

RSVP

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program
of Berks, Pike & Wayne Counties

Spring 2024

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Berks, Pike & Wayne Reaching Out to the Communities



In a heartwarming display of community care, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Berks, Pike & Wayne Counties donated 150 winter hats to Mary's Shelter in Reading, Pennsylvania, on December 5, 2023. The handmade hats crafted by our Program Assistant, Pam Gerlach not only provide warmth during the chilly months but also carry the personal touch of someone dedicated to making a positive impact. The RSVP program, known for its commitment to engaging seniors in meaningful volunteer opportunities,

extends its reach beyond its primary mission, showcasing compassion and channeling creativity into a meaningful cause.

The handmade winter hats serve as more than protective gear against the cold; they represent a connection between organizations and a testament to the power of giving back. As the shelter receives these thoughtful donations, it becomes a hub for kindness and solidarity, reminding us all that even the smallest gestures can make a significant difference in the lives of those facing challenges. This collaborative effort between Diakon Community Services AmeriCorps RSVP and Mary's Shelter exemplifies the spirit of community support, creating a warmer and more connected environment for those in need during the winter season.



From left to right: Staff member of Mary's Shelter, Volunteer Coordinator of Mary's Shelter Sue Shultz, RSVP Administrative Assistant Pam Gerlach and RSVP Director Mary Grace Pedroso

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Director's Note

Dear all,

As we welcome the refreshing ambience of spring, I am filled with appreciation for each one of you and the great contributions you make to our communities. Your dedication and passion continue to bring success to our program and the organizations we serve.

Spring is a season of restoration, renewal and hope. It is all about new beginnings and transformation that reminds us that change is possible and that there's always room for growth. As we navigate into this lively season and shed our winter blues, let us carry with us the spirit of partnership, perseverance and bliss that defines our acts of service.

In this Director's Note, I would like to share some exciting activities for everyone to enjoy and stay active during this lovely time of the year. Let's embrace the fresh energy that comes with springtime!



1. **Gardening:** Spring is the perfect time to indulge in the joys of gardening. Cultivate your gardens. Plant flowers and your favorite herbs.
2. **Outdoor Adventures:** Let's enjoy the warmer weather by planning outdoor excursions such as nature walks, picnics or even birdwatching sessions. These activities not only promote physical health but also offer rejuvenation for the mind and soul.
3. **Creative Workshops:** Unleash your creativity by joining spring-themed workshops in your facilities or communities.
4. **Community Outreach:** Let's continue making a difference in the lives of others by participating in community service projects. Whether it's assisting local schools, organizing food drives or supporting environmental initiatives our collective efforts can create positive change.
5. **Health and Wellness:** Prioritize self-care this season by participating in wellness activities such as yoga, meditation or gentle exercise classes. Nurturing your well-being is essential for maintaining vitality and resilience.
6. **Educational Opportunities:** Expand your knowledge and interests through educational seminars, or book clubs focusing on topics relevant to springtime themes, such as sustainability, gardening tips or outdoor safety.
7. **Volunteer Recognition Luncheon:** We will be hosting volunteer recognition events for Berks, Pike & Wayne Counties volunteers to express our gratitude for your invaluable contributions. Please see invitations for details. Join us for a day of recognition, reflection and camaraderie.

However, as we indulge in these activities, safety remains our top priority. Please remember to stay hydrated, apply sunscreen and dress appropriately for the weather. Additionally, we encourage you to be mindful of your surroundings and practice safety precautions.

Whether it's gardening, picnicking or simply basking in the warmth of the sun, let's make the most of this season while prioritizing our well-being. Together, we can create memorable moments and cherish the joys of spring in a safe and responsible manner.

All the best,

Mary Grace Deloso-Pedroso

Director RSVP of Berks, Pike & Wayne Counties

Spring Word Search



Spring Words Word Search Puzzle



y d d l b d a g n f g n s i o f
u d t n m r y r h l b r f v j l
l p a j i a i e h s n e a m k o
b a i f f x y e f u n y g s q w
u z d c f u a n y s z n r r s e
g o s y n o l b l o s s o m a r
s r s o b i d e n y i i w v c s
s o x h r u c i n y m n t l d x
x b z p o p g i l p q a h c t b
q i a a u w a n e b q e r c h s
z n r t n r e n j u o i p c a r
b e e s q d u r n d i i k z h i
n t x c r j v z s s l g m u d r
n m j a v a x v c u x u j a o i
n n g j b s f m t m d u d b y s
o w h b u l b s c r o c u s h y

FIND THESE SPRING WORDS

daffodil

garden

blossom

bees

June

robin

May

March

showers

flowers

growth

April

green

bulbs

buds

ladybug

crocus

iris

grass

rainy

mud

bugs

tulip

picnic



The words may be hidden vertically, horizontally or diagonally.

Health Update

Clostridioides difficile or C. difficile

What is C. diff?

C. diff (also known as Clostridioides difficile or C. difficile) is a germ (bacterium) that causes diarrhea and colitis (an inflammation of the colon). It's estimated to cause almost half a million infections in the United States each year. About 1 in 6 patients who get C. diff will get it again in the subsequent 2-8 weeks.



- If the test is positive, you'll take a specific antibiotic (e.g. vancomycin or fidaxomicin) for at least 10 days. If you were already taking an antibiotic for another infection, your healthcare professional might ask you to stop taking it if they think it's safe to do so.
- Your healthcare team might decide to admit you to the hospital, in which case they will use certain precautions, such as wearing gowns and gloves, to prevent the spread of C. diff to themselves and to other patients.

Risk Factors for C. diff

C. diff can affect anyone. Most cases of C. diff occur when you've been taking antibiotics or not long after you've finished taking antibiotics.

There are other risk factors:

- Being 65 or older
- Recent stay at a hospital or nursing home
- A weakened immune system, such as people with HIV/AIDS, cancer, or organ transplant patients taking immunosuppressive drugs
- Previous infection with C. diff or known exposure to the germs

What if I have symptoms?

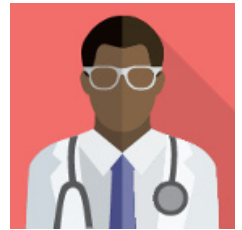
If you have been taking antibiotics recently and have symptoms of C. diff, you should see a healthcare professional.



- Developing diarrhea is fairly common while on, or after taking, antibiotics, but in only a few cases will that diarrhea be caused by C. diff. If your diarrhea is severe, do not delay getting medical care.
- Your healthcare professional will review your symptoms and order a lab test of a stool (poop) sample.

Is C. diff contagious?

Yes. To keep from spreading C. diff to others:

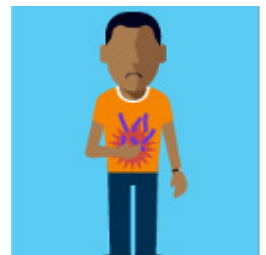
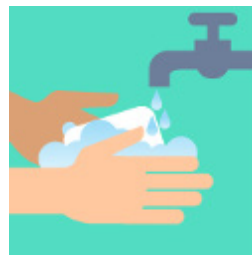


- Wash hands with soap and water every time you use the bathroom and always before you eat.
- Try to use a separate bathroom if you have diarrhea.
- Take showers and wash with soap.

Can I get C. diff again?

Some people get C. diff over and over again.

- One in 6 people who've had C. diff will get it again in the subsequent 2-8 weeks.
- If you start having symptoms again, seek medical care.



Recipe Corner

Filipino Chicken Adobo

Ingredients:

1.5 lbs chicken	½ tsp whole black peppercorns
4 tbsps soy sauce	5-10 pcs bay leaves
5 tbsps brown sugar	1 cube chicken bouillon
3 tbsps white vinegar	2 tbsps cooking oil for sauteing (olive oil maybe used)
5 cloves garlic	¼ cup water (optional)
1 medium size onion	



Directions:

Sautee garlic and onions until aromatic. Add chicken and let in brown. Add soy sauce, brown sugar, vinegar, whole black peppercorns and bay leaves. Add water (if you like more sauce). Slow cook until chicken is tender and sauce is thick.

Recipe by: **Mary Grace Doloso-Pedroso, RSVP Director**

Happy Birthday

March

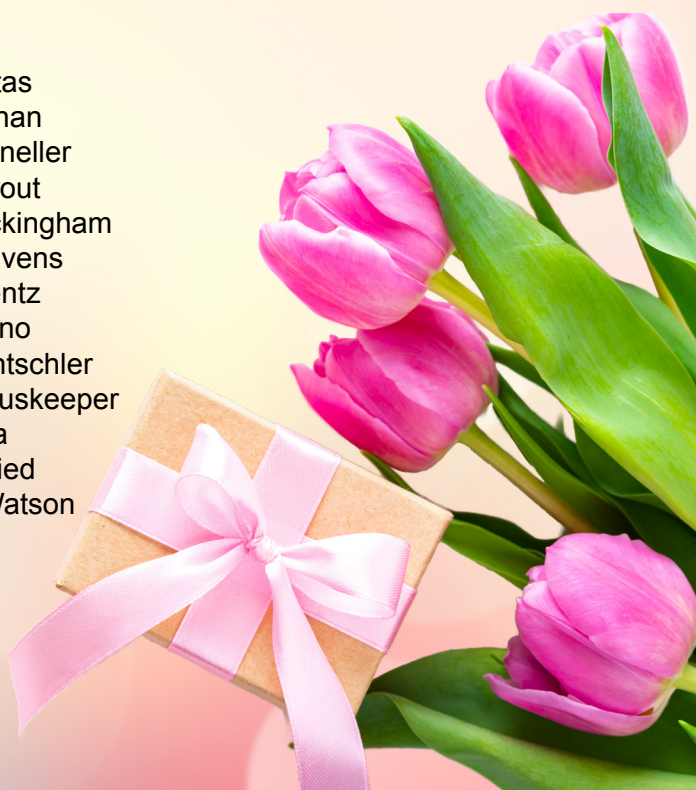
Janet Mollick
Patty Villani
Nancy Reitsma
Jim Pierce
Martha Weida
Kathy Young
Nancy Bialkowski
Robert Lindars
Lynn Potter
Janet Blankenbiller
Pat Crane
Frances Kingsley
Barbara Sanders
Tina Stein
Judith Wells
Graziella Santoro
Frances Drake
Susan Rees-Kirchner
Patrick McCarthy
Brian Woods

April

Carlene Guzzo
James P Cordner
Michael Jagacki
Kelly Locklin
Fred Hannel
Diana Torre
Loise M. Johnson
Sarah Pinks
James Robertson
Sondra Rosenthal
Rose Capitelli
Sandra Hoffman
Joseph Scibetta
Wilsa Garbe
Mary Kay Tosi
Stanley Whittaker
Keith Wolf
Mary Breitenbach
Kathy Mitchell
Sharyl Kreiter

May

Donna Kurtas
Kathy Meehan
Jeffrey Schneller
James F Trout
Larry J Buckingham
Dennis Leavens
Colleen Mentz
Anne Budano
Gladys Rentschler
Pamela Houskeeper
Bill Reitsma
Maryann Nied
Ronald J Watson



St. Paul's Lutheran Church Volunteer Fair

(Martin Luther King Jr. Day)



From left to right: RSVP Administrative Assistant Pam Gerlach and RSVP Director Mary Grace Pedroso



RSVP Volunteer James Trout

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, RSVP of Berks, Pike & Wayne Counties made a significant impact by participating in St. Paul's Lutheran Church Volunteer Fair. This event not only honored Dr. King's legacy but also exemplified the spirit of community service and unity. Through their presence, RSVP demonstrated their commitment to fostering positive change and building a stronger, more inclusive society. RSVP staff engaged with attendees, showcasing various opportunities for service and empowering individuals to make a difference in their community. By coming together on this meaningful day, both RSVP and St. Paul's Lutheran Church reaffirmed the importance of collective action in advancing Dr. King's dream of equality and justice for all.

Cherry Blossoms Facts

- 🌸 *Cherry blossoms symbolize renewal.*
- 🌸 *The flower petals are edible.*
- 🌸 *Cherry trees have a short lifespan.*
- 🌸 *400 cherry trees are individually named in Amsterdam.*
- 🌸 *Cherry blossom ice cream is a real thing.*
- 🌸 *Peak bloom is around April 4 in Washington, DC.*

SOURCE:

[HTTPS://WWW.COUNTRYLIVING.COM/GARDENING/G3168/CHERRY-BLOSSOMS-FACTS/](https://www.countryliving.com/gardening/G3168/CHERRY-BLOSSOMS-FACTS/)

Volunteer Spotlight

Bill Reitsma



I was asked to share my experience as a volunteer with Diakon. I am retired, live in Lackawaxen and have been a volunteer for over five years. There is a book that I would recommend titled, "Being Mortal" by Atul Gawande, MD. It addresses the transitions we all have to make as we age to stay healthy and happy. Two of those critical transitions are: one, to remain socially engaged and two, to be a participant in something that gives meaning to your life. I mention this because volunteering has provided avenues for both of those transitions for me. As a volunteer I have several roles that I find both engaging and meaningful. The first role is as a "meals on wheels" delivery person. In that role, I have established many relationships that have lasted for years. Those relationships are with both those who share in providing this service and with those who receive the meals. Every time my wife and I finish our route we comment to each other on how blessed we feel and how the clients have become our friends.

The other volunteer role that I have is as a facilitator for two different support groups. The Caregiver Support group is focused on supporting those who are caring for loved ones in their home who are ill and/or housebound. The Bereavement Group is for those who have experienced the loss of a loved one. In both of these groups, I have found a community of people who care for each other, offer suggestions from their experience and have a listening ear. I feel and sense genuine empathy which I hope translates into strength and hope for those who attend. I am sure that others in the groups sense that as well. In fact, at the last meeting one participant said, "It was the first time I laughed in months." Many in these groups have formed friendships and meet outside of the group to continue to build relationships. Volunteering has brought me joy, meaning, purpose and new friends. All things that allow me to make healthy transitions in my life as I age. I find providing service to others a very rich activity that is mutually beneficial.

Advisory Council Member Feature

Kathy Mitchell

If that name sounds familiar, it is because Kathy is our former RSVP Director. Actually, she was the first one when Diakon was awarded the AmeriCorps grant for Berks, Pike and Wayne Counties in 2017.

Her eclectic background and work experience prepared her for that position. With a degree in education and early childhood development, (Bloomsburg and Marywood) she began her career in early childhood education, then pivoted to adult education as a Staff Development and Training Specialist. During that time, she sat on the teacher education board of LCCC Lehigh Carbon Community College and assisted many staff in achieving their degree and certification goals.

Kathy dabbled in marketing research, spent several years in marketing and sales for airport advertising, culminating in the honor of serving as director for AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP of Berks, Pike and Wayne Counties with Diakon.

She will tell you that her greatest joy and accomplishment was raising her three daughters single handedly, hence, not much scares her these days. She delights in spending time with her family and six grandsons. She is a Senior CHAT volunteer and also enjoys reading, walking, dancing and yoga.





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