

NORFOLK COUNTY RSVP



Norfolk County RSVP Volunteer Program
614 High Street Dedham, MA 02026

rsvp@norfolkcounty.org
781.329.5728



Karen Kyne models a volunteer vest and transport chair as she heads off to help with a patient discharge. Milton Hospital welcome desk volunteers work as a team to greet and give directions, escort visitors, assist with patient discharge, and run errands between departments.

In the Emergency Department, volunteers greet and give directions, provide comfort items for patients and family, and run errands. All volunteers must pass a TB test, have flu shots during flu season, and maintain confidentiality.

VOLUNTEER FOR VETERANS

Veterans Good Neighbor Program (Boston VA)

Visit veterans near you to check-in, provide companionship and activities, or escort on walks.

Drive an SUV

The DAV Transportation Network provides rides for veterans to VA medical facilities. Volunteer drivers serve one day per week or every other week, picking up Veterans in specially-marked SUVs.



Reach Out to Local Veterans

RSVP is piloting a new volunteer position with Veterans Service Officers to host volunteer outreach volunteers, who will call Veterans and Veterans' widows in their community. Volunteers will check in, provide updates about Veterans' benefits, and invite residents to work with their Veterans' Service Officer on financial and health related issues. If interested, call RSVP!

HOMELESS SERVICES

Father Bill's Place, Quincy

One volunteer is needed each morning to assist the support staff as the guests leave the shelter for the day. Volunteer will help with check-out and will involve lots of interaction with shelter guests. Time 6-8am.



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RSVP is sponsored by the Norfolk County Commissioners:

Peter H. Collins of Milton, Commissioner

John M. Gillis of Quincy, Commissioner

Francis W. O'Brien of Dedham, Chairman



SERVING SOLDIERS AND VETERANS

Interview with Mary Farrington, Avon



Avon volunteer coordinator Jane Carthas and volunteer Mary Farrington collect gifts for veterans at the Senior Center

We'd all like to help soldiers feel appreciated at home and abroad. Meeting Mary Farrington showed us that it is possible to make a big difference and to feel the impact first-hand on the lives of soldiers, with just a handful of helpers over few years. With her town and senior center, she led a two-year campaign to send boxes to soldiers abroad. Now she is working to show care for local veterans and seniors at hospitals and nursing homes.

What made you decide to start the soldier box program?

I got into the soldier box program because of my son in Iraq. I was sending him a box every week and I said to him one time, "You get a lot of boxes. What do you do with them, and what happens to the men who don't get any boxes?" He told me that he put them on the table in the barracks and men help themselves to whatever they want. It's very hard to leave your family and go over there and be in a strange country and a dangerous one. I called a couple friends that work at Otis Air Force Base, and they gave names of some men who would like packages from home.

How have Avon residents become involved?

Lots of people, especially seniors, donated things for soldier boxes. I made over 100 scarves in the army colors. We heard back from the men that it was wonderful to get the scarves. They put them around their mouth and nose because of sand blowing around. I asked them what the fellows need the most over there. One soldier wrote back that they need socks. The Avon Civic Association had outdoor concerts and put up a sign to donate socks to the

soldiers. We sent them to the men and got one letter saying that when he got that pair of socks and put them on, he felt like a new man.

I called one of the elementary schools in Avon and spoke with the principal to see if the children could make Christmas cards for the soldiers. I read those cards and looked at the pictures the kids drew, it made me cry. Little kids asked such serious questions: Where do you sleep? Are you going to have turkey for Christmas? They drew pictures of soldiers fighting the enemy and sinking ships. One little boy said, "You deserve more money."

Postage cost came from donations to the project including from the VFW, Avon Civic Association. A few times the program got advertised on local TV and more people would hear about it and donate. We're a small town, with not very many people but the seniors really stepped up to the plate and did what they could. Now we are focusing on ways seniors can continue to give back to veterans with their time, visiting VA Hospitals and nursing homes. It's important not to exhaust your neighbors' ability to give, and to come up with ways that people can help, no matter how much money they have.

How has volunteering affected your life?

I took care of my husband who was sick for 9 years. When he passed away, I was alone at home and went to the senior center to be with people. When I wanted to help the soldiers, it all started at the senior center. It's a blessing for me because it gives me a purpose—I need somebody to depend on me for something. I know I can do something. It might not be money, but I can do a lot of good for some people.

How other towns and volunteers can get involved:

- Organize your own drive – contact your VA hospital or a national organization that sends packages to troops, such as Any Soldier or Operation Gratitude. Call RSVP at 781-329-5728 for contact information.
- Commit to serve veterans on a regular basis as a friendly visitor, driver, or outreach assistant (see front page).