



RSVP Bone Builders News

Maryesa White, RSVP Bone Builders Director

Bone Builders Turns 25!



RSVP Bone Builders has reached an exciting milestone: in July 2026, the program celebrated 25 years of service. This achievement reflects not only the value of Bone Builders in our communities, but also the dedication of the volunteers who make the program possible. Our volunteer instructors generously give their time to lead classes, support participants, and help create welcoming spaces for people to improve their strength, balance, physical health, mental well-being, independence, and social connection. I would like to personally thank each and every Bone Builders volunteer for your commitment and service. Your hard work has changed lives, strengthened communities, and helped our program reach this important milestone. I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish together over the next 25 years.

Please watch for upcoming trainings throughout the year, including refresher sessions and new instructor trainings. If you have questions or are interested in starting a new class, please reach out to me. I would be happy to help you get started.

Community members who are interested in joining a Bone Builders class are encouraged to call the office or visit our website for the current class list and schedule.

Phone: 802-468-7056

Website: <https://www.volunteersinvt.org/service/rsvp-bone-builders-program/>

Thank you again for all that you do!



RSVP Bone Builders strengthens community and independence: (2025-2026 Data)

This grant year, 976 individuals participated in the RSVP Bone Builders program across Rutland and Addison Counties. Now in its 25th year of operation, the program continues to grow, welcoming 115 new participants and supporting classes with the help of 244 trained instructors serving 48 classes at 44 different stations.

To better understand participants' experiences, the annual survey was shared with RSVP Bone Builders classes. A total of 616 participants completed the survey, representing 63% of all participants and an increase of 252 responses, or 41%, from last year. Survey results showed strong enthusiasm for the program: all 616 respondents said they enjoyed the social connection with their Bone Builders classmates, and all 616 also said they enjoy participating in class and becoming stronger, which helps them remain independent.

These results highlight the continued value of RSVP Bone Builders as a program that supports health, independence, and meaningful community connection for older adults in our region.



**AmeriCorps
Seniors**

AmeriCorps Seniors Federal News!

Exciting news to share! We have just received \$127,500.00 in funding from

AmeriCorps. This AmeriCorps

Seniors Grant will allow our organization to tap the power of

national service, recruit more

Volunteers over the age of 55, and

bring new solutions to build a

healthier, stronger community. Learn

more about the new funding

possibilities this funding offers by

visiting our website:

<https://www.volunteersinvt.org/>



Celebrating

— 25 YEARS —

RSVP Bone Builders



! CAUTION !

AmeriCorps Seniors Prohibited Activities: Volunteer service activities that expand or enhance the work of a non-profit or public agency are acceptable, within the limits of safety and appropriateness for the volunteer. Requests for volunteer assistance which would otherwise be performed by an employed worker, or which would supplant the hiring of or result in the displacement of employed workers or impair existing contracts for service are not acceptable; nor will volunteers engage in religious, sectarian, or political activity, instruction, or work. **Proprietary Health Care Organizations:** All such placements must limit volunteer assignments to those which provide direct and traditional assistance to patients such as: visiting, teaching, counseling, entertaining, etc. Placements must avoid other staff or clerical assignments which would accrue to the profitability of the proprietary health-care organization. **Religious Organizations:** Volunteers may be provided to churches and other religious organizations for non-sectarian service programs. They cannot be placed in religious institutions, conduct religious services, or engage in any form of proselytization. **In-Home Assignments:** Individual private homes may not be volunteer stations. In-home assignments are made only through volunteer stations. When in-home assignments are made, a letter of agreement will be signed by the parties involved. The document will authorize volunteer service in the home and identify specific volunteer activities, periods and conditions.



**AmeriCorps
Seniors**



RSVP volunteers help neighbors stay connected and independent!

During this grant year, RSVP volunteers helped 267 clients access essential transportation services, including rides to grocery stores, pharmacies, medical appointments, dental appointments, and other important destinations. For many clients, these rides made it possible to get where they needed to go in areas where public transportation is limited.

The data shows that transportation support helped 267 clients remain independent and improve their capacity for independent living. This is a meaningful outcome for the transportation programs where RSVP volunteers serve, especially in rural communities where reliable transportation can be difficult to access.

Two stations reported that 168 clients developed closer ties with more people or enjoyed the social connection with their volunteer driver. One station also reported serving 7 veteran clients. In addition, one station reported turning away only 11 ride requests throughout the entire grant year, which is less than one ride per month.

Overall, the results point to a strong and ongoing need for transportation programs in the communities RSVP serves. In rural areas of Vermont, where public transportation may be limited or unavailable, volunteer transportation helps older adults and other clients maintain independence, access essential services, and stay connected to their communities.



RSVP Postcard Program Is Back!

Our Holiday Postcard Program is starting back up, and we're looking for our wonderful returning postcard writers and new volunteers to join us! We will be starting on October 26 and postcards will need to be returned by December 11.

A simple handwritten postcard can bring a smile, brighten someone's day, and let others know they are being thought of during the holiday season. Whether you've participated before or are trying it for the first time, we'd love to have you be part of this special program.

Ready to pick up your pen and spread some holiday cheer?

Contact Johanna at 802-379-9512 or johannarsvpfgp@gmail.com to get started!

YOU'RE INVITED!

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

Volunteer RECOGNITION EVENT

OUR VOLUNTEERS
MAKE A

gourd-ly
BIG DIFFERENCE.

DATE:
NOVEMBER 9TH

TIME:
11A-1P



LOCATION:
RSVP OFFICE:
16 North Street Ext.
Rutland, VT 05701

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DEDICATION,
COMPASSION, AND THE INCREDIBLE
IMPACT YOU MAKE EVERY DAY!

MUST RSVP TO ATTEND

Limited Space!

RSVP BY
OCTOBER 28TH

☎ 802-379-9512

~ We appreciate you! ~

RSVP Operation Dolls and More Crisis Program Update:

RSVP Operation Dolls and More Crisis Program is shifting its program slightly to focus on community needs throughout the year and not just during the holiday season. If you are a program that supports children and families in crisis situations please reach out to our program coordinator Johanna to see how we can help. Phone: (802) 379-9512 or Email: johannarsvpfgp@gmail.com

We are also looking for donated items to help fill our Crisis Packages that go out the children and families in need. Please see the list below on items we are looking for. Donated items can be dropped off on Tuesdays from 10a to 11:30a at the RSVP Office.



Cleaning out?



**Operation Dolls & More Crisis/Holiday Pack Initiative
are looking for the following items:**

Coloring Books & Crayons
Small Dolls, Barbies
Small Boy Toys - hot wheel cars, trucks, space items, etc.
Hats & Mittens
Socks
Legos
Playing Cards, Word Search, Sketch Pads, Markers, Colored Pencils
Child Size Blankets (42" x 60")
Small Action Figures, Dinosaurs, Farm Animals, etc.
Fabric & Yarn



RSVP Operation Dolls and More Crisis/Holiday Pack Initiative: **Hats, Mittens, and Sock Challenge!**



RSVP OF RUTLAND AND ADDISON
COUNTIES
ARE COLLECTING HANDMADE/NEW
HATS, MITTENS/GLOVES, AND SOCKS.
FOR CRISIS PACKS FOR INDIVIDUALS OF
ALL AGES

WE WILL BE COLLECTING FROM
OCTOBER 1 - DECEMBER 1
DROP OFF AT

16 NORTH STREET EXTENSION
PLEASE PUT IN WHITE CABINET

Any Questions

Contact Johanna at 802.379.9512 or
johannarsvpfgp@gmail.com





RSVP Bone Builders News

Best wishes and happy retirement Pat!



There are many great people and innovative ideas that got their start in Vermont. Calvin Coolidge, our 30 th president, the Vermont Teddy Bear Company started from a push cart on Church Street in Burlington, Rotary International founder Paul P. Harris was raised in Vermont. John Deere was born right here in Rutland. The band Phish got it's start in Burlington as did Burton Snowboards. And of course Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream!

Another great and innovative concept that was pioneered right here in Vermont 26 years ago is the RSVP Bone Builders program. It took the vision of Nan Hart, the director of RSVP at the time, it also required a leap of faith from the organizations who offered funding to get the program off the ground and it took the generosity of individual donors and also the senior centers, churches, school libraries, town halls and even fire stations all over the state who opened their doors to give us a place to hold our classes.

But most importantly it took people willing to volunteer to become certified Bone Builders instructors because without them there would be no Bone Builders program. I am so proud of them because they play the most important part in the success of this grass roots, volunteer driven program that we can offer free of charge to anyone who wants to come get stronger and healthier.

I bet I am not alone in realizing that change of any kind is always a bit difficult. Deciding when and how to make changes in your life can be exciting and fun but can also be daunting and come with some anxiety . So I am feeling all of those emotions as I move on to retire at the end of May from my position as the Bone Builders Coordinator . I have been involved with Bone Builders since it's beginning in 2000 and I became the coordinator of the program in 2007.

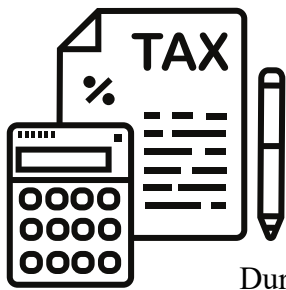
I have to say that it has been an amazing experience for the past twenty-six years to watch this program thrive and grow to become a quietly important part of all the communities that have Bone Builders classes. Whether you are a long time Bone Builders participant or instructor or you are new to the program I think you understand that Bone Builders has an impact that goes beyond reversing and preventing osteoporosis. The group becomes part of our social circle and adds another dimension of connection to the community. I think the support and camaraderie that exists in class is carried with us outside of class too.

Being part of the Bone Builders program has been one of the greatest honors of my life. I have met so many wonderful people and you have all inspired me with your dedication and enthusiasm. I am so proud of all of you in what I see you accomplish and how I see you lift up and encourage one another , not just in getting stronger physically but in meeting the many challenges that life sends our way. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention how much fun you all have and how important it is look for humor whenever we can and to keep laughing. I think you all very good at that!

I am leaving the coordination of the Bone Builders program in the very capable hands of Maryesa White. Maryesa and I share the same goals for and philosophy about how and why this program works so well. I am confident she will carry on and keep it growing and getting stronger. You can reach Maryesa at 802-468-7056.

Sincerely,

Pat



AmeriCorps
Seniors

Making an Impact:

RSVP Volunteers Support Free Tax Preparation Services:

During this grant year, 22 RSVP/AARP tax volunteers helped clients in Rutland and Addison Counties file a total of 1,766 tax returns. Their service also helped generate a combined federal and state Earned Income Credit of \$138,630 for eligible clients.

At a time when the average cost for basic professional tax preparation can range from about \$300 to \$600, these free services provided meaningful savings for local residents. Based on an estimated \$300 cost per return, RSVP/AARP tax volunteers saved clients approximately \$518,700.

The numbers also show continued growth and strong community need. This year's data included an 85% increase in the number of individuals served and a 79% increase in the dollar value of tax returns generated. The reporting period includes figures from the end of the previous tax season, April 1–15, 2025 (due to our federal grant year); future reports will include full end-of-season data for April 1, 2026, through March 31, 2027. Overall, the results show that free tax preparation remains an essential service for many individuals and families in Rutland and Addison Counties, helping clients keep more of their income while accessing the credits and refunds they are eligible to receive.

Crisis/Holiday Pack Initiative:

RSVP Operation Dolls and More supports children and families in times of need!

RSVP Operation Dolls and More continues to provide meaningful support to children, families, and individuals across Rutland and Addison Counties. The program marked 28 years since it began, with 2025 representing the 26th year of holiday crisis distribution. During the holiday distribution, the program provided approximately 10,760 items, which were used to create about 2,152 holiday crisis packages. These packages were distributed through 27 partner stations and reached approximately 1,883 children throughout the two-county region.

The program's year-round crisis supports also continued to grow. Now in its 7th year of expanded crisis response, RSVP Operation Dolls and More provided approximately 925 crisis packages to 4 agencies, serving about 500 youth and adults experiencing crisis situations in Rutland and Addison Counties.

Partner feedback also showed the program's broader impact. Four stations provided data for the independent living survey and reported that 546 individuals and families were able to remain independent or feel more connected to their community through the year-round and holiday crisis programs. Three stations also reported serving 30 veterans or veteran families.

Overall, RSVP Operation Dolls and More/Crisis remain an important community resource, offering practical help, comfort, and connection to neighbors facing crisis situations throughout the year and during the holiday season.



Rutland & Addison Counties Volunteer Opportunities



- **AARP Tax Assistant Program (Rutland & Addison Counties):** AARP Tax Preparers to help prepare taxes and AARP Facilitator who helps fill out intake forms
- **ARC:** Assist with Projects
- **Brandon Senior Center:** Meal Help – Mon & Wed 9am-12pm, Thurs & Fri – 12pm-3pm
- **Bulk Mailers (Rutland & Addison Counties):** Helping nonprofit agencies with bulk mailing - we call you when we receive a request to see if you are available to help
- **Castleton Community Center:** Senior Meal Volunteers, Knitters, Front Desk/Receptionist
- **Chaffee Art Center:** Gallery Sitting, Art Class Assistant, Volunteer Outreach, General Help on Saturdays from 10am-2pm and Art in the Park Volunteers
- **Chittenden Public Library:** Help Shelve Books and process new books and other desk related tasks
- **RSVP Operation Dolls & More Crisis/Holiday Pack Initiative:** Looking for volunteers for a variety of different opportunities - consider joining and helping to serve children/families in need in our community
- **Paramount Theatre:** Ushers
- **Pittsford Food Shelf:** Stock shelves, sign people in and help new people sign up
- **RSVP Postcard Program (Rutland and Addison Counties):** Write postcards for Military Personnel and anyone isolated from the community
- **Rutland Regional Medical Center:** Various Opportunities throughout the hospital
- **Rutland Community Cupboard:** Volunteers to help 1-2 hours before opening
- **Slate Valley Cares:** Food Shelf (hours are flexible)
- **Trio Meals on Wheels:** Packing Containers/Bags 7am-12pm, Delivering Meals to Sites or Home Deliver to Clients – 10am-2pm - mileage reimbursement provided for deliveries
- **Vermont Association of the Blind & Visually Impaired:** Drivers Needed - mileage reimbursement provided
- **Wonderfeet Kids Museum:** Variety of Opportunities
- **Young at Heart Senior Center:** Prepare and distribute Meals on Wheels, Organize and operate the Thrift Store
- **Age Well:** Delivering Meals on Wheels Mon–Fri 8am-4pm
- **American Red Cross (Rutland & Addison Counties):** Volunteers to help with Blood Drives
- **HOPE:** Food Shelf Help – Flexible Hours
- **Homeward Bound:** Dog walking volunteers, dog fosters, rabbit socialization volunteers—volunteers are asked to make a commitment of 6 months to their volunteer service
- **Peaceful Packs Blanket Project/Warm Hearts Warm Hands has incorporated with RSVP Operation Dolls & More Crisis/Holiday Pack Initiative:** Volunteers to knit, crochet, sew blankets, hats and mittens
- **Tri-Valley Transit Dial-A-Ride Program Drivers:** Volunteer Drivers Needed - mileage reimbursement provided

This is only a brief list of current volunteer opportunities. If you do not see an opportunity that matches your interests, please contact our program coordinator, Johanna, at 802-379-9512 for more information or to learn about additional ways to get involved.



BECOME A MENTOR. CHANGE A CHILD'S LIFE.

WHY JOIN US?

- Make an Impact:**
Provide one-on-one support to children who need it most.
- Earn a Stipend:**
Receive a tax-free stipend (10-40 hours/week). No impact on other benefits.
- Great Benefits:**
Paid leave, travel reimbursement, and monthly training.
- No Experience Needed:**
Training is provided. Just bring your compassion!

WHO QUALIFIES?

Must meet income eligibility
(Monthly Gross Household Income):
1-Person: Up to \$2,660 | 2-Person: Up to \$3,606

Join the Green Mountain Foster Grandparent Program

Are you an older adult (55+) in Rutland, Bennington, or Addison Counties looking to make a difference? Share your love, patience, and experience by mentoring children in local schools and daycares.

Ready to Share Your Heart? CALL US TODAY!
802-774-8711
Green Mountain Foster Grandparent Program



RSVP Veterans Connection: Supports veterans, families, and military personnel

The RSVP Veterans Connection Program partnered with the local Veterans Outreach Group to offer monthly resource meetings for veterans, military personnel, and their families. These meetings feature community speakers who share information about local services, programs, and resources available to support those who have served and their loved ones.

During the grant year, the program held 11 presentations, with approximately 20 veterans attending each meeting. To date, attendees have responded positively, indicating that they value both the information shared and the opportunity to connect with others.

Through this partnership, RSVP Veterans Connection continues to strengthen access to resources, build community connections, and support veterans, military personnel, and families across the region.



COME JOIN RSVP VETERANS CONNECTION PROGRAM

EVERY SECOND TUESDAY OF
THE MONTH AT DENNY'S
RESTAURANT AT 9:45AM

361 US Route 7 South, Rutland,
VT 05701

Guest Speakers Sharing
Information on Resources
Available to Veterans
Please note: Meals and Drinks are
not included but you may
purchase your own



AmeriCorps
Seniors

"Making a Difference: The Power of Our Volunteer Community"



AmeriCorps
Seniors

RSVP Volunteers Support Other Community Priorities:

Across Rutland and Addison Counties, RSVP volunteers continue to support programs that help individuals remain independent, feel less isolated, and stay connected to their communities. The data collected this year shows positive outcomes in social connection, companionship, and independent living. Thrift Shop volunteers helped serve approximately 115 individuals. Survey responses showed that about 80 individuals were able to remain living independently because of the support volunteers helped provide, while 110 individuals said they felt more connected to the community.

Meals on Wheels partners also reported strong volunteer impact. One station provided independent living survey data, with 73 individuals saying they felt less isolated or enjoyed the social connection provided through the program. In addition, 1,223 clients said the meals helped them remain independent or continue living in their own homes. Overall, RSVP volunteers helped serve 1,791 Meals on Wheels clients, including 237 veterans.

Congregate Meals volunteers served at two different sites, helping support 4,291 individuals and approximately 628 meals this past year. Survey data showed that 106 individuals enjoyed the social connection of congregate meals, and 97 individuals said the meals helped them remain independent. Volunteers also helped serve 30 veterans through congregate meal programs.

American Red Cross Blood Drive volunteers supported Rutland and Addison Counties through the collection of 2,160 pints of blood. Since each pint can help approximately three patients, these donations had the potential to support about 6,480 individuals in need of blood.

Food shelf volunteers also made a meaningful difference this year. Two food shelves responded to the survey and reported that volunteers helped serve approximately 3,900 individuals, including 310 veterans. Of those served, 3,658 individuals were able to remain living independently with support from the food shelves, and 975 clients said they felt more connected to the community through the services volunteers helped provide.

Knitting volunteers throughout Rutland and Addison Counties contributed more than 1,000 winter items, including hats and mittens, for crisis bags. These handmade items were shared with organizations serving individuals experiencing crisis situations.

The RSVP Postcard Program helped bring cheerful messages to isolated seniors and veterans. Volunteers wrote and distributed approximately 3,316 postcards, including 405 postcards sent to veterans. Postcards were shared through organizations such as Meals on Wheels, Councils on Aging, senior living facilities, nursing homes, hospice programs, visiting nurse programs, and veteran facilities.

Together, these programs show the broad reach of RSVP volunteers and the many ways their service strengthens independence, reduces isolation, and supports community well-being across the region.



Rutland Community Programs

RSVP & The Volunteer Center

16 North St Ext.

Rutland, VT 05701

802-468-7056

www.volunteersinvt.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage Paid

Rutland, VT.

Permit No. 9

