

RSVP NOTES & NEWS

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KEVIN GOOCH

Meals on Wheels driver

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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Kevin Gooch, Meals on Wheels driver
By Evelyn Harris, RSVP Director



Meet Kevin Gooch. I had the pleasure of spending an afternoon riding along with Kevin as he delivered meals to homebound residents in Michigan City, IN, where he was born and raised. Kevin, 70, is a devout Christian who speaks candidly about his faith in God—the reason he is so dedicated to serving others. In 2012, Kevin turned his life around, started living for the Lord and pondered what he would do in retirement after devoting 43 years to the steel mill. The only thing he knew was that he wanted to spend the rest of his days serving the Lord. A couple days later, Kevin said Meals on Wheels (MOW) came to mind: “I questioned it at first, but the thought never went away, and that’s when I knew it was God.”

Cheryl Daurer, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels of LaPorte County, said she still remembers the day Kevin walked in her office in December 2013. “He was just one of the nicest guys I had ever met. He completed an application, signed up for RSVP and received his route schedule that started January 1.”

Kevin recalls the first day he rode with Cheryl while in training. “We stopped at a house to deliver the first meal and I happened to know the guy there, so that was okay. Then, we went to the second house and the Lord just humbled me. After delivering the meal, I came

down the steps crying. Cheryl thought something happened while I was in the house. She asked what was wrong and I told her God is humbling me right in front of you. I continued to tear up as we drove to the next stop and I tried to pull myself together.” Seeing how emotional Kevin was, Cheryl asked if he wanted her to deliver the next meal. Kevin decided against that and delivered at the next stop as well. “I wanted to deliver from that point on,” Kevin replied. “First, God showed me how great the need was. Second, the second stop was my wife’s uncle. I had no clue he lived there. He had a meal that day because God led me to be a servant.”

Kevin now delivers meals on a weekly basis and has a part-time bus monitoring position at Michigan City Schools to keep busy when not delivering for MOW. Kevin says that he’d rather cancel a vacation than miss his scheduled day to serve. “I’m never sick on Thursdays and always excited to go. I will show up every time unless there is something that I just can’t change, because I’m dedicated to Meals on Wheels.”

We talked about the challenges he faces as a meal delivery volunteer, like the winter weather. When we experienced blizzard like conditions this spring, Kevin vividly remembered how bad the streets were. While businesses were closed, Kevin still delivered meals. He said, “I know this is a

test of my dedication. I’m just going to get through it.” And, he did.

There have been some unforgettable moments for Kevin: “I remember trying to deliver to a gentlemen on my route and found out from his family that he no longer was in his home. He had been moved to a local nursing home facility for a while. Since I wasn’t busy that day, I decided to stop by to pay him a visit. When I entered his room and he saw me, I thought he was going to jump out of his chair! He was so excited to see me and that really touched my soul. I couldn’t believe it. I went to visit him the following week as well to see how he was doing.”

In his spare time, Kevin enjoys spending time with his family, attending church and sharing his love for God. He is a humble man who finds pleasure in serving others. When we discussed the perks of the RSVP program—mileage reimbursement, supplemental liability insurance, accidental death benefit, free events and more—Kevin stressed that’s not why he serves. “You’ll never see me at any volunteer recognition event. I’m not looking for any type of reward. I just want to give all glory to God. I’m doing all of this for Him, by Him, through Him, and because of Him. I am only concerned about feeding the hungry and the poor because God has given me so much.”

Thank you, Kevin, for lending RSVP and Meals on Wheels your servant’s heart and choosing to make a difference!

As we wrapped up our conversation, I asked Kevin one final question: “If there was one thing you could change about your volunteer experience, what would it be?” He immediately replied, “More diversity in the program.” Our desire is that our RSVP membership reflects the communities we serve. Invite someone you know to join RSVP today!



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Evelyn

Evelyn Harris,
AmeriCorps Seniors/RSVP Regional Director

“HAPPY SUMMER!”

We’ve landed on a date for our 2021 Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon — Tuesday, August 24. Ladies, dust off your flapper dresses! Men, pull out your white spats. Let’s celebrate the Roaring Twenties in 2021! We’re keeping the same theme as last year’s event, since it was canceled by COVID and we didn’t get to wear our 1920s garb. This event is for RSVP station managers and volunteers who submitted a timesheet between January 2020 and May 31, 2021. Seating is limited, so look for your invitation in the mail. RSVP by the deadline and be ready to party in August!

P.S. If you volunteered in 2019 you will be able to pick up your new RSVP jacket at the event. For 2019 volunteers who did NOT volunteer in 2020 or 2021, we will make arrangements this fall after the event for you to receive your jacket. Stay tuned!”

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Lake County

- Calumet College of St. Joseph
- Campagna Academy
- Foodbank of NWI
- Habitat for Humanity of NWI ReStore
- Lake Area United Way
- Lake County Sheriff's Department
- Meals on Wheels of NWI
- Secret's Loving Care Adult Day Service
- Sojourner Truth House

LaPorte County

- Dunebrook
- Meals on Wheels, La Porte and Michigan City
- Reins of Life, Inc.
- Stepping Stone Women's Shelter
- The Salvation Army, La Porte
- VNA Hospice

Porter County

- Bonner Senior Center
- Duneland Family YMCA
- First Presbyterian Resale Shop
- Helping Hands Food Pantry
- Meals on Wheels of NWI
- Memorial Opera House
- Opportunity Enterprises
- Porter County Aging & Community Services
- Portage Township Food Pantry
- Portage Township Dept. of Parks and Recreation
- St. Agnes Adult Day Service Center
- United Way of Porter County
- Village Park Enrichment Center at Banta
- VNA Lifeline
- VNA Meals on Wheels, Porter County
- VNA Porter County, Hospice
- Westchester Public Library

Starke County

- Community Services of Starke County

Volunteer opportunities are subject to change based on availability.



REFER A FRIEND & WIN A PRIZE!

Refer a friend to RSVP to be entered to win \$50!

If they serve six consecutive months, you'll be entered to win a \$50 Visa gift card! Tell your friends about the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program today—and be sure they put your name on the referral line on their application. Drawing winner will be announced in December.



UPCOMING EVENTS

DAY OF CARING

FRIDAY, AUGUST 6

nwivolunteer.org

WOMEN'S UNITED BUNCO BASH

OCTOBER 2021

unitedwaypc.org/bunco



HELP RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS

The RSVP program has been one of the best-kept secrets in Northwest Indiana and that's time that changed! If you or someone you know are looking for meaningful volunteer opportunities to make a difference or just stay active, RSVP is the program for you. We partner with many different organizations to offer a variety of service projects for you to choose from. Our desire is that our RSVP membership reflects the communities we serve. **Contact Evelyn at 219.464.3583 x 127 or evelyn@unitedwaypc.org!**



AmeriCorps
Seniors

UNITED WAY OF PORTER COUNTY

951 Eastport Centre Drive
Valparaiso, IN 46383



Unites Northwest Indiana



**“The heart of a volunteer is never measured in size,
but by the depth of the commitment to make a
difference in the lives of others.”**

— DeAnn Hollis



**AmeriCorps
Seniors**



**Are you 55+ years and interested in volunteering? Contact
Evelyn Harris at evelyn@unitedwaypc.org or 219.464.3583 x127.**

The United Way of Porter County fights for the health, education and financial stability of every resident in Porter County. Together with more than 400 community partners, 2,300 donors and 4,000 volunteers, we are uplifting lives across Porter County and Northwest Indiana.

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