



2008 Annual Report

18,250 Minnesota Senior Corps volunteers provided more than 2.7 million hours of service.

During these challenging economic times, the Minnesota Senior Corps programs are prime examples of how the value of volunteer time saves taxpayers' dollars each year. In all, 18,250 Minnesota Senior Corps volunteers provided more than 2.7 million hours of volunteer service in 2008!



Foster Grandparents

In 2008, 1,036 Foster Grandparent volunteers contributed 681,749 hours to the lives of 14,000 children and youth throughout the state — serving as mentors, tutors, and caregivers. At the same time, 16,995 RSVP volunteers contributed almost 1.8 million hours of service within 1,650 nonprofit or public agencies throughout Minnesota. And 439 Senior Companions provided 262,026 hours of service, which allowed 2,200 elderly Minnesotans to remain living independently in their homes.



Senior Companions

Our Minnesota Senior Companion and RSVP volunteers provided companionship, respite, chore, nutrition, and transportation services to help keep our frail and elderly Minnesotans in their homes and out of nursing homes. In 2008, approximately 5,400 Minnesotans remained living independently in their homes with direct volunteer support. This resulted in a gross savings of more than \$260 million for the State of Minnesota by preventing nursing home expenditures.



RSVP

Our Minnesota Foster Grandparent and RSVP volunteers, who have a direct impact on improving the quality of education for our Minnesota children and youth, provided 850,000 hours of tutoring or mentoring. This resulted in a gross savings of more than \$15 million for the State of Minnesota.

Thank you for your continued support of our Minnesota Senior Corps volunteers — along with your support, they are changing the lives of our Minnesota neighbors!

Deanna Patenaude
President, MnSC Association

FUNDING: The federal and state governments support Senior Corps. However, local public and private support is critical to engaging the growing number of eligible seniors

	Federal	State	Local
Foster Grandparent Program	\$2,380,141	\$842,247	\$487,670
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program	\$1,458,682	\$536,123	\$1,154,703
Senior Companion Program	\$599,534	\$554,190	\$349,492
Total	\$4,438,357	\$1,932,560	\$1,991,865
Grand Total (federal, state, and local).....			\$8,362,782

ENCOURAGING INDEPENDENT LIVING...

Senior Companions and RSVP volunteers are assigned to community members who need help to live independently, and often are at risk of nursing home placement. Volunteers provide a variety of non-medical assistance to clients, including friendly visiting, respite support to caregivers, and transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and errands. Additional activities include Meals on Wheels, congregate dining, chore services, home modification, peer counseling, and education programs.

The Senior Companion Program of Northwest Minnesota is very fortunate to have Merle as a volunteer. Merle turns 79 in 2009 and begins his 12th year of volunteering as a Senior Companion in Crookston. Over the years, Merle has shared many hours of kindness, caring, and compassion to hundreds of senior citizens in northern Minnesota's Red River Valley. Trips to the doctor, store, and visiting over coffee are weekly occurrences in the life of Merle and his clients. Those weekly visits enable his clients to remain independent in their own homes. Some of the people served by Merle also receive assistance from Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS). He is able to help by picking up and delivering the boxes of food each month, which enables those seniors to receive nutritious foods to help extend their limited incomes.

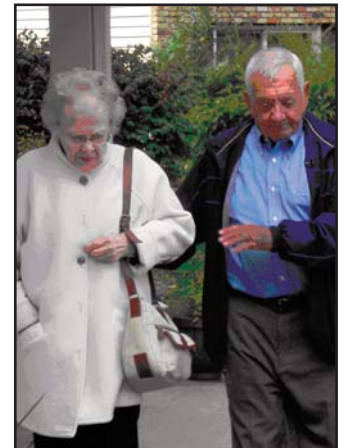


“As a long-term care social worker, I have seen time and again the benefits of Senior Companions in the lives of our senior citizens,” says LouAnne with Polk County Social Services. “They have someone to call on to help out with a ride to a last-minute appointment, or to run a necessary errand, or just to talk to. This calm, kind reliability comes naturally to Merle as he has enriched the lives of many seniors in our community who might otherwise have a pretty lonesome and worrisome life. Thank you, Merle, for all you do.”



New Senior Companion Clara joined the Senior Companion Program last June and met with her first client. Marie lives alone in a cute little house on the edge of town. It was clear that her memory was fading and her family was concerned about her living alone. One of the first things Clara realized was that, with Marie no longer able to drive, she would be needed to get her into town to do the basic errands of living independently. When Marie's prescriptions need to be refilled, Clara takes her to the drugstore. Marie relies on Clara to go to the grocery store with her and, returning home from the store, help from Clara to put the groceries into the cupboards. In addition, Clara makes it possible for Marie to stay connected with the community and her family. Recently, when Marie's brother had surgery, Clara was able to help her visit with him while he was hospitalized.

Marie waits for Clara's regular visits each week. She would not be able to continue to remain independent in her own home without these regular Senior Companion visits. In the six months since Clara began serving as a Senior Companion, she has logged 2,000 miles of driving in her car simply performing her Senior Companion responsibilities of going to visit her four clients each week and taking them out.



MENTORING CHILDREN & YOUTH...

Foster Grandparent and RSVP volunteers augment classroom teaching and learning by providing tutoring and mentoring support in many academic subject areas. Senior Corps volunteers guide children at a critical time in their lives, providing one-on-one attention and serving as role models for appropriate behavior, preparing at-risk children in academic and life skills – and increasing the likelihood they will experience a successful educational future.

Among 25 children in a kindergarten class at an elementary school in Duluth, MN, three children live in foster homes. These three children — two girls and a boy — came into the classroom with below expected levels for pre-reading and math. The two girls would come to school very sad, which was manifested by the girls being quiet, often sick, and worried about everything. The boy was very angry, which caused him to act out. Also in the classroom was 79-year-old Foster Grandma Dot, who spent time one-on-one with these three children and, in particular, helped the boy focus and complete his work.



According to the kindergarten teacher, a trust developed between the children and Grandma Dot. They knew they could count on her in their daily school life because she was a consistent presence in their lives. She had a gentleness about her that other (younger) school volunteers did not have. This was visible as she spent time each day helping the children develop self-help (e.g., learning to button their coats), academic, and social skills. By the end of kindergarten, the three children met curriculum goals and knew their letters and letter sounds. “This was due in large part to the extra attention that Grandma was able to provide, which they had missed in the past,” says their teacher, “and to the trust that developed because of the consistent, caring service Grandma provided.”



Alma began serving as a Foster Grandparent at a Bemidji elementary school on her 60th birthday. Although her monthly income from her VA widows’ pension was very low and she knew the small financial reimbursement would be a help to her, she also felt that she had the skills and experience to use to benefit children. More than four years later, the teachers at the schools continue to comment on how Alma’s one-on-one attention helps many students. This year, Alma is working with a 2nd grader who is reading at a 4th grade level. They spend their time together reading the dictionary and a chapter book that is well beyond the reach of his classmates. Without her presence in the classroom to encourage him, the student would not be able to explore and build on his gifts. Alma also works with a boy who previously was unsuccessfully home schooled. Although he should be in the 5th grade, his skill levels are several grades lower. Because Alma is giving special attention to him, he is excited about learning and beginning to have success.

“Alma is a gift to me,” says one teacher. “Because she is here, my students get one-on-one reading time. Alma is compassionate and kind. When one of my students refused to work, Alma very patiently waited it out with him. That student is doing very well now because we didn’t give up on him. Alma played a huge part in that.” Alma’s small stipend is enough to supplement her pension income to meet her living expenses, and she is able to give back in a meaningful way as she makes a positive difference in the lives of the young students.



EXPERIENCING HEALTHY BENEFITS...

According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer. Older volunteers are the most likely to receive greater benefits from volunteering, either because they may otherwise face higher incidence of illness or because volunteering provides them with physical and social activity and a sense of purpose at a time when their social roles are changing.

Winters in Minnesota are not only a time of cold, but also a time of darkness, which can lead to feelings of isolation and depression. Getting out and volunteering is one way people can stay connected and have a little bit of joy and light brought into their lives through the long winter months. For one Aitkin-Carlton Co. RSVP volunteer who suffers from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), providing transportation on a daily basis has been a wonderful means of socialization and has really picked up his spirits. In fact, in the past, the volunteer used a full-spectrum light 30 minutes a day to help with his depression. Halfway through this past winter, he came to realize that he had yet to use the light. It was the task of helping a client run errands three days a week that helped him realize that “we were having so much fun that I didn’t know I was SAD.”



Nearly three years after becoming a Foster Grandparent, Jean was diagnosed with breast cancer. Jean had surgery in May and had chemotherapy treatments every three weeks during the summer. Jean wasn’t sure if she would ever be able to return to school as a Foster Grandparent again. Although Jean recuperated well from the surgery, the chemotherapy resulted in hair loss, extreme fatigue, and a persistent feeling of sickness. She was extremely susceptible to

viruses or infections of any kind, but says, “The thought of returning to school in the fall really helped keep me going.” Jean’s motivation made all the difference in the world. By August, Jean was done with her chemotherapy. By early September, her doctor granted Jean permission to return to school. When she returned, Jean wore a hat rather than an uncomfortable wig to hide her hair loss. A number of faculty and staff were familiar with cancer treatments and resulting hair loss, so the teachers were prepared ahead of time to help the children understand and accept Jean’s changes. “Even cancer, surgery, and treatments didn’t stop Jean,” says a teacher who worked with Jean. “She was back with us in the fall, as eager as ever. We are thankful for her everyday presence, her support of our work, and her caring manner with children.”



Bonnie lives in Mountain Lake and has just started her second year as a Senior Corps volunteer. Before she began volunteering, she says she was very self-absorbed in her own problems and those of her family. Once she started volunteering on a regular basis by helping senior citizens in her community, all that changed. Visiting with others who need assistance, knowing they are counting on her, she found she didn’t have time to focus all her attention on herself and her needs. She lost 25 pounds and has been able to keep her diabetes under control. Her volunteering has also helped improve family relationships as she is not so involved in her adult children’s lives, and they all enjoy each other’s company more.



MINNESOTA SENIOR CORPS PROJECTS...

www.mnseniorcorps.org

Foster Grandparent Program

FGP of Central Minnesota

Serving Benton, Douglas, Grant, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pope, Sherburne, Stearns, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, & Wilkin counties

Jackie Johnson
Phone: 320.229.4588
Email: jjohnso1@gw.stcdio.org

FGP of Lutheran Social Service

Serving Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott counties & counties not covered by other Foster Grandparent Programs

John Bringewatt
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FGP of Northeast Minnesota and Northwest Wisconsin

Serving St. Louis, Cook, Lake, Carlton, & Pine counties in Minnesota

Terry Hendrick
Phone: 715.394.5384
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FGP of Northwest Minnesota

Serving Becker, Clay, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomon, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, & Roseau counties

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RSVP

Aitkin-Carlton County RSVP

Serving Aitkin & Carlton counties
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Anoka County RSVP

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Arrowhead RSVP

Serving Cook, Lake, & St. Louis counties
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Augustana RSVP

Serving Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, & Renville counties
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Common Good RSVP

Serving Blue Earth, Brown, Goodhue, LeSueur, Nicollet, Olmsted, Rice, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan & Winona counties

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ElderCircle RSVP

Serving Itasca & Koochiching counties
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Greater St. Cloud RSVP

Serving Benton, Sherburne, & Stearns counties
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Horizon Health RSVP

Serving Beltrami, Cass, Lake of the Woods, & Morrison counties

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Mahube RSVP

Serving Becker, Clearwater, Hubbard, & Mahnomon counties

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RSVP Greater Twin Cities & East Central Minnesota

Serving Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Isanti, Hennepin, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Pine, Ramsey, Scott, & Washington counties
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RSVP of Red River Valley

Serving Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, & Roseau counties
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RSVP of Southern Valley

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RSVP of Southwest Minnesota

Serving Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, & Rock counties
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RSVP of Todd/Wadena/OtterTail/Wilkin

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RSVP Volunteers United

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Semcac RSVP

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Southern Tri-County RSVP

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West Central Minnesota RSVP

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Senior Companion Program

SCP of Lutheran Social Service

Serving all Minnesota counties not covered by other Senior Companion Programs
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SCP of Northwest Minnesota

Serving Becker, Clay, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomon, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, & Roseau counties
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