

Experience *in Action!*

King County RSVP's news for people 55 & older

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Volunteer spotlight: Suvendoo Ray, volunteering for a healthy community

By Megan Wildhood

“When I first signed up to volunteer to tutor kids, they were shocked at my three-digit tutor number,” says Suvendoo Ray, RSVP member, who began volunteering when he retired last year. When he originally arrived in Seattle in 1987 before his 32-year career at Boeing took off, Suvendoo started volunteering with the Youth Tutoring Program (YTP), and he reconnected with YTP after he retired last year. “I really enjoy tutoring kids, because I have seen a lot of things around the world – and

these kids have seen different things – and I see it as a back-and-forth discussion where we can learn from each other.”

Sarah Johnson, YTP's Volunteer Coordinator & Lake Washington Center Supervisor, says, “Suvendoo is a great tutor, and we are lucky to have him here supporting our students. He has been an incredibly dedicated tutor to two brothers at Lake Washington. The students are always very excited and enthusiastic to work with him. He seems to have built



Suvendoo Ray

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up a great rapport with his two students and is always interested in learning more about how to support them with our program.

“His first week, he told us about his initial involvement with YTP and how great of an experience he had. There are some new or returning tutors that are a bit apprehensive with working with groups, and it is great to see their group working and enjoying their sessions together. He is also flexible with supporting other students whenever his students are absent, and always has great questions or anecdotes to share.”

Suvendoo has seen the world, both in his professional and personal lives. He grew up in a farming village on the east coast of India and has always loved airplanes. “Every time I saw a plane, I went nuts,” he recalls. Planes were constantly flying over his home as a child on their route to Singapore.

“The first thing I can remember in my whole life is pointing up to the sky and asking what that thing in the sky flying over was. I believe everything in my life worked out the way it did because of that captivation I had as a little guy. I have always known that planes were things I

wanted to design, build, and sell.”

His parents took him to New York in the mid '70s; his father was a professor at the University of New York. After completing high school in Albany, Suvendoo earned his Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD degrees in Aeronautics at Purdue University in Indiana. As part of his doctoral studies, he worked for the Air Force and NASA as a researcher. He graduated with his PhD at age 25 and moved to Seattle to work at Boeing in 1987.

Suvendoo also received his MBA in Finance from Seattle University. During his 32 years with Boeing, he worked in various programs. Suvendoo was involved in the engineering of nearly every plane Boeing built. He moved into sales in 1996 and retired in 2019. “That's why I've seen the whole world.”

Now that he's not working 12-hour days or traveling the world every month for 10 days at a time, he's jumped into volunteering just as intensely as he did in his working life. He describes himself as target driven, writing sticky notes with tasks to complete daily, even after retiring, “though the things on them do look a bit different now.”

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Speaking Directly

by Jen Gahagan, RSVP Director

Staying Healthy

Over the last several months, the topic of staying healthy has been at the top of my mind, and I know I am not alone. As we prioritize the health of loved ones, ourselves, and the community, my team and I have heard from many of you who are adapting to staying home and practicing safe social distancing.

Many of you have learned new skills, picked up old hobbies, and established new phone or video check-in routines in order to stay healthy and connected. A few of you have even continued to be engaged in safe volunteer activities such as mask making or no-contact food delivery. Socially

isolating, while necessary, is challenging for most people and can be hard on your health. Now more than ever, it is so important for us all to be active participants in our own health – physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Deborah Cox-Roush, Director of Senior Corps, recently reminded us that her #1 priority is the health and safety of volunteers. She asked me to share the importance of following CDC guidelines and staying healthy, active, and engaged at home. Here are a few suggestions shared with us from Senior Corps and our friends at Public Health – Seattle & King County.

- ▶ **Play games:** Whether you are alone or with other family members, board games, card games, brain games, and video games can be great ways to have fun and engage your brain.
- ▶ **Stay active:** Keep moving! Get up and walk around your house or apartment every hour or so. Practice gentle stretching or strengthening exercises. If you can get outside, go for a walk around your neighborhood. Just be sure to stay at least six feet away from others.
- ▶ **Enjoy music:** Listening to music, singing and playing an instrument have been shown to elevate mood, reduce stress, increase happiness, and even stimulate your circulation and boost your immune system!
- ▶ **Take a break** from the news and social media, especially before going to bed. Substitute music for more relaxation!

- ▶ **Engage in useful activities:** Cooking, gardening, and even organizing are all great activities for taking care of yourself and feeling good about a job well done.
- ▶ **Connect regularly with family and friends:** Regular phone calls, porch visits, reading stories to your grandchildren over a video conferencing app, or hosting a virtual dinner party are all ways you can stay connected to family and friends.

We recognize that staying healthy, active, and engaged at home looks different for different people. We have some wonderful articles written by volunteers to share with you that range from staying healthy financially to spiritually. We at RSVP are so inspired by our volunteers and writers. Please take a break and enjoy this issue of *Experience in Action*, dedicated to staying healthy. ●



Financial Planning

by Bill Pharr

Financial Fitness... Preparing for the worst before it hits

Unsurprisingly, the main questions I've been asked a lot more lately are "What should we do to prepare for a recession?" and "How do we handle a stock market crash?"

Stock market crashes and terrible economic events go back hundreds of years, though history shows that each incident is different. In 1634, the Dutch Tulip market crashed. Panic ensued in 1907 when the New York Stock Exchange dropped 50% from its peak the previous year, and JP Morgan saved several companies in America from insolvency and bailed out New York City. There has been a resurgence of talk about the Great Depression that started in 1929; even the 1987 Black Monday has come up, along with the Dot.com bust of 1999-2000. And the Great Recession and stock market crash of 2008 still seems fresh in everyone's mind.

These are just a few of the more prominent economic disasters in the last several hundred years, and we can be sure that stock market crashes will occur in the future. We can also be sure that there is no way to predict when they will manifest. But that doesn't mean you can't prepare your financial life to the best of your ability in advance.

In 2015, Bill Gates made a speech in which he stated that all of the countries of the world need to prepare for the next pandemic health crisis by performing what he called "pandemic war games." He meant that America should prepare for the next pandemic just like the military prepares for as many occurrences in a real war by carrying out "war games" before a war begins. To translate this analogy to relevance for today's crisis, everyone needs to prepare their finances *in advance* of the event (boom times, normal times, and bust times), not *during* the event itself. Everyone should put their financial life through a "financial

war game" at least annually. Every person is in a different financial situation, so there is no single right way to carry out the "financial war game" challenge. However, there are tried-and-true steps everyone can and should take to prepare.

First, take advantage of what is already available. In the world of personal finance, time, compounding, and risk management are your friends. Risk is always present in financial assets that seek to earn an expected return above the rate of inflation.

Risk means different things to different investors, but it is always there no matter what you do with your money. As you prepare your financial life, it will be important to know your comfort level with "risk" before the next recession and disastrous economic event since it is very tempting to allow outside events to change your perception of risk.

Every financial and investment plan inevitably involves guesswork. These guesses usually come with baseline assumptions backed by sound theories and involve the use of probabilities to make decisions knowing the future is unclear to everyone. Most importantly, you need to know how much money you have coming in and how much you have going out every month. With this information, you can decide how much to keep

in cash savings for a rainy day. Then, you can set aside money for any future short-term spending you are planning, such as buying a new car, a down payment on a home, or higher education.

Next, you need to put money aside for long-term life, and this is where most people need to take the most risk to beat inflation and have a chance to grow your assets. For long-term money – money you don't need for a long time – the stock market is a common place for people to invest. This, of course, is where recessions typically hit the hardest in the



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It Seems to Me...

by Peter Langmaid

Why I value staying healthy

Last December, I had a 12-hour surgery for an aortic valve replacement, a massive infection in my back, and a stroke. I was in the hospital for 28 days. I'm told I could have died. Recovery is slow and will likely take a year. So, for me, staying healthy is not just a good idea, it's what I do – for myself and for my family.

There are six interconnected areas of my everyday life that I focus on: nutrition, exercise, hygiene, emotional well-being, mental health, and social health. When I lay my head on my pillow each night and can honestly say I've done something in each of these areas, I consider that a good day.

Healthy eating is both the easiest and most difficult thing for me to do. It's easy because my wife is a great cook who can make lip-smacking meals from healthy ingredients and keeps the house stocked with fruit and vegetables. It's difficult because I love cookies, chips, cake, ice cream, and processed snacks of all kinds.

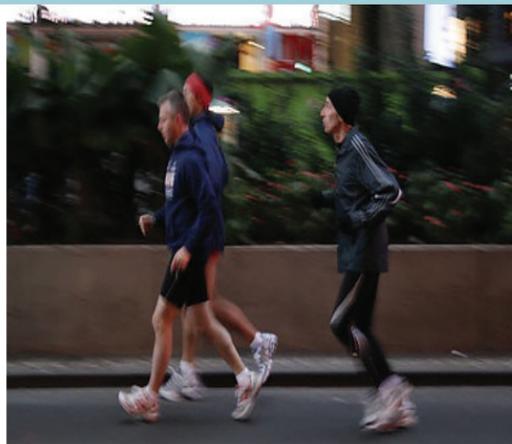
There are two words that were reiterated over and over by my entire rehab team: "Keep Moving!" Exercise is good for your muscles, good for your bones, good for your brain, good for your heart, good for weight control, and good for your feeling of well-being. Exercise can be done alone or in a group, indoors or outdoors, at home or at a gym. Not everyone likes a workout, but everyone feels better after

completing one.

There's a reciprocal relationship between self-esteem and staying healthy. When you feel good about yourself, everything is easy – and when you feel bad about yourself, even the simplest daily activities seem impossibly arduous. A good place to start feeling good about yourself on a daily basis is personal hygiene. It's too easy, especially for those of us who don't work or work at home, to let the hair and nails get a little long, to neglect daily dental care (don't forget to floss!), and to stay in our pajamas past noon.

When I was in the hospital, I only had energy for family. But every day my wife came to visit, she would read me emails of concern and support from friends. Since I've been home, the visits and phone calls have been endless. One person who I've known for over 60 years came up here from California two weekends in a row and called every day for a month! There's no way to quantify the impact of friends on the mental health aspect of my recovery; it's been huge. A cheerful email of concern and encouragement would always help me stay positive.

Humans are inherently social. Mental health professionals all agree that prolonged isolation has a negative effect on your mental and emotional health. I have found that volunteering at my local food bank is a great way to socialize, help others, and feel



good about myself at the same time. * We need interaction to stay balanced. Watching TV doesn't count as socializing because it's not interactive. Excessive TV watching, especially these days, can cause anxiety and depression – so don't forget to socialize.

A healthy mind is a stimulated mind. Just as your body needs exercise, so, too, does your mind. Don't let your mind grow dull from inactivity and lack of challenge. Read a book, do crossword puzzles, take a class, join a discussion group, play cards – anything that makes you think. For myself, the stroke I suffered affected my ability to read, write, and recall familiar words. I will get better over time, but not without effort on my part. For example, producing this article was quite a struggle.

Finally, get out of the house when and as you can! We live in a beautiful part of the country, so take advantage of that as the weather gets warm. There's nothing more exhilarating than a deep breath of fresh air and the feeling of warm sunshine on your sun-screened face. Combining being outside with an invigorating walk with friends for added exercise and socializing is a great way to pursue well-rounded health. ●

*Peter Langmaid is a semi-retired businessman, RSVP Ambassador, and longtime EIA contributor. *He wrote this piece prior to the start of social distancing guidelines.*

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short term. However, the stock markets have never, over any 20-year time period we have on record, lost money. This means that combining patience with figuring out your level of risk is important. And, for long-term money, diversification, if done correctly, lowers risk.

Possibly the most important annual event in your financial life is to meet with a financial advisor and review your portfolio of assets to make sure there is a balance between easily accessed cash savings (which loses money every year due to inflation unless you have it in a high-yield savings account), savings for shorter-term goals, and money invested with the intention of long-term growth. So, part of any plan is to be prepared in advance for macro financial events

and review your personal finances with a trusted person at least annually.

Historical panics in the United States seem to have one thing in common besides being inevitable: They all come to an end. Stock markets recover. Economies continue to grow. People still get up every day looking to improve their station in life. History shows that life has never been easy. But, if there's one thing you can take from history, it's that humans have always made it through tough times. ●

Bill Pharr is a retired business owner and financial advisor, RSVP member, and regular contributor to the EIA.

RSVP



The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is a nonprofit National Senior Corps program sponsored locally by Solid Ground. RSVP meets critical community needs by encouraging and supporting volunteerism in King County for people 55 and older.



At Solid Ground, we believe poverty is solvable. Our approach combines direct services with community-based advocacy. We support individuals while working to undo racism and other oppressions that create barriers – so everyone can achieve their full potential.

EIA

Experience in Action! (EIA) is published by King County RSVP and distributed to 3,500 RSVP members, senior volunteers and friends. **EIA** is dedicated to providing news, information and opportunities about senior volunteerism. Articles express writers' opinions, which are not necessarily the views of RSVP or **EIA**. We reserve the right to refuse any material deemed unsuitable. Articles may be edited to meet technical and editorial policy guidelines.

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Aging with Wisdom

by Carol Scott-Kassner

Staying spiritually healthy in a challenging time

What a strange time we are living through. It is one I never imagined, but neither were the violent riots of the 1960s and neither was 9/11. Any of us who were young adults in the '60s remember well what a challenging time it was to come of age. I know exactly where I was, the time and day, when I learned that President Kennedy had been shot. I clearly remember those same details from 9/11. I also remember how sad I was and how many tears I cried. Ultimately, I learned I could survive such devastating times.

What we are experiencing now, however, is not a single shocking event but a prolonged time of forced isolation in fear of spreading a virus that none of us can see but all of us can imagine. We are bombarded daily with the latest news of the worldwide spread and its impact on the lives of individuals, the functioning of countries, and the state of the economy. We are steeped in knowledge of how to avoid getting affected – but there are no guarantees. It is exhausting.

In a surprising role reversal, many of us find ourselves being protected by our children in loving but firm ways. Because my

daughter doesn't want me to die, I'm not allowed to go shopping. I send my grocery list to her each Thursday evening and she arrives early Friday morning with all of my groceries and often a fresh bouquet of flowers. This makes her feel better, and it certainly makes me feel cared for. It keeps me safe.

An advantage for all of us who are older during this particular crisis is that we have the "long view." We made it through the '60s as a country. We survived 9/11 and found new sources of resilience as a nation. Our understanding of the world and of our ability to adjust to tragedy and come out the other side has enlarged. We've learned in our lives as citizens but also as individuals that there are challenging times, joyful times, and a lot of ordinary times. We've learned we must step with courage into whatever challenges we face and move forward.

As my husband and I experience this time together, we find ourselves concerned and prayerful for the world but also touched by gratitude, something we try to practice regularly. It can help turn negatives into positives. We've found it is a



blessing to no longer be working since we don't have jobs to lose. It is a blessing to have financial resources to survive this time because our retirement funds are sufficient. It is a blessing to have already gotten used to slowing down as we already know how to stay at home. It is a blessing to be perceived as older because children, friends, and neighbors check on us regularly to make sure our needs are being met. And, it is a blessing to have digital access, social media, Zoom, and FaceTime to stay connected with groups we're involved with and people we love.

Although not all people who are retired are blessed in these ways, cities and states are gathering extensive financial and food aid to offer support to those elders who may be isolated and in need of such support. Neighbors are helping neighbors. There are remarkable stories each night on television about the caring things people are doing for each other including for the elderly and the dying. It is good to be reminded that, in a time of sheltering in place, we

are not alone. Compassion is flowering this spring.

One of my favorite books about aging is by William Martin called, *The Sage's Tao Te Ching: Ancient Advice for the Second Half of Life*. I turn to it regularly as a spiritual guide for my aging journey. Reading #59 seems particularly relevant and hopeful for this time in history:

How Happy We All Become

What freedom there is in needing no achievement. No longer struggling with life, the sage uses anything life brings for good.

Because nothing particular is needed, nothing is impossible. Universal compassion is as natural as breathing.

Rich blessings to each of you. Health and wellness, strength and wisdom. Deep breathing. Peace and compassion for all. ●

Carol Scott-Kassner is a spiritual director and expert in the spirituality of aging.



Volunteer Spotlight

by David Thornbrugh

Bruce Garberding

One volunteer deeply involved in Northshore Senior Center (NSC) is Bruce Gaberding. A graduate from the University of Illinois with an MSW in social work, he served in the Navy and was discharged in Alaska, where he spent some years working with Native people, which he reflects on as "an incredible experience." After moving to Seattle, he worked for the Seattle Housing Authority for 25 years before retiring about five years ago. After spending some time as a volunteer for the Seattle Ombudsman's office, working with people in long-term care and at a dog rescue center, about two years ago he found himself a home at the Kenmore Northshore Center.

In addition to occupying the Center's reception desk every Thursday, working in the office and "just socializing with people at the center," Bruce is now helping out with Northshore fundraising activities, working with the Board of Directors as part of the advisory committee. "About 150 of us volunteered to contact the 3,000 members and to ask them if they had any needs we could help with. I've called over 100 people, and everybody was so grateful. Just being contacted like that made them feel better. ● Read all about the Northshore Senior Center on the next page!"



Bruce Garberding

Northshore Senior Center

Supporting health on many levels

by David Thornbrugh

Even before our world turned upside down, staying healthy was a common topic on most seniors' minds. During a time when nearly all of our longer-term sources of self-care such as gyms, yoga studios, health clinics, and public libraries are temporarily beyond our physical reach, it is vital to remember that our true friends at Northshore will be there for us again when the current crisis has broken and begun to recede.

Founded in 1972 and dedicated to helping seniors lead full, healthy, and inspired lives, Northshore Senior Center (NSC) has been offering a wide range of classes and programs to promote the emotional, social, and physical well-being of older adults at locations in Bothell, Kenmore, Mill Creek, and Kirkland. As Northshore's Volunteer Coordinator, Forum Shah, explains, "One aspect of staying healthy is to stay busy; you feel better." Toward that end, Northshore offered Zumba classes, line dancing, ballroom dancing, and pickleball at its Bothell site, and plans to again as things reopen.

For other ways of keeping fit, the Health and Wellness Center, connected to the Bothell Senior Center by an accessible skybridge, provides services for visitors living with mental, social, or physical disabilities in the form of the Adult Day Health Program. The building also offers the North Shore Wranglers, volunteers who help support events at NSC.

In more ordinary times, as Ms. Shah points out, all four of Northshore's sites are places where retirees can volunteer and mingle with others. "Plus, they can learn a new skill." As RSVP's largest site partner, Northshore's senior centers have been especially attractive to the readership of RSVP. When open, RSVP members volunteer to work in the Bothell Center greeting visitors, the coffeeshop or bakery, or the facility's kitchen department.

"Another new program from the Bothell center is a pantry program," which, says Ms. Shah, as of late April was "offering free food. Now we are serving 80-90 people a day. The community comes in and donates food: restaurants, churches, just people. We offer the food in the Bothell parking lot for pickup and do some delivery. We are trying to make this virtual, too, including a day-to-day menu on Facebook, so people can see what food is available each day."

For her part, to keep the centers going during the shutdown, Forum Shah is spending her time working at home to get organized and make any changes to programs that had been in the works. As she puts it, the stay-at-home order has given the Bothell staff "a chance to catch up when not caught up in the day to day and make the services more accessible to seniors."

She is also working on a peer-to-peer fundraising program: "We are setting up a separate platform: We are asking the community to support us using social media by launching a text-to-donate fundraiser."

CEO Brooke Knight recently announced this is part of the fundraising campaign, the organization's largest ever, "to raise the \$500,000 we'll need to keep us going over the next few months."

Another project Shah has in hand is a plan for volunteers to participate in social service activities as phone buddies, which she described as being akin to Meals on Wheels. "Now we are trying to go more virtual, helping seniors learn to use ZOOM and join in online classes. We hope to make them feel more comfortable using computers."

At the time of our interview in mid-May, NSC had hosted a virtual fitness class. "There are also lots of volunteer instructors for crafts such as knitting," Ms. Shah says. "The response to virtual services will depend on the response we get from our members and volunteers."



A fun Volunteer meetup at Northshore Senior Center-Mill Creek location (photos this page courtesy of Northshore)

"Now, we are working on making any new apps as simple to use as possible. The feedback we get from seniors is that they will use all services that are easy to use, that require only a few steps to use."

NSC enjoys "an incredible group of volunteers," a total of around 600 among the three centers contributing to a wide variety of activities, including drivers helping people get to appointments. Northshore offers several programs to support health. There's an activities center and a fitness center, which I've participated in. It's

an amazing program, with state-of-the-art equipment. All the people working there are volunteers; all of them have backgrounds in fitness."

For the time being, the centers have switched over to virtual exercise. "I know they're offering yoga online, some regular exercise," comments Bruce Garberding, a deeply involved, long-time volunteer at NSC. "At Kenmore, we had several walking groups, and a fitness group in a church; an armchair fitness." In his experience, "besides just the physical aspect, volunteering fosters emotional health, coming together with others. Many of our groups become very close knit. At Kenmore, I'm close with about 10 other volunteers. Since the COVID shutdown, we've been staying in touch, checking in by phone, exchanging group emails. It's been important."

"I have come to really appreciate the importance of these senior centers. Growing up, I never saw myself as someone going to a senior center. I had this stereotype of people who would do that as being people without any

friends. But that's not true at all. Now that I can't go to the center, I miss all the friends I have there. It's made me realize how much going there fulfilled me. In our country, our extended families are spread out over hundreds of miles, and we don't see them very often. Senior centers are there to be our families when we can't get to them."

Like most of us, he wonders: "when all this is said and done, what the new normal will be? What is going to happen with handshakes and hugs?" Whatever the case, Northshore plans on resuming all of its abundance of activities that bring people together as family; such activity and connection is much anticipated. ●

For more information or to get connected with Northshore, please reach out to Megan Wildhood at meganw@solid-ground.org or 206.694.6786.



Zorna, Director of Administrative Services with Volunteer Maggie (105 years), a Northshore member since they opened their doors in 1976



Brooke Knight, CEO, with staff and volunteers

'Freedom's Forge'

A book review by Bill Pharr

In 1918, America had the fourth largest military in the world. By the late 1930s, America had the 18th largest military force in the world, just behind Holland. It was a difficult time for the President and our country. Franklin Delano Roosevelt wanted to avoid going to war with Germany as the stakes were high. In September of 1939, FDR sponsored a bill modifying the Neutrality Act in order to allow the UK and France to purchase munitions on a cash-and-carry basis.

Going into 1940 and the beginning of 1941, the news from Europe was dire, and Churchill was pleading for help from America, which had 325 tanks to Germany's 2,000-plus.

When America's involvement in World War II began to look inevitable, FDR asked Bernard Baruch – head of War Industries Board, the organization that led the effort to arm America for World War I – to lead the war effort. Baruch refused. When FDR asked him if he could name three candidates to take on this amazingly difficult and complex assignment, Baruch responded: "Bill Knudsen, Bill Knudsen, Bill Knudsen."

This is the lead-in to the most amazing story of WWII that few people know anything about. It's told in *Freedom's Forge* by Arthur Herman.

William Knudsen came from Denmark as a bicycle mechanic. He worked and studied, and eventually worked for Henry Ford, then later Alfred Sloan of General Motors. He had an ability to get things done, understand how to make things, how to produce things quickly, and convince corporations to turn their plants over to the war effort. It was this man who FDR asked to take on this job with no pay, setting an expectation of producing 50,000 planes a year if they had any hope of defeating Germany's Luftwaffe, which was ruling the skies of Europe.

Knudsen had no team or place to manufacture these planes, and the political atmosphere was against him since America was not yet at war. In 1939, the US Army had 15,000 total vehicles; by the spring of 1941, still before the country's entrance into the war, it was looking to acquire 250,000 vehicles. By 1940, Knudsen oversaw 920 contracts of which \$3 billion was for the Army and \$6 billion for the Navy. By the end of 1942, the US Army would be the customer for 800,000 vehicles,

excluding tanks, of some 330 different types.

Setting aside the difficulty of dealing with politicians, Knudsen had many other consistent issues to handle. The first was labor unions. While the book does spend time talking about the amazing contributions women made in the workforce during this time, it portrays labor unions negatively. A week before D-Day, there were 70,000 workers out on strike, likely in part because in 1942 and 1943, 20 times more workers died in the war effort than died in the actual fighting in the war. Still, the unions worked hard to keep African Americans from taking jobs related to the war effort, which made it difficult to build the required parts and machinery.

Another constant challenge was the shortage of key supplies, such as copper, magnesium, and aluminum. At one point, the government deemed that all new airplane prototypes had to be made of wood. It was a special challenge to make steel strong enough to withstand the cold temperatures encountered by planes flying over the seas.

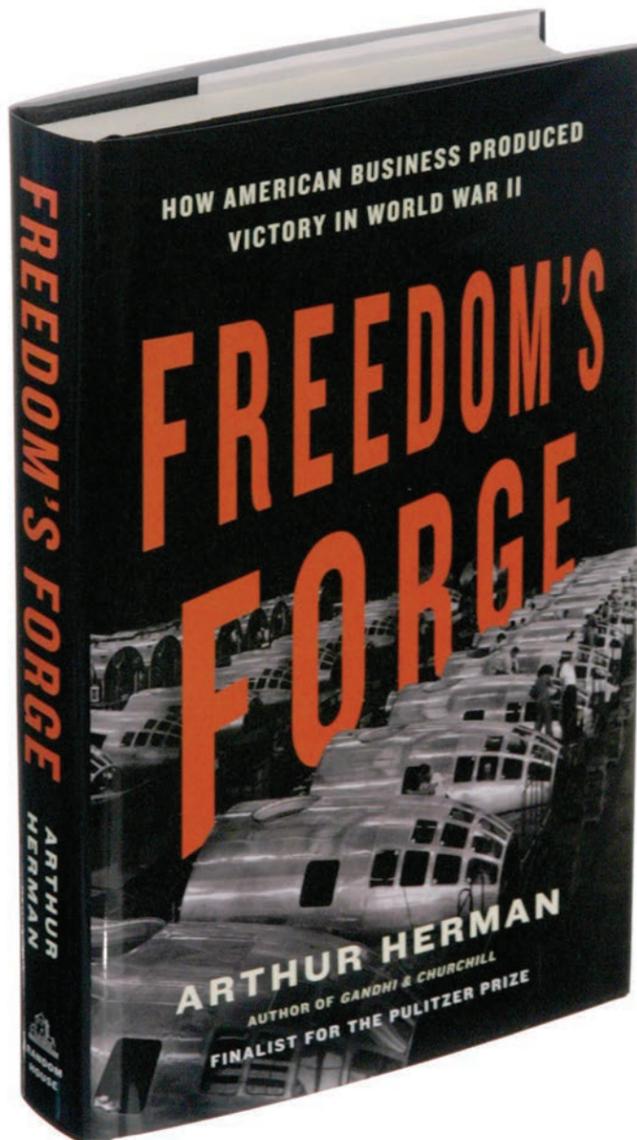
Before he died in 1948, Knudsen was responsible for some incredible hires. Another one you may not have heard of directly but who has left his mark on the insurance world was Henry Kaiser. The book details Kaiser's career starting in Boston and then on to Spokane where he got into building roads. Kaiser played a major role in the building of Hoover Dam leading into the war effort. Kaiser also built ships as part of the war effort; he cared about his workers.

In the shipbuilding to arm Europe and America, as well as his steel mills (especially Kaiser Steel in Fontana California), many of his workers were injured and some died, because in their rush to build as many ships as possible, the workers did their work in unsafe conditions. He set up, at his own expense,

hospitals and medical care for his workers. This was the beginning of Kaiser Permanente healthcare.

And then, the war was suddenly over. Europe was in ruins, and 10 million men and women would be coming home. *Freedom's Forge* not only details the efforts of many of World War II's heroes who may not be common knowledge, but it also showcases the magnitude of the war effort in a way I'd not fully understood even as someone who's read many books on WWII.

For a look at some of the aspects of World War II you may not be familiar with, *Freedom's Forge* is a fascinating read. ●



WHAT IS AN RSVP AMBASSADOR?

An RSVP Ambassador is an RSVP Volunteer who is willing to help us spread the word about the benefits of volunteering.

Because of our small staff, we have assembled a wonderful group of volunteers who help us share RSVP's mission with other seniors. If you would be willing to represent RSVP at events around King County, we would like to talk to you.

We do not ask for a specific time commitment, only that you occasionally share your enthusiasm for volunteering and relate your own experiences with RSVP to encourage others to join. We provide a fun, interactive training and give you the chance to meet another group of active, enthusiastic people.

SEND US YOUR HOURS!

Yes, your hours as an RSVP volunteer are important and need to be reported to us.

Your hours are not only tied to federal funding with benefits then provided to you, like the excess accident medical and liability insurance, but they also help the volunteer sites and RSVP reach volunteer hour goals.

And just as importantly, it helps us recognize you for your service and highlights the contributions you make to meet community needs when you volunteer.



To sign up, send hours, or ask more questions, please contact: Megan Wildhood, 206.694.6785 | meganw@solid-ground.org

RSVP celebrates volunteers & older Americans all spring long!

April was Volunteer Appreciation Month followed immediately by Older Americans Month in May – so we've had a lot to celebrate at RSVP! Specifically, we honored YOU, one of the 895 RSVP volunteers who contributed close to 114,000 hours of service in Seattle and King County in 2019. Every day of the year, we recognize and honor the wisdom and life experiences of the older Americans in our region, particularly the RSVP Volunteers who make such a difference in our community.

This is a prolonged, challenging time for our world. We also want

to acknowledge that many have felt alone or isolated even before the present health concerns created by the pandemic.

Whether it's playing board games, spring cleaning, singing, gardening, scrapbooking, hosting virtual dinner parties, tele-volunteering, or engaging in another new or favorite hobby, we are all learning and practicing ways to stay active and engaged at home.

We may just pick up a healthy habit to practice long after this time of staying home passes. We are all in this together, whatever our age and wherever we are. ●

RSVP VOLUNTEERS ARE A KEY INGREDIENT IN SOLID GROUND'S RECIPE for CHANGE



Suwendoo Ray continued from page 1

Suwendoo had been looking for volunteering options for a while after retiring, but many opportunities had specific niches that, while good causes, didn't allow him to explore the way he wanted to. "I found out about RSVP through my retirement coach. RSVP really works for me because it had so many opportunities in one place. I found everything I wanted to do. It was like shopping at Costco."

In addition to volunteering at the Youth Tutoring Program, he transports clients with Catholic Community Services (CCS)'s Volunteer Services – although during the closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, he only did medication pickups for

CCS clients – and he is looking forward to getting started with Solid Ground's Community Food Education program.

He also uses his experience building and repairing homes as a hobby with Habitat for Humanity. He volunteers weekly both building houses and helping at their store in South Center. "I really like tools, furniture – things for homes that you then sell."

Finding Habitat projects to work on in Seattle is a challenge because of the high cost of construction. "Often, you have to go far north or far south from the city, so I really jump on projects when they are in the Seattle area. I really enjoy fixing up people's houses – the details like

moldings, framing, painting – so if that's a need, I'll be there. I love working with my hands."

In addition to volunteering, you can find Suwendoo on a golf course, watching sports of all kinds, gardening, or doing yardwork.

Both his children live in Los Angeles: his son earned an undergraduate degree in aerospace from the University of Washington and now works for SpaceX. His daughter graduated from UCLA and is a middle school teacher in an underserved neighborhood, because "that's what she wants to do and where she felt she had the most to offer," Suwendoo says proudly.

Suwendoo is brimming with

excitement about volunteerism and RSVP in particular. "I think if we can get people who are interested in volunteering connected with RSVP in a consistent, effective way, people will see all the opportunities to choose from and they won't have to go hunting around." He identifies his main skill as motivating people – "I was the #1 guy between my company and the customers, so I'm a bridge between interest or need and what people have to offer."

We are so glad to have him as an RSVP Ambassador and as an enthusiastic volunteer in so many areas of our community. ●

VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH RSVP

Due to COVID-19, volunteer opportunities are rapidly evolving. To talk to a real person about current and emerging opportunities that are right for you, call Megan Wildhood at 206.694.6786 – or visit our website at www.solid-ground.org/RSVP for volunteer opportunities listed by region.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Auburn Food Bank: We are open from 8am-2pm, Monday-Friday. Come join us for one hour a day or all six! No need to RSVP, simply come! We are closed Wednesdays to clients; we have several opportunities for those who have mobility issues or difficulty standing. We also need help with clerical work such as typing and data entry, which could be done any time between 2-5pm, any weekday.

South King County

Catholic Community Services: We are currently seeking volunteers to drive clients to and from essential appointments as well as deliver needed supplies to clients' homes. We are enrolling and orienting volunteers to housework, yardwork, laundry, and other in-home tasks so that when things open up again, we will be ready to place volunteers in those roles quickly.

Throughout King County

CHI Franciscan House: We connect volunteers with phone or video buddies during this time. Volunteers must be fully trained by us first; we are offering our next training in mid-June.

Volunteer from home

Full Life Care: Contribute home-sewn fabric masks, in response to COVID-19, to help protect the hundreds of essential homecare aides and the thousands of adults with disabilities who we serve, regardless of their income.

Multiple locations

Greenwood Senior Center: We are looking for a number of volunteers for several opportunities, including gardening, mask making, being penpals with a child, mowing lawns, and delivering meals to seniors.

North Seattle

Magnuson Park Community Food Pantry: We're seeking volunteers Wednesdays from 11am-2pm with volunteer shifts from 10am-1pm and 12-3pm (or volunteers can do both shifts). Volunteer roles include unloading food deliveries; setting up, sorting and stocking food; welcoming and assisting patrons; and cleanup.

North Seattle

Marra Farm Giving Garden: Garden at this historic urban farm, Tuesdays & Fridays, 9am-2pm, and Saturdays 10am-2pm. Volunteers help with a variety of tasks including building soil, preparing vegetable beds, planting vegetable starts and seeds, weeding by hand, composting, watering, harvesting, washing produce, and distributing produce to the local food bank and other locations. No experience needed!

South Seattle

North Helpline: Volunteer roles helping with food distribution include checkin, line direction/greeting, distributing food to clients, helping to stock the distribution lines, and assisting customers with carts. Volunteers will be assigned to their positions during the distribution based upon the needs of the food bank. Hours vary per day; a time commitment of 3-4 hours per shift is requested. Children ages 12 and older are welcome to volunteer with an adult; youth 14 and older can volunteer on their own.

North King County

Solid Ground: We're seeking help making masks for vulnerable residents and staff who are providing essential services. Supplies available if needed.

Volunteer from home



Thank you for being
a key ingredient in
Solid Ground's
Recipe for Change!

- Please call to help me find a volunteer opportunity suited just for me.
- Please send information about RSVP.
- Please note my new address.

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

Please mail this form to: RSVP, 1501 N 45th Street, Seattle, WA 98103