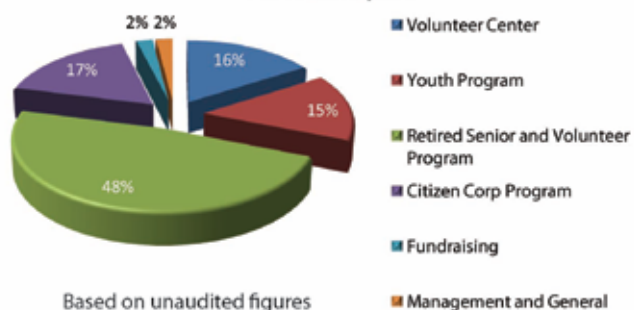
The Southeast Wisconsin Citizens Corps was established at the Volunteer Center in 2008. The Community Energy Response Team (CERT) Program educates people about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization and disaster medical operations. Using their training, CERT members can assist in their neighborhoods or workplaces following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help.

In 2009 SWCC:

- Hosted six classes and trained over 125 new CERT volunteers
- Developed a database of more than 400 nonprofit agencies in Racine, Kenosha, and Walworth Counties
- Hosted two safety fairs, one in Racine and one in Kenosha
- Participated in two county fairs
- Had 26 speaking engagements and presentations on CERT
- Attended training at the National Citizen Corp Conference in Washington, DC and the State VOAD Conference at Fort McCoy
- Finished three Incident Command System (ICS) courses
- Created more than 20 volunteer opportunities for CERTs in the community.

People who have gone through the CERT training have a better understanding of potential threats to their homes, workplaces and communities and can take the proper steps to lessen the effects of these hazards.

**Volunteer Center of Racine County Programs and Services
Financial Report**



Celebrating 10 years of Caring & Commitment to the Community