



Retired & Senior Volunteer Programs
of Ingham, Eaton & Clinton Counties
2400 Pattengill Avenue, Lansing, MI 48910
517 887-6116

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2026



From the Desk of Carol Wood, Executive Director

We hope spring is just around the corner and headed our way. It has certainly been a snowy and cold winter, and many of us are looking forward to warmer days ahead.

In January, we celebrated Jan Bowlin's 10-year anniversary with RSVP. It felt especially meaningful to take this opportunity to recognize our dedicated staff and their years of service:

- **Gloria Cannon**, Foster Grandparent Volunteer Coordinator – 16 years on August 10
- **Jan Bowlin**, Finance & Office Manager – 10 years on January 25
- **Carol Wood**, Executive Director – 9 years on December 12
- **Jason Wilkes**, Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent Program Director – 8 years on July 9
- **Jim Dell**, RSVP Volunteer Coordinator – 7 years on November 4
- **Audrey Gordon**, Program Assistant for FGP, RSVP, and SCP – 3 years on January 19

We are also pleased to share that our federal funding appropriation bill was passed and signed on February 3. This secures funding through September 30, 2026.

2025 Impact of Volunteer Programs

Retired & Senior Volunteer Programs of Ingham, Eaton & Clinton Counties
www.rsvp-lansing.com

Foster Grandparent Program
28 Volunteers
25,769 Hours Served

Senior Companion Program
31 Volunteers
31,940 Hours Served

RSVP Volunteers
233 Volunteers
36,412 Hours Served

1/1/25 to 12/31/25



94,121 Hours Served

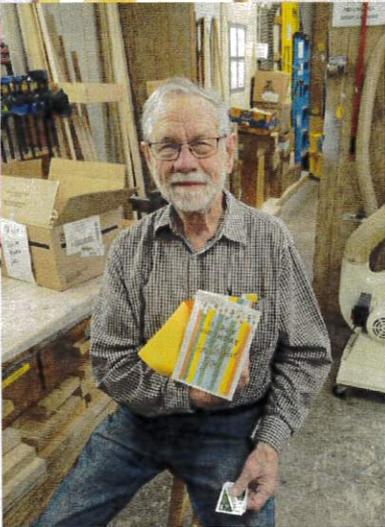


Saving the Greater Lansing Area
\$3,273,528.38

We are incredibly proud of the impact our volunteers have made in the community throughout 2025. Foster Grandparents serve in classrooms, helping children succeed. Senior Companions serve in residential facilities, providing companionship through visits and phone calls. RSVP volunteers serve in a variety of roles — from patrolling the River Trail and welcoming visitors at the airport, to making toys for children and providing medical transportation for seniors.

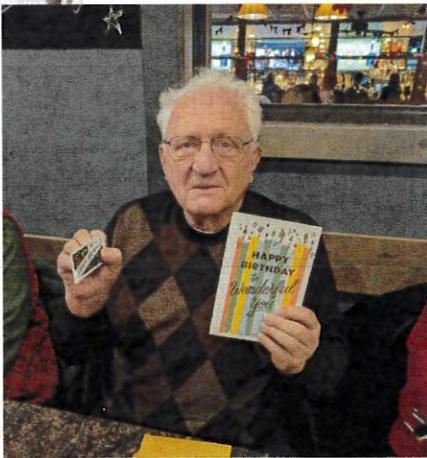
Each volunteer gives of themselves to make our community a better place.

Birthday Wishes



Bill Kingsley turned 89 years young! Bill is a RSVP volunteer and has been volunteering at Scheffel Toys Project since 2008! He has shared his talents helping to make thousand of toys for underprivileged children.

Ron Thill turned 87 years old. Ron has been volunteering at McLaren for 10 years at their Information Desk. Ron spends his time helping visitors and patients when they come to the hospital.



Happy 87th Birthday to Jim Heyden, he retired from the Lansing Police Department, as the Deputy Chief serving from 1961-1994. He now devotes his time as RSVP volunteer at R. J. Scheffel Toy Project.



Carol Rostar turned 91 years old. Carol is a Foster Grandmother volunteer. Working with children for the past six years.



Ester Keys is RSVP Caring Hearts volunteer. Esther turned 91. She volunteers by making hats for new borns at McLaren Hospital



Lucille Pitlanish a RSVP volunteer turned 92 years young! Lucille is on our Telephone Reassurance callers. Her calls help to brighten the lives of seniors who are isolated and in need of a friendly voice.



HAPPY 85TH BIRTHDAY Norma Bermudez! She has served as Senior Companion for three years, and before that she worked with MSU Extension Program for a number of years.



Remembering Volunteers....Welcoming new volunteers

In loving Memory
 05 January 1945-
 22 January 2026
**VERLENE "VEE"
 BJORNSON**

Vee was raised on a farm in Wolf Lake, Minnesota, where she learned self-reliance and resilience. The family lived without running water and relied on a large vegetable garden and raised sheep for wool. She volunteered for many years with Lakeshore Keepers, welcoming visitors and guiding them up the lighthouse towers. Vee also gave her time to the Woldumar Nature Center, ESL instruction, the Capital Area Humane Society, and the Delta Center Book Store. Over the years, Vee served as an RSVP Volunteer with the Scheffel Memorial Toy Project.

Wayne May, Foster Grandparent

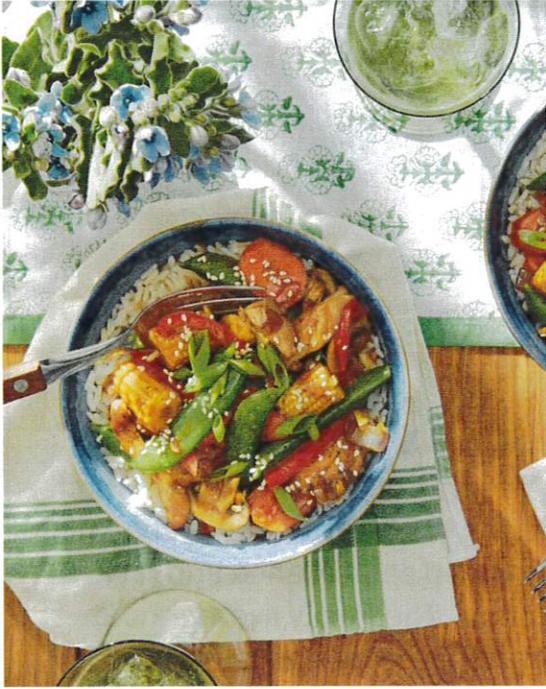


NEW VOLUNTEERS

Joyce Cathey, Senior Companion



Chicken and Veggies Stir Fry



Yields: 4 serving
Prep Time: 20 minutes
Total Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup chicken stock
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. plus 1 teaspoon pure honey
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 1 Tbsp. plus 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1/2 lb. boneless chicken thighs, sliced and add Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 Tbsp. canola oil
- 4 oz. snap peas, trimmed
- 1/2 red pepper, chopped
- 1/4 red onion, chopped
- 4 oz. mushrooms, sliced
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1/2 (15 ounce) can Baby Corn, drained
- 1 1/2-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- Sliced scallions, toasted sesame seeds, and warm rice, for serving

1. **Step 1: Whisk** together stock, soy sauce, honey, sesame oil, and cornstarch in a bowl until cornstarch is dissolved.
2. **Step 2: Season** chicken with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large skillet over high heat. Add chicken and cook, stirring occasionally, until cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes; transfer to a plate using tongs. Reduce heat to medium-high. Add vegetables and season with salt. Cook, stirring often, until vegetables are crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes (you can add a few tablespoons of water if pan starts to get too dark). Add ginger and garlic. Cook, stirring, until fragrant, 30 seconds to 1 minute.
3. **Step 3: Whisk the sauce and add it to the pan with the chicken.** Cook, stirring, until sauce is thickened, about 1 minute.
4. **Step 4: Serve** over rice topped with sesame seeds and scallions.

Ground Chicken Tacos

Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp. canola oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 lb. ground chicken
- 1 1/2 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 lime, zested and juiced, plus wedges for garnish
- 2 tsp. chopped chipotles in adobo
- 1/4 cup chicken stock
- 8 - 12 crispy taco shells, warmed
- Diced avocado, crumbled queso fresco, sliced radishes, and chopped fresh cilantro, for topping



Directions

1. **Step 1:** Heat oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Add chicken, chili powder, and cumin. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, breaking it up with a spoon, until meat begins to brown, 5 to 6 minutes. Add lime zest and juice, chipotles, and chicken stock. Increase heat to medium-high and cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid is absorbed, 3 to 4 minutes.
2. **Step 2:** Serve in taco shells with desired toppings.

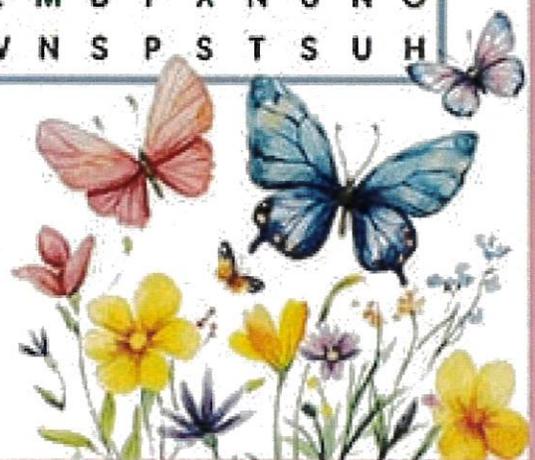
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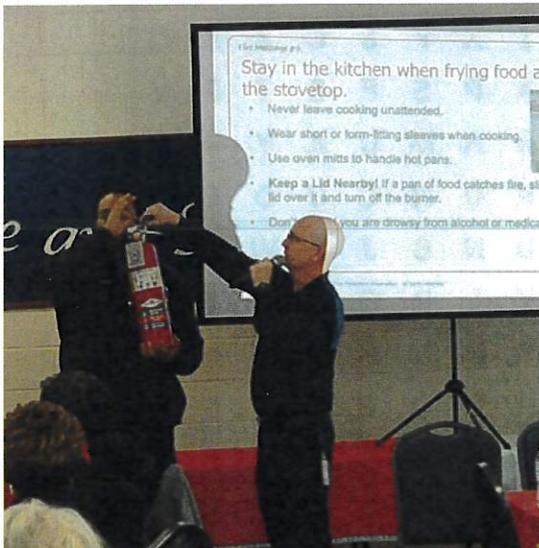
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 RAINBOW

RAINDROP
 ROBIN
 SEEDLING
 SPRINGTIME
 SPROUT
 SUNSHINE
 THAW
 TULIP
 UMBRELLA



VOLUNTEER IN-SERVICE



THANKS TO LANSING FIRE DEPARTMENT who presented “Fire Safety for Older Adults”. The presentation included information about your risk of dying in a home fire is greater as you get older, smoke alarms give you extra time to escape, cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires, and plan your escape around your abilities.



Special Thanks to MSU medical students for giving physicals to Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion volunteers.



Steps to Safety

Our recent **“Steps to Safety”** program, based on National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) guidance, focused on practical ways older adults can reduce their risk of home fires and falls — two of the leading causes of injury.

Fire Safety: Fire is Fast!

Today’s home fires burn hotter and faster than ever before. You may have as little as **two minutes to escape** once a smoke alarm sounds. Smoke — not flames — causes most fire deaths.

Top Causes of Home Fires:

Cooking Space heaters Smoking Electrical issues Candles

Key Fire Safety Tips:

- **Stay in the kitchen** when cooking, especially when frying food.
- Keep space heaters at least **3 feet** from anything that can burn and unplug when not in use.
- If you smoke, **smoke outside** and never smoke in bed.
- Never leave candles unattended.
- Install **smoke alarms on every level**, in bedrooms, and outside sleeping areas.
- Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms **monthly**.
- Plan and practice a **home escape plan** with two ways out of every room if possible.
- If you can’t get out, **close doors, seal gaps under doors, and call 911 from a window**.

Remember: **Stop, Drop, and Roll** if clothing catches fire.

Fall Prevention: Small Changes Make a Big Difference

Did you know that **1 in 3 older adults experiences a fall**, and the first fall doubles the risk of another? The good news: many falls are preventable.

Fall Prevention Tips:

Stay Active

- Regular exercise builds strength, balance, and coordination.
- Tai Chi and stretching are especially helpful.

Talk with your doctor about the right exercise for you.

Move Safely

- Take your time getting out of chairs or bed.
- Stand and get your balance before walking.

Wear sturdy, well-fitting shoes with non-slip soles — even indoors.

Make Your Home Safer

- Keep stairs and pathways clear of cords, shoes, books, and clutter.
- Install handrails on both sides of stairs and use them every time.
- Improve lighting, especially in stairways and between bedroom and bathroom.
- Use non-slip mats and install grab bars in bathrooms.
- Secure rugs and fix uneven flooring.

Clear ice and snow from outdoor walkways.

Manage Your Health

- Keep an updated list of medications and review them with your doctor.
- Be aware that some medications can affect balance or cause drowsiness.

Consider a **medical alert device** if you live alone.

Safety Starts at Home

Fire and fall prevention doesn’t require major renovations — just awareness, planning, and small, consistent habits. By taking proactive steps today, we can protect ourselves and maintain independence longer. For more information, contact your local fire department or senior center. Stay safe!

**NEED
Call**



TO BORROW A TOOL?
the Capital Area Housing Partnership at 517-332-4663.



RSVP MISSION

RSVP is a community based organization that recruits a broad range of volunteers to meet the various needs of our partner organizations. We strengthen the organizations we serve while enriching the lives of our volunteers. Our volunteers are dedicated and caring individuals with vast life experiences which contribute to the unique services we provide.

SERVICES FROM TRI-COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING

TCOA can help with the following services:

Congregate Senior Dining Sites	517-887-1393
Crisis Services	517-887-1440
Health and Wellness Activities	517-887-1450
Home Delivered Meals	517-887-1460
Home Repair or Chore Services	517-887-1440
Information and Assistance	517-887-1440
In-Home Services	517-887-1440
Legal Assistance	888-783-8190
Long Term Care Ombudsman	866-485-9393
Non-Covered Medical Needs	517-887-1440

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

2400 Pattengill Ave.
Lansing, MI 48910

Phone: 517-887-6116
Fax: 517-887-7313
www.rsvp-lansing.com

Office Hours:
Monday - Friday
8:30am - 4:00pm