

## Partner Profiles



United Way of the Tri-Valley Area

Lisa Park Laflin, Executive Director

*Editor's Note: This article, written by Linda Rood of RSVP, is part of an ongoing series that demonstrates the community impact of the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area (UWTVA), its funded Partners, collaborators, and recipients of donor-designated funds. To learn more about how you can give, advocate, or volunteer in your community, or to view the article archive, visit [www.uwtva.org](http://www.uwtva.org). To contact staff, call (207) 778-5048 or e-mail [info@uwtva.org](mailto:info@uwtva.org).*

### **HealthReach Retired & Senior Volunteer Program Bone Builders exercise program**

MaineGeneral's HealthReach Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is a Community Partner of the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area. RSVP links volunteers over 55 years of age to meaningful volunteer opportunities, such as the *Bone Builders* program. *Bone Builders* is a community based osteoporosis prevention education program for older women and men. *Bone Builders* is based on a book written in 2005 by physiologist Miriam Nelson, a member of the Tufts research team. Nelson's research shows that moderate free-weight training performed as seldom as twice a week for at least six months improves strength, balance, energy levels and bone density.

*Bone Builders* offers a structured curriculum that consists of three parts in the one-hour long sessions that are held twice a week. The first is weight bearing exercises with free weights to increase muscle strength, balance and bone density; the second is balance training; and the third is an education component that includes nutrition and other relevant healthy life style topics. "It's an important program for people's health and well-being as they age," says Ruth Saint Amand, Director of RSVP. "*Bone Builders* is for anyone concerned about bone loss, especially postmenopausal women, and anyone who wants to develop good habits early."

RSVP programs across the country offer *Bone Builders* free of charge. This is possible by the generosity of donated class space, volunteer leaders and funding for the ankle and hand weights. HealthReach RSVP is seeking volunteers in the Franklin County area who would be interested in learning more about *Bone Builders* and how to become a group leader. Trainers are required to enroll as an RSVP Volunteer to receive the free training and program benefits. RSVP enrolls individual who are 55 years of age and above in a wide variety of community service endeavors.

Osteoporosis is a condition in which bone density deteriorates and bones are more prone to becoming brittle and break. Bone density peaks at about age 30 and then begins a slow and gradual decline as a normal part of the aging process. The National Health Institutes of Health Osteoporosis and Related Bone Diseases state that 10 million individuals already have osteoporosis and 34 million more have low bone density. One out of every two women and one in four men age 50 and older will have an osteoporosis related fracture in their lifetime. We often only think of this as a disease for women however, over 2 million men will suffer with osteoporosis. Osteoporosis strikes at any age. This is often called a silent disease because bone loss occurs without symptoms. Speak with a health care professional about the risk factors and how you can improve your bone health.

To learn more about *Bone Builders*, please contact Linda Rood, Field Coordinator at 800.427.1127, 778-0427 or 861.3534.