

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

An estimated 488 RSVP volunteers will serve. Some of their activities will include but are not limited to - serving meals to homebound seniors, packaging non-perishable foods for under-privileged schoolchildren to eat on weekends, building homes, working in thrift stores that raise funds for emergency assistance, building wheelchair ramps for disabled veterans and tutoring children in after school programs. The primary focus area of this project is "Healthy Futures." At the end of the three year grant, Moore County RSVP volunteers will have been critical in the success of nearly 100 seniors being able to live safely in their homes during this time, will have enabled 2700 school children receiving free or reduced school lunch to focus on learning on Monday because they had food to eat on the weekend, will have supported Habitat for Humanity and the Northern Moore Family Resource Center by providing livable and affordable housing for 25 families by volunteering on new home jobsites, in the Habitat Re-store and by teaching financial skills to ensure the new homeowners were able to stay current on their mortgages, will have volunteered receiving, pricing and managing four thrift stores whose funds were a vital part in serving over 2, 000 families by providing food, clothing and financial assistance to pay utilities, will have constructed wheelchair ramps and/or made home improvements for 30 veterans and military families in Moore County, RSVP volunteers will have fed and tutored 1000 school aged children at the Boys and Girls Club and The Northern Moore Family Resource Center. The CNC federal investment of approximately \$30,000.00 annually will be supplemented by approximately \$50,000.00 annually by the County of Moore.

## Strengthening Communities

Moore County was established in 1784 and is located in the south-central region of North Carolina. Commonly referred to as a segment of the Sandhills region, it is approximately a one-hour drive from Raleigh, the state capital. There are 11 incorporated municipalities in Moore County: Aberdeen, Cameron, Carthage, Foxfire Village, Pinebluff, Village of Pinehurst, Robbins, Southern Pines, Taylortown, Whispering Pines and Vass. There are also 10 unincorporated municipalities in Moore County: Eagle Springs, Eastwood, Glendon, High Falls, Jackson Springs, Jugtown, Lakeview, Seven Lakes, West End, and Woodlake. Moore County is famous for its pottery, horse farms, antiques and 43 golf courses. At the same time economic shifts are less perceptible in the southern half of the county, which the Sandhills Area Chamber of Commerce headlines boast of "a mild climate, high quality of life, entrepreneurial opportunities, nationally recognized hospital and medical community, quality school system, premier community college and proximity to Fort Bragg. Moore County has a

## Narratives

friendly atmosphere." Moore County is promoted as major hub for recreational and tourist activities. The truth about growing unemployment and escalating poverty rates continue to hide in the shadows. Eighty-two percent of adults 25 years of age and older have high school diplomas and 26% of adults 25 years of age and older have bachelor's degrees. Historically, large numbers of our local population have been made up of early retirees no longer in the workforce. These larger than averages numbers skew the practical educational attainment of the actual working force. The Census Bureau reported 22% of the adults over 25 did not finish high school. The Action for Children, NC 2010 report indicated less than 70% of high school students graduated and 45% of Moore County's school students are on free/reduced lunch. Additionally, the Moore County census data reported more than 1,788 families with children under 18 are headed by females only. Recently released 2010 census statistics demonstrate a growing population of 88,247. Racial and ethnic diversity is noted in the 2010 census, which lists 78% of Moore County residents are white, 13 % black, and 6% Hispanic or Latino. The Business Journal's March 29, 2012 says" Nationwide, the average personal income climbed 4.3 percent to \$41,663. Per capita income in the Tar Heel State grew to \$36,164, a 3.3 percent increase. North Carolina's 3.3 percent growth rate was the weakest of the 12 states in the Southeast and third-lowest in the country." This disparity in income between the haves and have-nots is also true in areas of academics, youth development, and career readiness between youth living in the lowest economic areas and the rest of the county. The stark contrast between the prosperous Sandhills section and the economically blighted northern area of Moore County is real and the impact serious. Life in northern Moore County is hard and getting harder. In 2010 the Census Bureau identified 5 counties, with populations of 65,000 or higher, in the nation with the largest increase in poverty rate from 2007 -- 2010. Moore County North Carolina ranked 5th in the nation. The escalating numbers of those living at or below poverty levels in rural Moore County has pulled the county average to the bottom of the nation. In the Sunday April 27, 2014 edition of the local newspaper, The Pilot, Pat Corso the executive director of "Moore County Partners in Progress", said "Moore County's designation as a Tire 3 county...greatly limits our eligibility for some state incentives...For Moore County the crux of the problem is that our atypical economic landscape and uneven distribution of wealth are not taken into consideration when tier designations are determined, and this greatly reduces our competitiveness and ability to attract new jobs and capital investment." Mr. Corso went onto to say "For Pinehurst, the median household income is \$66,432, and the percent of residents living in poverty is 4.1 percent. For Southern Pines, the corresponding figures are \$45,436 and 12 percent. But for Robbins, the numbers are \$28,021 and 29 percent."

## **Narratives**

With these high unemployment figures affecting parts of our county, the day to day needs of many of the people living in these areas is simply to have enough to eat and pay their bills. Many of Moore County's RSVP stations address these issues and we would like to continue supporting their invaluable work. "Healthy Futures" is the focus area we feel is most critical to helping the largest number of our residents in need. In 2013 Moore County RSVP signed on The Northern Moore Family Resource Center as a station. This organization offers after school programs and summer camps for children in the Robbins area, adult math and reading programs, financial literacy for families, matching funds for families to purchase a home and partnership with Sandhills Habitat for Humanity in home repairs. This new organization along with The Coalition for Human Care, Meals on Wheels, MANNA, The Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina, The Boys and Girls Club, the Interfaith Food Pantry, Moore Free Care Clinic and the Moore County Department of Aging along with the help of RSVP will continue providing for the needs of the less fortunate in Moore County.

This dichotomy of the two groups in Moore County has an upside though, the pool of retirees in southern Moore County has been very beneficial in the Moore County RSVP's recruiting efforts. Time and time again we see folks from Pinehurst and Southern Pines driving 20 plus miles one-way to volunteer in our rural areas. Also, these people with more disposable income have been very generous in their support of the 40 different RSVP stations in this county.

Moore County is a strong resource from which RSVP receives an uninterrupted flow of input and evaluation from local municipalities and government agencies regarding specific and identifiable community needs. Recent Census figures note 25% of Moore County's population was over 60 and at that same time 39% of the people were over age 50. In 2006 it was estimated that 32% of Moore County residents were 55 years of age and older. US Census 2010 projections indicate that Moore County's residents 60 years of age continue to outnumber those 17 and younger and by 2030 will increase from 26,254 to almost 38,000. In Moore County a majority of our 55+ population are relocated seniors and retirees bringing together people of increasingly diverse ethnoses and backgrounds in an already geographically and economically diverse county. It is from this rich base of experience and expertise that Moore County RSVP continues to promote volunteer service to the public sector as a viable, practical, realistic and economically savvy way to identify community needs, seek solutions and implement work plans. Moore County Board of Commissioners has appointed an RSVP Advisory Council who insures accurate and timely local input as well as program evaluation. The individual RSVP Advisory Council members provide an additional link into all areas of the county as well as ensuring that programming crosses all barriers of race, culture, socio-economic, and educational

## Narratives

levels. In addition, the council is a conduit for integrating county-wide community resources and mobilizing connections. RSVP's strong links to the public sector are matched by equally strong relationships within the private sector through faith-based and private non-profit agencies. Moore County RSVP has invested nearly a quarter of a century partnering and building close relationships within our communities. Public awareness has been built through years of direct involvement with non-profit agency partners, through collaborative training programs, and on-going analysis and reporting of community needs assessments. Over the last three years a "Face-to-Face" segment has continued to be an important part of the RSVP monthly Advisory Council agenda. At the top of each meeting a station executive, volunteer or director updates RSVP on their mission, vision, current statistics and future goals and volunteer needs. This personal exchange is critical in assessing the impact and progress a station is making toward solving community problems and/or the eligibility of partnering with this agency in the future. The RSVP staff is active with the Inter-Agency Council which includes faith-based, private and public sector agencies. RSVP Director Deese is also on the board of directors of MooreHealth, a community service organization sponsored by FirstHealth of the Carolinas. MooreHealth is a volunteer community organization committed to developing cooperative planning that promotes health and improves the quality-of-life for the residents of Moore County. This organization, composed of representatives from a broad spectrum of the community, provides a mechanism for innovative, cost-effective and challenging approaches for a healthier tomorrow by coordinating resources of Moore County for the greater benefit of its residents. The purpose of MooreHealth is to gain community support in assessing unmet health needs and to find solutions. Working with these groups keeps RSVP abreast of new trends changes in community needs. Director Deese also serves as Co-chair on MooreHealth's Aging committee. RSVP will provide community volunteers and agencies with the tools needed to enhance services to the citizens of Moore County. Through continued partnerships with and participation in community organizations, RSVP is provided with the information necessary to assist in the development of needed volunteer programs. Historically, how RSVP has identified and responded to community needs has varied. Multilevel research and data, governmental studies and community focus groups have always been major contributing factors. Our RSVP program has exhaustively explored every aspect and avenue in determining true community needs as well as implementing creative solutions and innovative volunteer assignments. The community has taken a new and different approach in responding to a "need" and involving RSVP stations and volunteers in very resourceful solutions. Representatives had gathered to meet; review and share information on the existing home delivered meal programs.

## Narratives

Statistics shared that 26,000 meals are delivered annually to Moore County's senior and homebound residents. RSVP volunteers with Home Delivered Meals (delivering in the northern portion of the county) and Meals on Wheels (delivering in the southern portion of the county) served 6500 hours delivering nutritious and well balanced meals. Nearly 80 volunteers deliver these meals Monday through Friday. At a round table discussion during this meeting, Aging Council member Charles Carlton asked, "What nutrition is provided to these clients on weekends?" The community leaders in attendance, staff from the nutrition program, volunteers, Meals On Wheels, even former RSVP Advisory Council members were stunned and speechless. They realized that no mechanism existed to provide weekend nourishment for their clients. It was undeniable that at that table a true community need had been unveiled. Council member Carlton challenged the group that day to categorically come to the aid of the homebound needy and find an appropriate response. Carlton's one question became the catalyst for a dynamic solution. Five RSVP stations responded to the challenge, rapidly and synergistically in a way that leaves no doubt as to the high quality of the program and its members and demonstrates the excellent collaboration of community partner stations. In these times of economic stress, diminishing donations and fading support for non-profits, Moore County RSVP stations took a collaborative not a competitive approach to finding a successful solution. We identified a problem, connected the resources and people and created a solution that offers meaningful volunteer placements. The "Recipe for Success": Take an inquiring mind, add the following RSVP stations: Moore County Department of Aging (home delivered meals), Sandhills Meals on Wheels, Moore County Schools (BackPack Pals), St. Joseph of the Pines, the Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC, add a local catering service, and Teen Challenge Program volunteers, and stir in nearly 10 RSVP volunteers -- the result, Snak Pak Pals Program. Snak Pak Pals is truly a recipe for success that demonstrates how the collaborative effort of RSVP members can conquer a community need. The purpose of Snak Pak Pals is to provide some nourishment to seniors and the homebound on weekends. At present, approximately 200 meals are delivered weekly, by RSVP stations Meals on Wheels and Moore County Department of Aging. There has been no program in place, however, to take care of the recipients nutritional needs on weekends. Under the aegis of this new program, seniors and the homebound receive plastic grocery bags filled with items such as juice, cereal, soup, crackers, raisins and pudding for weekend meal support . This initiative is modeled after the very popular Backpack Pals, a program housed at the Food Bank of Central NC. Targeted to aid the 45% of school children participating in Moore County's free/reduced lunch programs. During the week children in the Backpack Pals program receive breakfast and lunch at their respective schools. There was no option

## **Narratives**

however to serve and sustain the children on weekends until 8 years ago with the inception of BackPak Pals. Today 25 schools and over 900 children participate each week. BackPack Pals volunteers, an RSVP volunteer service opportunity, meet each Thursday at the Food Bank where back packs are loaded with items similar to those listed above and returned to the schools for Friday distribution. BackPack Pals and other RSVP volunteers at the Food Bank agreed to undertake packing SnakPaks for the seniors and homebound snacks right after the backpacks are filled. Sandhills Teen Challenge Volunteers deliver SnakPaks to MOW and Home Delivered Meals distribution sites. On Fridays, the weekend packs are picked up and distributed by our RSVP volunteers with Meals On Wheels and Home Delivered Meals. Snak Pak Pals is a collaborative effort between several RSVP stations, RSVP volunteers and community leaders, whose cooperation, eagerness, willingness and timely response to the community need has been overwhelming. In February 2011, the Snak Pak Pals program was officially adopted as an arm of the Meals on Wheels of the Sandhills organization and is a vital and growing testament to effectively mobilizing community resources. In 2009 there were at least 1100 instances of homelessness in Moore County. Schools, health care agencies, churches, veteran's affairs, domestic violence organizations, governments and nonprofits serving people in need see the faces of homelessness every day. Many Moore County residents may not be aware of these situations. In rural areas like ours it is easy to not see homelessness. The urban portrait of homelessness involves broken persons living out of cardboard boxes or shopping carts and sleeping on heated street grates. In Moore County our rural homeless have different ways of providing for themselves by living in cars, abandoned buildings, campers, occasionally in motels, under bridges and in the limited shelter options available. In Moore County Schools reported the average age of a homeless person in Moore County was 9 years of age. Unsurprisingly, the face of volunteerism has advanced and changed in the last few years as baby boomers have entered our volunteer arena. Our RSVP volunteers are impacting and leading Moore County with new levels of experience and expertise. As a singular voice in Moore County, one of RSVP's major directives is to inform both the public and private sector institutions that we have the fastest growing, best educated and most vigorous population of older adults in history. We provide a conduit for our community to an incredible volunteer base. Each RSVP volunteer assignment enhances the capacity and output of the organization in a personal way. The local impact of RSVP volunteers can be measured on the playing fields of crisis intervention, board rooms, food collection and distribution, advisory councils and health care planning services. RSVP enjoys wide-spread support from Moore County and its communities. Local media lends strong support and the local newspaper is always willing to publish stories about

## **Narratives**

RSVP, volunteer needs and accomplishments. Volunteers receive individual counseling and placement services designed to respond to their particular needs and skills. RSVP has over 200 service opportunities listed with 40 community partners. RSVP graduated 9 stations over the past 2 years. There was no interruption in the goals laid out in past work plans. A total of 4 volunteers were serving at these stations. These four volunteers all had other assignments with other stations that did fall into one of the 6 focus areas. The breakdown of race among our volunteers is Black 6%, White 93%, Hispanic 0% and American Indian 1%. The numbers for the county as listed by city-data is Black 13%, White 78%, Hispanic 6% and American Indian 1%. RSVP Moore County will continue to visit predominantly black and Hispanic churches especially in the Northern portion of our county to recruit and give information about RSVP. Moore County RSVP Approximately 2% of our volunteers are military veterans. Moore County continues to recruit and reach out to veterans for volunteer opportunities. Moore County RSVP is also looking at ways to encourage members of our LGBT community to participate. The director of RSVP has been invited to participate in Gay Pride bowling night. This has been a great opportunity to interact and pass along information on volunteering opportunities with Moore County RSVP. Diversity of our volunteers is an important priority of Moore County RSVP going forward. It is obvious that different experiences and backgrounds enrich the people and organizations that benefit from the service provided by RSVP volunteers. Their expertise along with other volunteers improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering.

### **Recruitment and Development**

Recruiting potential RSVP volunteers and developing skill sets and leadership potential in our new and active volunteers is a top priority and an on-going process for Moore County RSVP. RSVP's goal is to discover the natural resources, leadership and talents resident in our volunteers, offer them opportunity to access training, and maximize their talents to assure a high quality volunteer service experience. Volunteer retention begins with recruitment and conversely a successful recruitment program begins by retaining good volunteers who reproduce like volunteers. This duality is an interesting dynamic. Each point of contact a volunteer has with RSVP from initial interview, placement, regular personal contacts, and recognitions truly matters. The sum total of these experiences determines the quality and satisfaction of their volunteer service and conversely length of service. Although several factors contribute to the success of the volunteer experience, the success of the experience is many times in direct proportion to the training received. "Basic RSVP training" begins in our recruitment marketing tools and continues through the initial and placement interviews.

## Narratives

The RSVP Handbook received in each new member toolkit reinforces this training and provides a permanent reference tool for our volunteers. RSVP's volunteer development begins with a volunteer's first staff consultation appointment. This process provides the RSVP director with accurate information to most effectively assign the volunteer and it offers the recruit a way to be interactive in selecting their personal volunteer opportunities. With over 200 unique volunteer job opportunities, specialized training is fundamental for the novice. No longer limited to just an orientation or safety training session, stations in collaboration with RSVP are offering specialized, training workshops and courses. The training courses are monitored throughout the year by the director who attends these sessions to get an understanding of the volunteer assignment that help in determining the best volunteer match. Exploring all the volunteer service possibilities RSVP has available, enables our volunteers to discover and develop new skills and talents that truly enhance their lives. Founded on the belief that "programs don't save children, relationships do," RSVP station, Communities In Schools (CIS), has become the nation's most effective and widely respected community-based organization helping kids succeed in school and prepare for life. RSVP volunteers are linked with Southern Middle School (6, 7 & 8th grade) students as mentors. One hour, once a week changes lives. Their life experiences are varied and how they apply that experience in their RSVP volunteer service career can be very creative and unique. One of the reasons our RSVP volunteers can so successfully change this course or direction is the level of specialized training and development that is accessible to them. Regretfully, in Moore County, 22% of adults function at literacy levels so low that they lack skills to participate in vocational learning. The Moore County Literacy Council and RSVP volunteers have helped create a solution by providing one to one mentoring services to Moore County adults. As serious as adult literacy issues are this is a difficult job assignment for most RSVP volunteers to consider accepting because it is commonly assumed that a teaching or language arts education is a prerequisite to be effective in an adult literacy program. Nothing could be farther from the truth. A comprehensive orientation and 12 hours of training is provided for each RSVP volunteer. The volunteer achieves a level of proficiency and expertise that allows him/her to become an excellent one to one mentor. Volunteers also participate as mentors in Adult Basic Education, ESL, discussion groups and computer lab sessions. RSVP and its community partners provide and will continue to develop specialized trainings that enhance and provide the highest quality of volunteer experience. Not only does RSVP's quarterly newsletter, Volunteer Voice, keep volunteers abreast of what other stations and volunteers are doing throughout the county, but it is a powerful tool in our recruitment, retention and recognition toolkit. A standard part of each recruitment kit mailing, Volunteer Voice

## **Narratives**

includes an insert listing our current volunteer job opportunities. Prospects call to find out more about RSVP and service opportunities as well as active volunteers wishing to expand their service areas. One of Volunteer Voices' special features is our Volunteer Spotlight. Candidates are solicited from station coordinators, and the selected volunteer's story and a photo are published. This is an excellent way to recognize our volunteers. RSVP regularly gets phone calls with a thank you for featuring an outstanding co-worker; but just as often volunteers discover friends and faces from church, the neighborhood or fitness center are RSVP family members too. In addition, RSVP volunteers are regularly recognized as special guests on popular local "Senior Moments" radio program. Targeted to like demographics, RSVP Volunteers love sharing their experiences during the live interview while inviting others in the community to also volunteer. Recruitment is an on-going process for Moore County RSVP, as literally every activity, contact, conversation or presentation extends an invitation to join the ranks of our RSVP volunteers. In the area of recruitment, RSVP continues to have an active presence in the faith community, service and civic organizations by speaking to groups and agencies interested in community service. One of RSVP's best recruitment tools has been its holiday projects which have included food drives and bicycle collections. These RSVP sponsored programs along with MLK Day of service are heavily publicized on the radio and in the local newspapers. The testimony and sharing of personal volunteering experiences is often the catalyst in introducing their friends and neighbors to the opportunities of becoming an RSVP volunteer. Often they bring their friends, spouses, neighbors to meet the staff at our location in the Senior Enrichment Center. RSVP's office location makes these stops and friendly visits commonplace.

Each year RSVP hosts an annual RSVP Volunteer Recognition Event. 2014's event was held on March 20th and the theme revolved around Spring relating to the way our volunteers always spring into action. In the last two years we celebrated at St. Patrick's with the theme, "Our volunteers , we are Lucky to have you." And Valentine's Day, "We love our volunteers. " The RSVP Advisory Council is actively engaged in every aspect of the event. Hosted in the Grand Hall of the Moore County Senior Enrichment Center, volunteers are personally greeted by council members and staff. Guests enjoyed a sit down lunch personally served by the director and Advisory Council members. The program consists of musical entertainment, door prizes and special recognitions of volunteers for longevity and extraordinary service. Awarded at this time is the "Above and Beyond" certificate recognizing volunteers serving over 1000 ours in the past year and the prestigious annual "RSVP Unsung Hero Award". This is an exclusive RSVP honor and recognizes and acknowledges an RSVP volunteer who might otherwise go unnoticed. Our "Unsung Hero" is one who serves quietly, unnoticed by choice or

## Narratives

chance, someone who is faithful to the volunteer job they have undertaken, who rarely misses a day and exemplifies the heart and mission of the non-profit they serve. Nominations are received from RSVP community partners who are eager to honor their heroes. RSVP brochures listing benefits and volunteer opportunities are regularly placed at various locations in the community. A big program sponsored by the RSVP Advisory Council is placing brochures in every waiting room in the county. RSVP brochures and registration packets are also at the local Chamber of Commerce and in the newcomers welcome packets for new residents, Convention and Visitors Bureau and State and Local Employee Credit Union offices. In addition, RSVP of Moore County participates in a benefit discount card program, through the Chamber of Commerce where volunteers are honored throughout the county by receiving a discount on goods and services from local businesses. RSVP volunteers are also eligible to join the Local Government Employees Credit Union and they can access these services by presenting their RSVP membership card. Often the director speaks during newcomer's orientation or station trainings and invites new volunteers to join the RSVP ranks. The Moore County Senior Center is an AARP Tax-Aide site. Tax-Aides, after month long trainings, annually prepare and file tax returns for over 1500 county residents at no charge. These seasonal volunteers offer economic opportunity to the community and are targeted for RSVP recruitment. AARP invites the RSVP director to attend aide training sessions to share the RSVP volunteer benefits and register incoming volunteers. Our Volunteer Voice newsletter is all around town too. In addition to our regular display sites at senior center sites and county facilities, Volunteer Voice is now available in an email edition. On Moore County's web-site, RSVP can be discovered, explored and current program information accessed and downloaded from our web page. Having a presence on the web has been a great asset in our recruitment and retention efforts. With one click our RSVP information can now be accessed and information, forms, news and timesheets downloaded; adding convenience and saving time in active senior lifestyles. Links on community partner web-sites make registration effortless. RSVP staff accesses CNCS On-Line Learning Center and sends training bulletin email invitations to station coordinators to link up and explore some of the excellent CNCS programs like the Non-Profit Readiness Toolkit. RSVP, through its affiliation with the Senior Enrichment Center programs, also provides no cost computer training for our volunteers. We collaborate with the Moore County Department of Aging, who offer personalized computer consultations from beginner to advanced sessions that RSVP volunteers can take to improve or learn new computer skills or software programs. This past year the RSVP Recruitment Committee has examined and explored our current efforts, studied successful strategies, and is engaged in drafting a formal recruitment plan targeted at

## **Narratives**

sustaining the long term growth and success of our RSVP program. Committee goals for 2014-2015 will continue to include commercials on local TV and PSA's on local radio stations, 550 AM and 102.5 FM. These efforts have been very successful in the past. As an added recruitment tool the RSVP director teaches a class at the local community college on volunteering and also is a featured writer on volunteering in the magazine, Outreach NC.

### **Program Management**

RSVP works with 40 local community partners. In fiscal year 2013/2014 RSVP's 488 volunteers were actively engaged in finding solutions to community concerns like hunger, education, adult literacy and homelessness. RSVP volunteers served with community partners, or stations, in disaster preparedness relief and response, tax-assistance, food distribution, job preparedness, affordable health services, veteran's services, companionship/outreach, adult respite care, community revitalization projects, as well as tutoring and after school programs. RSVP volunteers logged 47,000 volunteer service hours in that same period. Published by the Independent Sector, the estimated dollar value of volunteer time for is \$22.14 per hour. RSVP's programming for impact work plans both support and effectively determine positive and life changing results for individuals and families in Moore County communities. Over the past 25 years, RSVP has grown into a corps of 488 active volunteers selecting to serve from over 200 opportunities with 40 community partners or stations. Volunteer service opportunities are earmarked to address local concerns, create solutions and solve local problems. In 2013, 178 RSVP volunteers served in 8 different service capacities at the Coalition for Human Care. The Coalition distributes food, clothing and financial assistance to families in Moore County. These remarkable RSVP volunteers logged 16,346 hours last year serving over 13,000 individuals who received clothing and food or financial assistance totaling \$500,000.00 in services. The RSVP program directives and RSVP volunteers serve in local projects defined by initial assessments of community needs and special initiatives. Much of our resource planning comes from information gleaned from the county's Health Dept. Bi-annual survey of residents stating their concerns regarding health issues they face. Program management for RSVP happens on several tiers. RSVP stations, volunteers, financial management and records management systems combine for successful program management. RSVP community partners are monitored by both the director and the RSVP Advisory Council. New programs are developed in response to known community needs. The RSVP Advisory Council, with input from sponsor Moore County's agencies, continually evaluate community needs and respond by developing volunteer stations based on the identified needs of the community. A comparatively comprehensive checklist of existing work plans guides RSVP in the selection of these

## **Narratives**

community partners. This assures compatibility and it is reasonable that the volunteer opportunities will address specific community needs and also provide meaningful impactful opportunities for volunteer service. The director annually monitors RSVP stations on a regular basis through site visits, trainings and meetings with station coordinators. The Station Safety Survey is conducted each year during the month of March. The results of this survey assure that the most basic elements of accessibility, accommodation and safety are provided for RSVP volunteers. Personal on-site visits have proven to be good for growing healthy relationships and very insightful as to the needs of partner organizations. The saying, "a picture is worth a thousand words" bodes true when RSVP staffers or Advisory Council members make "on-site" visits to see first hand the application of our current volunteer service opportunities and can determine if they are successful or need revising. RSVP volunteers each receive a welcome kit. It contains a Volunteer Handbook which details the expectations, needs, benefits and responsibilities of RSVP, the stations and the individual volunteer. To insure a successful experience RSVP personally contacts volunteers after 30 days on assignment to see if their training and service expectations have been met. RSVP is an advocate for the volunteer and provides assistance and solutions to any problems encountered during their volunteer service. Partner organizations have been integrated into monthly RSVP Advisory Council meetings in a segment called "Face to Face." At the beginning of each meeting, station representatives make presentations keeping RSVP up to date on the status quo, new goals, or upcoming needs of our RSVP partner organizations. Often "field trips" or site visits from the Advisory Council are restricted with stations providing service to families in crisis, health services, in legal or court assistance, or in other areas where privacy or confidentiality issues are a consideration. Communicating face to face gives RSVP Advisory Council a snapshot of the community partner and the opportunity to assess their programs effectiveness and compatibility. "Face to Face" presentations have also encouraged RSVP Advisory Council members to take on new or additional personal volunteer assignments. RSVP Policies and Procedures Handbook has been officially adopted by the RSVP Advisory Council that outlines proper program management. Moore County RSVP has the unique privilege of having as its sponsor the County of Moore. In 2011 Moore County implemented new multi-million dollar MUNIS software. MUNIS streamlined financial data and services with on-time and on-line accessibility to financial reporting. After completing intensive MUNIS training the RSVP staff is now adept in its applications. MUNIS has allowed the director to manage the project's financial resources with greater efficiency and more accountability. Consequently, the RSVP program is subject to the high standards policies and procedures that are required of county government. All records are subject to public scrutiny and access. RSVP Advisory

## **Narratives**

Council members are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, RSVP by-laws approved by them, minutes submitted to the clerk and matching grant funding subject to their annual budget adoption. RSVP utilizes a specialized software program called Volunteer Reporter. Volunteer Reporter is a powerful database manager that includes, volunteer status, enrollment, hours served, station information like MOU's, and service opportunity data. Volunteer Reporter offers numerous basic and customized reporting capabilities that allow RSVP to create reports (with current and/or historical data) or documents that demonstrate program statistics. These documents are the basis in reporting program impacts to Advisory Council members, County Commissioners and even for writing press releases. An example would be including, from Volunteer Reporter, statistics listing the number of volunteers who served last calendar year and the dollar value of their volunteer service. Grant reporting also relies on the Volunteer Reporter's specialized reports and data collection systems. RSVP's monthly, quarterly and annual reports and project assessments are submitted to the Moore County Commissioners and the Moore County Manager. Since RSVP's continuing matching grant funds are based on their assessment of our projects success and impact on the communities, our strategy is to stay connected and communicate effectively with the Board of County Commissioners. Historically sponsor Moore County has far exceeded the required 30% match. Moore County has proposed 62% funding match for the 2014-2015 grant cycle. Another example of RSVP's positive interaction with the Board of Commissioners is demonstrated when the RSVP Advisory chairman's request for the commissioners to adopt locally a National Volunteer Week in April that Moore County passed unanimously.

### **Organizational Capability**

As the RSVP sponsor since 1988, Moore County has shown staunch support and appreciation for the accomplishments of the RSVP program and all RSVP volunteers in the county. A history of strong governmental, community and individual support reflects RSVP's reputation for excellence, continuity and continued improvement. Someone once said, "to be very good at something for a very long time is very difficult." Fortunately, Moore County RSVP, through 26 years of growth, change and transition, remains good at being an excellent RSVP program and continues to make a major and effective impact on the community. Effective and timely communication of valuable information keeps the organization in the forefront of our communities. Moore County commissioners and citizens alike listen when RSVP trumpets the fact that in 2013 the dollar value of RSVP volunteer service to Moore County residents topped \$1.1 million. RSVP enjoys a proactive relationship with local media who are eager to publish press releases, volunteer stories and attend RSVP events. Local radio station 550 AM

## Narratives

hosts a "Senior Moments" program each Friday morning highlighting events, personalities and activities targeted to seniors. The RSVP director is a regular guest, sharing RSVP volunteer stories, special events, and extending an invitation to volunteer to this targeted audience. The RSVP Volunteer Voice newsletter is also an effective communication tool with instant access. With a simple click of the mouse, our volunteers and prospects can download current information about the RSVP program and how to connect and serve! The Moore RSVP program has an excellent track record. This is evidenced by the significant impact and positive community changes that are demonstrated by the results of our RSVP community partner stations and RSVP volunteers' effect in the community. RSVP stations statistics verify that program goals are continually met or exceeded. They are the engines that fuel positive change and our RSVP volunteers are the fuel. For example, after 26 years, Habitat for Humanity makes it obvious that it is has been doing something good for a very long time too. On average 8 homes were built each year making homeownership a reality for Moore County low income families. With the commencement last year of building in the Midway community of Aberdeen, Habitat aimed high and hoped to raise the annual average to 12-15 homes. In 2013 26 RSVP volunteers served 5,254 hours helping Habitat achieve its "new normal" by building 12 homes. Economic downturns in the last two years, health care losses, and a local high unemployment rate and escalating poverty continues to challenge the survival of families in Moore County. Responding to these increased needs and providing goods and services has challenged every non-profit in Moore County. Since its inception 26 years ago, the Coalition has grown from a consortium of 12 to over 75 churches and has become the primary clearing house and leading responder for Moore County's families in crisis. RSVP volunteers constitute 75% of the Coalition for Human Care's volunteer base. The Coalition's RSVP volunteers interview and assess clients each week day as well as provide services, man re-sale shops, process financial assistance, office support, provide transportation and distribute food and clothing. An economic tsunami hit Moore County families in 2009, resulting in the escalation of new clients - families, children and individuals - and an increased demand for both services and volunteers. RSVP's Coalition volunteers responded and were able to provide food, clothing, transportation and distribute \$232,447 in financial aid. In the first quarter of 2010 the new client base rose on average of 18% per month and client expenses totaled \$438,171. In 2010, RSVP volunteer service directly impacted Coalition clients preventing 141 families from losing their homes; maintaining water service for 85 families and ensuring 1204 residents had electric service. In the winter of 2010, 228 families kept warm and 2865 children who otherwise would have gone hungry received food thanks to RSVP volunteers. 2011 RSVP records report fewer "new" Coalition clients;

## Narratives

however they are now "returning" clients who after 2+ jobless years, all saving depleted, and increasing unemployment who are finding it impossible to survive without increasing assistance. For Moore County families in crisis, demands for assistance and services will keep escalating. In an October 2011 Pilot newspaper article, Coalition Director Barrett Walker was quoted as saying that the demand is so high these days the Coalition is almost always out of something. Much financial support has been lost; grant funding drying up and still Director Walker expects the situation to worsen as cold weather sets in. RSVP's response was to deploy 178 volunteers to the Coalition in 2013. They logged over 16,000 hours in 8 different areas including the Coalitions resale shops. The Coalition Retail shops profits fund 33% of client services. RSVP volunteer service is essential in maintaining the same level of services for future Coalition clients. Moore County is proud of RSVP volunteers and never misses an opportunity to recognize and honor them. Moore County elected officials, Moore County Commissioners and the county manger love to go public with their support and are regularly guests of honor at RSVP volunteer recognition award events personally thanking our stellar volunteers. For many, RSVP is synonymous with volunteerism throughout the community as RSVP leads the initiative to honor and recognize volunteers in Moore County. Moore County Commissioners and RSVP begin with a kick-off of numerous community-wide celebrations hosting "National Volunteer Week" each April. By proclamation and celebration, the County Commissioners publically acknowledge and honor Moore County volunteers at a Commission meeting. Serving as county coordinator for NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, the RSVP director annually solicits nominations from the county at large in search of Moore County's most outstanding volunteers and one professional volunteer director. Nominations are submitted to RSVP and the RSVP Advisory Council, representing the Governor's Commission in the County of Moore, serves as the nomination review, scoring and selection committee for this prestigious award. Governor's Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service presentations are made by the RSVP director and RSVP Advisory Council Chairman during a Moore County Board of Commissioners meeting emphasizing Moore County's staunch volunteer support. This affiliation underscores RSVP's expertise in local volunteerism and is an excellent recruitment tool for attracting both new volunteers and community partner stations. In a very concrete way the county continues to provide support to the project by providing matching grant funds, office space, office supplies, vehicle and vehicle expenses, technical and clerical assistance. As part of county government and the Department of Aging, the RSVP program receives assistance from various county departments such as Financial Services, Information and Technology Services, Human Resources, and Department of Aging. Human Resources assist with

## Narratives

all criminal/NSOPR/background checks for RSVP volunteers. Office space for the RSVP program is provided at the Moore County Senior Enrichment Center. This modern seven year old facility, including a fitness center, is certified as a Center of Excellence by the state of North Carolina. The Senior Center is a hub of senior social activity in the county and the perfect site for RSVP offices. Every visitor at the Center learns about RSVP via display, signage and presentation areas in the lobby. Daily staff guided informational tours offer an excellent opportunity to be in contact and meet the 500+ seniors who participate at the center each week. The Financial Services Department of Moore County is responsible for grant fund requests and financial reporting as well as processing all expenses and travel reimbursements for RSVP, its volunteers and staff. The County of Moore is rated AA by Standard and Poor's and Aa3 by Moody's. Moore County has also been awarded the GFOA Certificate of Excellence in financial reporting for 23 consecutive years. RSVP works directly with the Moore County Assistant Financial Services Director Caroline Xiong. Mrs. Xiong, graduated magna cum laude from North Carolina State University, has achieved a Bachelor of Science degree in business management with a concentration in finance. Mrs. Xiong is a Certified Local Government Officer with the N.C. Government Finance Officers Association and N.C. Association of County Finance Officers since January 1, 2007. She has also been an active member of Government Finance Officer Association (GFOA) since 2000. She works with an operating budget of over \$130 million, managing the accounting procedures for over 20 county departments. She oversees the filing of all grant reports and draw downs. The RSVP program also comes under the oversight of Moore County's Financial Services Director Carrie Neal. Neal is a member of the North Carolina Association of School Business Officials (NCASBO) and holds a North Carolina State Board of Education Finance Officer Certification. She is a North Carolina Certified Public Accountant and a member of the North Carolina Association of Certified Public Accountants (NCACPA). Moore County's Information and Technology Services assists with computer equipment, upgrades, and trouble-shooting problems with hardware and software. In addition, as part of Moore County, RSVP follows all mandated internal policies and procedures including purchasing, personnel issues and travel. RSVP has a published "RSVP Policies and Procedures Manual" which was approved by Moore County's attorney prior to its formal adoption by the Advisory Council in February 2010. The director is on the board of MooreHealth. Here community leaders are mandated to assess and survey Moore County health care needs and implement a local action plan. In fact, the Advisory Council exceeds the county's minimum quarterly meeting requirements and meets monthly. Council member orientations received an excellent score and the majority ranked the combination of experienced and newer members,

## Narratives

following existing by-laws, policies and procedures as an excellent contribution to an effective and efficient program. Responders solidly agreed that RSVP's strong volunteer support includes adequate volunteer recognition, volunteer benefits, service opportunities and volunteer supervision. Although RSVP's community awareness is good, the Advisory Council is determined to implement a more defined volunteer recruitment and retention plan. Recruitment and Retention/Recognition committees used this information in coordinating a successful summer of 2013 recruiting campaign. The RSVP Advisory Council meetings boast high attendance and outstanding meeting participation. This coupled with information presented during monthly "Face to Face" station reports responsibly provides a continuous source program evaluation of the and volunteer stations by the Advisory Council. Moore County is committed to continue to sponsor RSVP under the Department of Aging. The Department of Aging director is committed to providing support for the RSVP program. The RSVP staff's job performances are monitored by Terri Prots, department head for the Department of Aging. Both RSVP staff participate in Moore County's annual standardized Performance Evaluation Program (PEP). During this evaluation and review, administered by Aging department head, professional and educational goals are set and monitored for each year encouraging on-going job improvement. With their mission to provide services that promote the well-being of older adults, the Department of Aging is the perfect umbrella for RSVP. It not only provides cover for our day-to-day operations and needs, but gathers together that "circle of seniors", a major source of RSVP recruits. Offices at the Senior Enrichment Center keep the RSVP staff in daily contact with an ever changing and increasing number of visitors (annual average 500-600 visitors per week); RSVP's office location provides numerous opportunities for exposure and visibility. This relationship building is fundamental to RSVP's personal invitation. An estimated 70 RSVP volunteers serve through the Department of Aging as program facilitators, respite care givers, homebound meal deliverers, in front desk reception capacity and fitness room aides and instructors. The RSVP staff is composed of a full time director and a part-time (20 hour per week) volunteer coordinator. The volunteer coordinator works with the program director, making volunteer contacts and processing paperwork, timesheets and correspondence. RSVP volunteers may also, from time to time, assist with data base entry and front desk coverage and reception duties. The current Director, Tommy Deese brings to the job years of service to the senior population. A business school graduate he brings a common sense approach to people and situations. He is currently a member of NC Association of Volunteer Administrators and is completing his NCAVA certification. RSVP's part-time volunteer coordinator, Karen Beckerman, works with the program director, and is an excellent administrative support person. She has a

## **Narratives**

Bachelor of Arts degree in early childhood education and a MS in education. After teaching, she worked for a newspaper and was challenged to "think like an editor." These skills really add to the professionalism of our newsletter, brochures and written correspondence. She also volunteered for 25 years, both as a board member and vice-president of New Fairfield-Sherman Animal Welfare Society prior to relocating to North Carolina. She is gifted in working with volunteers who connect easily with her compassionate heart and winning smile. RSVP is rich with an ever present bank and plentiful resource of RSVP volunteers that can be relied on to help with special or on-call projects and assist with in-house duties. The continuing support of RSVP sponsor, Moore County, guarantees long--term sustainability of the RSVP program and supports and provides superior facilities, resources, travel and purchasing policies, supplies and equipment, and appropriate personnel support. In conclusion, Moore County RSVP remains an imaginatively and efficiently managed program, which has continually sustained a reputation for excellence in Moore County, with our sponsor, community partners and RSVP volunteers. By recognizing community needs, creating community partnerships and delivering solution minded RSVP volunteers; Moore County RSVP will continue to positively impact the future of our communities. Through proper organization, appropriate oversight, self-assessment, and retention of qualified staff while offering opportunity for significant volunteer engagement has proven that a good thing, like Moore County RSVP, can be done for a long time. As baby boomers increasingly arrive on the local volunteer platform, senior population projections explode and relocation activities increase, RSVP's ever expanding "circle of seniors" will provide a solid future for RSVP.

### **Other**

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES: Going forward for Moore County RSVP means increasing the impact of national service in Moore County by deploying RSVP volunteers with targeted projects. Outcomes from these new volunteer investment strategies and new project goals meet criteria outlined in the CNCS 2011-2015 Strategic Plan. HEALTHY FUTURES: RSVP Meals on Wheels and Home Delivered Meal volunteers provide nutritional services and social contact, 5 days per week, promoting the ability of seniors to continue to live at home and age in place. In 2013, 68 RSVP volunteered over 4100 hours delivering meals while visiting homebound seniors. Via Backpack Pals volunteers, reliable food resources for weekend nutrition are packed & distributed each Friday to nutritionally at risk students currently enrolled in free school reduced breakfast and lunch programs. 2012 was the baseline year for deploying RSVP Volunteers to new Backpack Pals sponsor the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. In 2013 27 RSVP volunteers contributed 1200 hours and helped pack 800 backpacks

## Narratives

per week. The "Together We Can Do Moore" the semi-truck mobile health care and social services vehicle allows RSVP volunteers an outreach opportunity to economically disadvantaged individuals. This volunteer corps initially composed of volunteers from St. Joseph's, the Coalition for Human Care and the Moore Free Care clinic will continue to bring access to preventative and primary care medical and dental services to uninsured families and individuals in Moore County's rural communities. Rural residents who have had no access to existing financial assistance, food, clothing, and benefits programs will no longer be underserved. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY: RSVP AARP Tax-Aide volunteers provide financial stability and security to economically disadvantaged individuals by preparing and filing their taxes at no charge. The Northern Moore Family Resource Center teaches classes on financial literacy to low income families as well as matches their \$1,000 with another \$ 1,000 for a down payment towards the purchase of a home. VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES: RSVP is proud to welcome Military Missions in Action a non-profit organization that helps veterans and military families with home repairs, access to care and many other resources. Along with the local chapter of the Disabled American Veterans and the Veteran Affairs Office Moore County RSVP volunteers will continue reaching out to this deserving population.

### **PNS Amendment (if applicable)**

Not applicable.