



NORFOLK COUNTY RSVP VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Your Invitation to Respond to Your Community

614 High Street P.O. Box 310 Dedham, MA 02027 781-329-5728



Nov-Dec



Dedham Savings Bank is the 2018-19 Leadership Sponsor of Norfolk County RSVP

Operation Gratitude Holiday Drive supporting Active Duty Military

Norfolk County RSVP is organizing our first holiday drive for Veterans. Between Thanksgiving and New Years Day, we encourage you to drop off personal items from the wish list (see below) and letters or cards that you write with good wishes to our soldiers. (Instructions for letter writing appear below.)

Drop off locations include:

- Norfolk County Commissioners Office, 614 High Street, 2nd Floor, Dedham.
- Canton Veterans Service Office, 660 Washington Street, Canton
- Norfolk Senior Center, 28 Medway Branch Road, Norfolk
- Norwood Hospital, 800 Washington Street, Main Lobbies & Cafeteria, Norwood
- Weymouth Veterans Service Office, Whipple Center, 182 Green Street, Weymouth



All letters and personal item donations will be sent in care packages by 'Operation Gratitude' to active duty soldiers around the world. Personal letters of appreciation are often the most cherished items in our care packages. For more information, call Robert at 781-234-3445.

WISH LIST ITEMS *

* All donated items must have a shelf-life/expiration date of at least 6 months from the date of our receipt.

- Puzzle Books (7"x10"preferred size)
- Sewing Kits (Travel size)
- Socks (Black Crew Length)
- Sunscreen (Travel Size, non-aerosol)
- Handmade With Love Items
- Cool Ties
- Knit or Crocheted Hats and Scarves
- Paracord Survival Bracelets
- All Purpose Wipes (Single & 30ct Packs or Less)
- Batteries ("AA" and/or "AAA")
- Deodorant (Travel Size, non-aerosol)
- Drink Mix (Individual Serving Packets)
- Gum
- Hand Warmers
- Jerky (Individual Bags)
- Lip Balm
- Pencils (Mechanical preferred)
- Playing Cards
- Talcum Powder (Travel Size)

HOW TO WRITE A LETTER

All deserve to be thanked for their commitment and bravery!

Start with a generic salutation, such as "Dear Hero" or "Dear Brave One."

Express your thanks for their selfless service. Avoid politics completely and religion in excess; however, saying you will pray for them is wonderful. Share a little about yourself: Family, Hobbies, Work, School, Pets, Travel, etc.

Talk about life and interests: : Your community, Sports, Weather, Music, Movies, Food, Books, etc.

Adults: Include your contact information (mail or email) so the letter recipient can reply. (Recipients may or may not write back; please do not be disappointed if you do not receive a response.)

Children's Letters: Include first names only and do not include addresses (an adult's address can be used).

Can't find the words? Consider drawing or painting a picture instead; please add a note to kids' drawings with their age. No glitter or confetti please! Do not put individual cards in envelopes.



Active Duty responses to letters & care packages

"I and many others were moved and several of us (including myself) felt like crying when reading all the notes, letters, and cards of encouragement.

I wish to give my utmost thanks and gratitude for the gifts that you all have most genuinely blessed me and all the soldiers in my company with. I and many others were moved and several of us (including myself) felt like crying when reading all the notes, cards of encouragement. These couldn't have come at a better time: I face being away from home, leaving my 5 year old son and my most precious 38 weeks pregnant wife who is close to delivering another boy. I read the notes, snacked on the food, right away tried the scarf and read the funnies. I greatly appreciate all that you have done for us and pray these boxes help many more like me and my company." SPC P.H

"The letters I received today brought joy to a lonely heart

I cannot express in words what your care packages do for our soldiers. I've never felt so proud to be a soldier in the US military. I am a husband and father of four. This is my first deployment and I have never missed a holiday with my family until this point. Your cards and very helpful items are a great reminder of the love I have for my family and country. Thank you for your support and I will ensure that we pay it forward. God Bless." 1LT W.B.



RSVP is funded in part by a National Senior Corps grant and sponsored by the Norfolk County Commissioners:

• Peter H. Collins of Milton, Commissioner

• Joseph P. Shea of Quincy, Commissioner

• Francis W. O'Brien of Dedham, Chairman



Linda Rosenberg: Profile of a New RSVP School Volunteer

Linda Rosenberg joined RSVP this summer. After going through RSVP’s school training sessions, she began volunteering this fall at the Wilkins Elementary School (formerly West Elementary) in Stoughton. A long-time Stoughton resident, Linda grew up in Milton, got a teaching degree and pursued a 37-year career as a Spanish teacher for Hingham Middle and High Schools. We asked Linda to tell us about her impressions as a new school volunteer:

What is your role as a school volunteer? I work with students in 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade classrooms on Wednesdays for about 3 hours. I assist with reading and literacy related activities, as well as some math. Much of my time is spent with two native Portuguese 4th graders developing their English skills.

First Impressions: I really enjoy what I am doing. The School is phenomenal, the teachers and staff are warm and friendly, and I am so impressed by the students, who are both well spoken and self-directed.

Biggest Surprise: The teaching environment has changed: teachers are no longer the focus of the classroom; instead everything is child-centered with small groups of students rotating between a small number of activity stations throughout the day.

A memorable moment: One day, one of my host teachers had laryngitis and asked if I would read a book to the entire class. The book, “The day all the crayons quit” was a big success. We all sat on rug while we read. Afterwards, the children were asked to imagine that they were one of the inanimate objects in the story (e.g., a crayon) and to share their point of view about the story.

What do you get out of volunteering: I wanted to do something that is joyful and makes me smile. In the classroom, I feel like I am doing something worthwhile and I feel so useful. Also, the children seem to really appreciate my being there. The children eagerly ask: “are you coming next week?”

Your advice to someone who isn’t a former school teacher but would like to become a school volunteer? Do it. As long as you can read and write in English, have patience with children and have a positive disposition, you will do well. You absolutely don’t have to be a former teacher to do this!

NORFOLK COUNTY RSVP PHOTO ALBUM

Many Quincy Knitters wear their ‘Life is Good’ T-shirts. This month’s donation of 28 afghans and lap robes are for Veterans in hospice.



Purple Heart recipient and Veteran author Al Kotler with his partner Selma at the RSVP Gala. Al uses RSVP ‘Rides for Vets’.

Vet Volunteer Bill Topham speaking at Lantana’s in August.



Cards, Letters & Personal Items for our Active Duty Military

In October, RSVP was approached by ‘Emergent BioSolutions’, a company in Canton, asking if a project existed for employees to volunteer some time in the community. With the assistance of the Canton Veterans Service office, we arranged our first full Operation Gratitude event which was held on October 23rd at the Canton Library. Nine participants wrote nearly 50 letters and cards and donated personal items including playing cards and lip balm for our active duty military. These volunteers planted the seeds for our holiday drive in support of active duty military which is detailed on the reverse side of this newsletter.

Operation Gratitude October Project Volunteers: Jennifer Trethewey, Dan Seligman, Jeff Hess, Lois Darr, Bill Robinson and Fran Donovan join RSVP Volunteer Coordinator Cris Goldsmith

Volunteers Jeff Hess and Bill Robinson from Canton’s Emergent BioSolutions donate their work time in support of our military members overseas, through Operation Gratitude.

