



## Mission Statement

*Volunteer Center @ RSVP endeavors to serve its community by providing a corps of volunteers to fill important community roles, and to provide for its volunteers meaningful opportunities for community service relevant to their skills, abilities and interests.*

# 2010 Annual Report

## Providing Military Tax Preparation for Deployed and Active Servicemen

Serving in the Military brings unique tax requirements and no local assistance was available to these families. Retired military RSVP volunteers contracted with local military organizations to develop this program. The volunteer tax preparers provided this service to a number of active, reserve and deployed military. The site remains open year-round to prepare tax returns for servicemen as they return from deployment overseas.

## Bringing Resources to Families Living in Poverty- Here-to-Help Team

Everybody needs a little help now and then. A number of families were having great difficulty applying for Indiana food stamps, Medicaid and unemployment benefits. The only way to apply for services was electronically and there was no local staff to help them through the process. To answer this need, our trained team of volunteers began assisting families at local agencies and food banks. Volunteers became their personal advocate and successfully assisted them through the maze of submission and documentation requirements. The *Here-to-Help* volunteers have effectively assisted over 2,100 families in obtaining Indiana food stamps, Medicaid and unemployment benefits.

## Providing Tax Preparation to Low Income Working Families

Many families rush to file their income tax to receive refunds as soon as possible. They have rent and heating bills to pay and the cost of gas rips deep into their budget. A number of them pay an average of \$312 to file their taxes, yet they don't get all that is owed them by the IRS. In 2010, over 3,400 low-income working families in Allen County did not claim the Earned Income Tax Credit they were entitled to. This can mean an additional \$2,000 to \$4,500 back on their tax return. During 2010, a total of 69 volunteers prepared 1,400 tax returns bringing back over \$2.1 million to the local economy.

## Coat Fairies -Bringing Change to Children Living in Poverty

A school case manager called to ask when our *Share the Warmth Children's Coat Drive* would start. He had 50 children in desperate need of warm coats. The weather had suddenly turned very cold and children were sent to school with layers of clothes, but no coats. The school had run out of other resources. Happily, we provided 50 coats and a large bag of hats and mittens. Right behind this request came 94 more requests totaling 3,700 coats. Our volunteer-run program serves over 110+ schools and social service agencies. Volunteers are the power that drives this program. In the last 11 years, the RSVP volunteers collected and distributed 27,000 coats for children. One group of children named these great volunteers the *Coat Fairies*.

