

Volunteer of the Year – West Central Wisconsin

Marti Clark

Coulee Region RSVP



Marti Clark first came to volunteer with the Coulee Region RSVP and started serving on October 15, 2012 when she heard on the radio that they needed baby hats for a particular service campaign. Almost ten years later, she has volunteered over 7,500 hours at 27 different sites.

While Marti has assisted numerous efforts, she has made the largest impact with their Handcraft Program. Each week she goes through the Handcraft items their volunteers drop off, inspecting them and logging the numbers and types of items and as well as the volunteers who brought them. She tags items to identify they were made by an AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP volunteer and puts them away for future distribution. Marti was the one volunteer that came into the office after it reopened following its closure due to COVID-19, continuing to sort all of the items while also making sure they were first held for 3-5 days before checking them in following the CDC hold times for fabric items.



Marti organizes the Handicraft Open House each November, where local nonprofits, medical facilities, long term care facilities, and other agencies are invited to “shop” for items made by the Handicraft volunteers at no cost to provide to those in need. These include quilts, baby items, cancer turbans, walker and wheelchair bags, scarves, hats, mittens, and several other items. Not to be deterred by the COVID-19 pandemic, she restructured it into a longer three-day event where organizations could make appointments to continue obtaining these items to give to others.

Additionally, when Coulee Region RSVP was presented with the request of making twiddlemuffs, which are designed to provide a sensory experience for those suffering from Alzheimer's disease and dementia, Marti took on the project. She is currently the only volunteer to make these items, knitting four hours each day to make the twiddlemuffs. Since starting the project, over 125 of them have been given to local memory care units in La Crosse and Monroe, as well as two local hospitals including them in their dementia kits in their emergency rooms.

Describing Marti’s service, program director Ruth Kinstler shared that “Marti always has a smile on her face and has a passion for the mission of RSVP. She is not afraid to try something new. Marti has a passion for helping wherever there is a need. She has a very giving heart and is willing to assist whenever we ask.”

