

Porter County Aging & Community Services Inc.
1005 Campbell St.
Valparaiso, IN 46385

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Permit NO 134

RSVP

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“It aids in companionship, outreach and serves as an outlet.” Joyce said volunteers, who establish their own curriculum, teach the class, which focuses on skills from turning on the computer and moving the mouse to accessing the Internet and setting up email.

“We’ve had a 90-year-old take the class who touched a computer for the first time,” she said. “The computers are free to use and we encourage participants to use them after the class.”

RSVP has been offering the classes for about 4 1/2 years

and they allow for a lot of one-on-one time with an average of three participants per class. Joyce is currently accepting interested individuals for a waiting list.

The program is currently facing challenges as it has seen a decrease in federal funding.

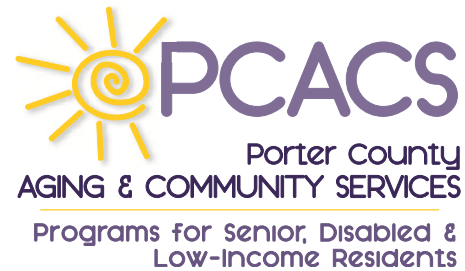
“For now, we are business as usual and we have taken measures to compensate without affecting our volunteer programs,” Joyce said.

RSVP accepts community donations. To help, contact Joyce at 219-464-1028.

For more information on the services provided by PCACS, contact:

Bruce Lindner, executive director,
via phone at 464-9736 or

via e-mail at bhlindner@frontier.com.



PCACS is proud to be a member agency of the United Way of Porter County.



Winter 2012 issue

NEWSLETTER

Two Men and a Truck owner takes community involvement to new level

Two Men and a Truck's mission and vision drive local franchise owner Jeff Brown to help community organizations, including Porter County Aging and Community Services.

The moving company has been stepping in when organizations need assistance with projects since the Northwest Indiana location opened in 2004.

PCACS Executive Director Bruce Lindner said Jeff and his staff have donated their services to help Federal Section 8 Housing clients move when they faced health challenges or didn't have family to help.

Most of the time the clients' apartments before the move had problems like mold, poor heating or offered challenges by not being on the ground level," Lindner said. "The moves usually involved some packing of goods as well as moving the chairs, beds and other furniture. Jeff understands our clients and goes beyond what is expected."

Jeff said the franchises are encouraged to get involved in their communities as a way to build on founder Mary Ellen Sheets' years of volunteering. She donated her first-year profit, \$1,000, to 10 different charities — a tradition she continues through support of these charities today.

On a national level, the company donates a dime for every move to the American Cancer Society. Since launching the program in 2000, the company has raised \$345,219 for the charity.

Locally, Jeff began his location's community involvement after Hurricane Katrina's devastation by donating its entire box inventory to the Church of Nazarene. Since then, Jeff's team has donated time, services and supplies to area organizations and causes, including Spring Valley Homeless Shelter, Opportunity Enterprises, Kiwanis, the United Way, Toys for Tots, the Buddy Walk, March of Dimes, Habitat for Humanity and various churches.

"If you don't help out, what are you here for? What goes around comes around," Jeff said. "If you operate a poor business, you aren't going to be here too long."

Community partner spotlight



Jeff Brown is president of Two Men and a Truck's Northwest Indiana franchise, which covers Lake, Porter and LaPorte counties. The company offers custom moving services.

Main location: 4701 Airport Drive in Valparaiso, 219-548-7577

Satellite office: 10007 W. 109th St. in Cedar Lake, 219-365-4477

Family: Wife, Laura, married 19 years; sons Ross, 16, Kyle, 14 and Nick, 9

Background: NWI resident for 36 years

It makes you feel good to wear our company shirts with pride, knowing what we do for the community and how we run a good business."

In 2012, Jeff looks to help even more by participating in the company's Movers for Moms project, which collects supplies for women's and family shelters.

Getting to Know: our board members

What is your role on the PCACS board?

I work as a liaison between the board and the County Council. I keep the council informed of what is going on and foresee problems to relate back to the council. It's very important for me to have a good rapport with the board and communication is very important.

Why do you continue to participate?

I have empathy for the age group and am very familiar with the challenges individuals confront at this age. I took care of my mother before she passed. She moved in with me when she was 92 and she passed at 97.

What accomplishments are you proud of?

I was able to facilitate other council members to pass next year's budget. I also have been accepted by the clientele who are willing to share their experiences, good and bad, and I work to help correct the problem. I am like the gripe queen. I am proud that they have enough confidence in me to take care of the problem.

What future goals do you have as a board member?

We have an aging population with growing concerns and problems that must be addressed. I would like PCACS to maintain and, if possible, grow the transportation areas.

Sylvia Graham

Years on board: One

Current position: At-large member of Porter County Council since 2008

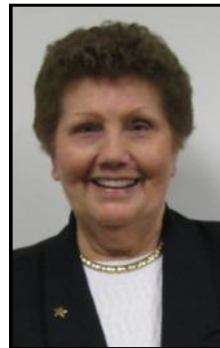
Professional background: Retired after working as Registered Nurse and Cardiovascular Nurse Practitioner; worked at Porter Health System and Northwest Indiana Cardiovascular Physicians

Personal background: Resident of Porter County for 50 years; Porter County 4-H leader for eight years, announced the 4-H horse and pony shows

Family: Married to husband Jack for 52 years, two children, four grandchildren

Memberships: Valparaiso Women's Club, Midwest Saddle & Bridle Club, Valparaiso Presbyterian Church and Indiana Farm Bureau

Interesting fact: "I grew up fishing and hunting. I am a Pro Bass Fishing Champion winning on Neely Henry Lake in Alabama in 2000."



Energy Assistance program continues to help residents

Due to additional funds made available by the state, PCACS staff is continuing to take appointments for Porter County individuals needing energy assistance.

"We had faced a bumpy financial start to this year's energy assistance season and had been restricting appointments," said PCACS Executive Director Bruce Lindner. "Now with an infusion of funds for the program, we expect to reach as many residents as last year when we were able to help 2,100 individuals."

Energy Assistance is an income-eligible program as well as a program to help seniors and individuals with disabilities who are struggling to pay their energy bills. When participants qualify for a determined amount, the payment is electronically paid to the appropriate energy company.

Bruce said as the program is time-sensitive, the three volunteers and Energy Assistance coordinator Marilyn Lindner are facing a large volume of phone calls.

"We ask everyone to be patient when they call to ask

questions and schedule appointments," Bruce said.

"Call or stop in the office to get a list of what documents are necessary to complete the application process and then make sure you have all of them with you when you go to PCACS to make your application," Marilyn added.

In order to apply for assistance, individuals will need a recent energy bill that is in the applicants' name, but it does not have to be a disconnect notice. They will also need social security cards for everyone in the household and proof of income from all sources for household members over 18. If applicants are renting, they need to have a Landlord Affidavit completed. This form is available at the trustee offices in Portage, Chesterton and Hebron and at PCACS on its Web page, www.portercountycacs.org. Additional documents may be needed for some circumstances and the staff can identify these before the appointment.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call PCACS at 464-9736.

Volunteer Force



RSVP of Porter County volunteers crochet blankets and wheel-chair and walker bags to be donated to community residents.

RSVP unites seniors, community organizations

The Retired & Senior Volunteer Program continues to affect not only the lives of its volunteers but also the area organizations that they serve.

RSVP of Porter County connects individuals 55 and older with Porter County not-for-profits and proprietary health organizations. The program currently has 275 volunteers working with 52 not-for-profits. The group donated approximately 24,000 hours in 2011.

"A lot of the volunteers use their life skills, but others come in and want to do something totally different. They want a new experience," said RSVP Director Joyce Bolin. "We try to listen to what they want and match them with the best organization."

Joyce said a gentleman came in with a background as an electrician and her mind automatically went to an organization such as Rebuilding Together. But the volunteer was looking for new challenges.

"He ended up at the library in the genealogy department," she said.

Some of the area organizations that volunteers assist include:

- Opportunity Enterprises as part of its Simply Amazing Market
- State Health Insurance Assistance Program to help seniors with Medicare decisions and selection of a supplemental policy
- St. Agnes Adult Day Service Center and area nursing homes
- Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as seasonal tour guides and gift shop workers
- Energy Assistance Program
- IRS' Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program

RSVP at a glance

Location: 1005 Campbell St. in Valparaiso, inside PCACS building

Phone: 219-464-1028

Director: Joyce Bolin for 13 years

Why she enjoys her role: "I like working with people and I get to be involved with both ends of the spectrum by working with both volunteers and organizations."

Her outlook: "My volunteers are an inspiration to me. I have an 80-year-old SHIP counselor and she is as sharp as a tack. She said something to me about a book she was reading on aging and how to age gracefully. It said something like 'keep up your curiosity.' I thought that was a good term to use. Explore new options, keep your curiosity going and the desire to learn new things."

Volunteers knit and crochet blankets and walker and wheelchair bags that are donated to the community. RSVP accepts donations of 4-ply yarn for the afghans and fabric for the walker bags.

RSVP also builds skills in area seniors through its computer classes, which run for four weeks on either Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays.

"It's a very basic class that is targeted at people who have never touched a computer," Joyce said.

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