

RSVP

While visiting a thrift store recently to recognize the service of our RSVP members, volunteers spoke about the benefits that volunteering has not only had for them, but for the customers they serve, and other nonprofits within the community.

After being asked how RSVP volunteering has benefited them, most everyone talked at once, there were many reasons, and they were sincere and excited to share them. One RSVP volunteer commented that "We have become friends and from friends have become family. We share our lives, talk about our children and grandchildren, pray together, and support one another." Having this volunteer opportunity gives them a sense of purpose, a reason to get ready for the day, to get out of the house, to have fun and be supported by people they now consider their family. The exercise from the tasks done increases their energy. They report feeling better. Helping others makes them feel good and accomplished. It is very clear that they love to volunteer to help others and they feel a positive change in their mind and body by having purpose, motivation, exercise and social interaction. Because they are serving for free, prices of goods can remain low. The volunteers spoke about a woman with a family of 6 that told them she counted on the thrift store to be able to buy school supplies due to the high cost of purchasing so many supplies at retail. The manager commented that many women need essential personal supplies, such as soap, shampoo, and deodorant which the store purchases with their earnings. These women in turn benefit healthy.

Donations brought in also go to many other nonprofits in town. Another RSVP member at CrossRoads Food Pantry receives tee-shirts to make grocery bags, the Neblett Center and Girls Inc. are given clothes, the Senior Center receives an item for their auction, and baby bottles are taken to another. These are just a few examples of their giving to other nonprofits, for the wellbeing of others. These RSVP members believe they are, as one said, "slices of a whole, each agency giving a part." An RSVP volunteer stated that she, "enjoys showing people love and concern." They all agree that they are involved in part of a whole group giving and receiving, that has made an enormous impact on the lives of those in need, as well as themselves.