

Retirement

Agencies cannot function without volunteers

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Seven years ago, Donald L. Kuhns, who grew up in St. Augustine's Parish on Rochester's southwest side, suffered a stroke that paralyzed his right hand and slurred his speech.

Rather than sit around his home in East Rochester feeling sorry for himself, Kuhns — at the behest of his wife, Gloria — decided to contact RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program), which is sponsored by LIFESPAN, a Monroe County community agency that serves senior citizens.

Through RSVP, Kuhns, now 69, became a volunteer at American Red Cross Food and Nutrition Services, which, among other things, prepares serving trays for Meals on Wheels.

A program of Visiting Nurse Service, Meals on Wheels serves 340,000 low-cost meals a year to people over 60 who are homebound, and who pay for the service on a sliding scale, according to Tom Marullo, program manager.

On Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Kuhns works with other volunteers and the paid staff at Food and Nutrition Services' kitchen, located in the Red Cross building at 50 Prince St. in Rochester.

Kuhns, an army veteran of the Pacific Theater in World War II, wraps bread and arranges various dishes, he said, adding that the job gives him something to do with his spare time.

"This makes me useful to society," he said, adding that his colleagues in the kitchen keep his mind sharp and alive.

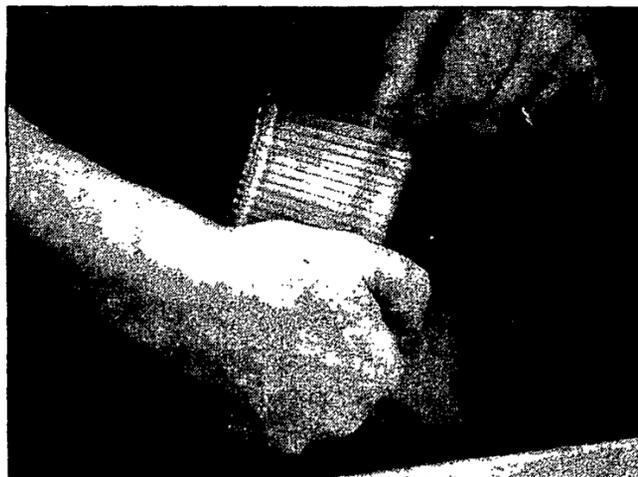
"You're-around people who are joking and kidding," he explained.



Donald Kuhns, also pictured on the cover of the "Retirement" supplement, volunteers his time four days a week at American Red Cross Food and Nutrition Services preparing serving trays for the Meals on Wheels program.

But it isn't just Kuhns who benefits from getting out of his house and into the city. William C. Park, director of Food and Nutrition Services, pointed out that volunteers like Kuhns cut his labor costs in half, a benefit passed on to the consumer in lower Meals on Wheels prices, he said.

That's precisely the marriage of volunteer desire with client benefit that RSVP's director, Ginny Ciccone, seeks to create through her federally funded program. RSVP currently places more than 700 volunteers in 120 not-for-profit agencies, she said. In 1995, she added,



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

those volunteers contributed 120,000 hours worth of work to the agencies.

Ciccone pointed out that in this era of cost-cutting frugality at so many social service agencies, a vast array of community services would not exist without volunteers like Kuhns.

"Volunteers are doing the jobs the staff used to do," she said. "If it wasn't for the volunteers, I don't know how the agencies would make it."

In fact, Ciccone noted that she has 400 open positions waiting for volunteers at a variety of not-for-profit agencies. In particular, RSVP needs males, minorities and Spanish-speakers, she said.

She added that while health-care institutions like St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, and senior citizens' residences like St. Ann's Home in Irondequoit, continue to provide a large number of volunteer opportunities, positions are also available for people with surveying skills, teaching experience, and financial expertise.

Volunteers perform clerical work, conduct museum tours, play with children at day-care centers and do a host of other activities necessary for the smooth running of many community institutions, she said.

Anyone over 55 is eligible to volunteer through RSVP, Ciccone commented, adding that interested seniors should call her to set up an interview. Once she talks with a prospective volunteer, Ciccone sets up an appointment with the person who is invited in for the extensive interview.

She assesses a volunteer's skills, availability and flexibility, she said, adding that the ideal volunteer can drive and "will do any job that's needed to be done."

She stressed that non-driving volunteers and people with disabilities have been placed by RSVP at various agencies. All

Continued on page 3A

Remember how secure you felt knowing someone was there to care for you.

Our residents and their families take comfort in knowing we're able to provide extra health care services should they ever be needed. It's part of our Assistance with Living Program — just one of the things that make life at The Gables at Brighton more comfortable and worry free. The Gables at Brighton, serving the Eastside of Rochester for over 7 years.



- No endowment
- Private, luxury apartments with full kitchens
- Safety, security and emergency medical call system
- Healthful, restaurant-style dining
- Housekeeping and linen service, daily transportation service and recreation



Call to arrange a no-obligation visit and complimentary lunch.

(716) 461-1880

Managed by AdvantageHEALTH Corporation

Don, who suffered a stroke seven years ago that paralyzed his right hand, compensates for his disability and is able to assist in the kitchen.

Quick!

What do Rochester General, Park Ridge, and Monroe Community Hospital have in common? What do St. John's, St. Ann's, and the Jewish Home have in common?

Right!

They all employ graduates of the EOC/Bridge Certified Nursing Assistant, LPN, and Surgical Technician programs.

NOW!

Now it's time for you to check out how well prepared our students are...the technical skills, the "soft" skills, the career/life skills.

Call the Educational Opportunity Center's Employment Services Offices: 232-2730 ext. 215
EOC/Bridge - 546-8660 ext. 221

This ad funded by VATEA