

NEWS

VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.

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Phone Calls Ease Loneliness

North Jersey--The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), sponsored by the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, offers a unique service for Bergen County residents who are elderly, disabled, homebound or living alone.

The program is called PEAL (Phoning Elderly And Lonely) and through it friendly volunteers call seniors or people with disabilities at regular, agreed-upon times to see if they are OK, or would simply like to chat for a few minutes.

“Many people who live alone have few people who call them—or wish someone would call them regularly,” says Barbara Wiederecht, Program Director of RSVP. “A reassuring voice on the phone lets them know someone cares. It may be the only link this person has to the outside world.”

PEAL volunteers are trained in listening and communication skills, and can be an information source, referring people to other services that may be of help to them.

“My caller, Betty, has been an angel,” says Mrs. V., a PEAL recipient. “It’s wonderful that there is a real person on the other end of the line. I look forward to her calls.”

Residents who would like to receive PEAL calls, or who have loved ones who could benefit, can contact RSVP at (201) 489-9333, or e-mail rsvp@bergenvolunteers.org.

Becoming a PEAL volunteer caller can be a worthwhile experience for those who would like to give back to the community. “This is a great opportunity to really make a difference in the quality of someone’s life, even if you yourself are housebound, or cannot get out to volunteer regularly,” says Ms. Wiederecht. “All you need is a phone. RSVP can match you with one or more PEAL clients to call. Many great friendships have been formed in this program.”

For more information about the PEAL program, call (201) 489-9333.

The mission of the Volunteer Center of Bergen County is to strengthen the community by connecting people with opportunities to serve, operating model volunteer programs, building capacity for effective volunteering, and participating in strategic partnerships that meet community needs.

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