

Medical Reserve Corps Offers Vital, Meaningful Volunteer Opportunities

“One of the most rewarding experiences of my life.”

By Heather Makechnie, MRC volunteer

In his 2002 State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush called on all Americans to make a lifetime commitment of at least 4,000 hours – the equivalent of two years of their life – to serve their communities, the nation and the world. President Bush announced the creation of the USA Freedom Corps to help Americans answer his call.



Medical Reserve Corps

Sponsored by the Office of the Surgeon General, the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) is one group under the USA Freedom Corps umbrella. Others are Citizen Corps, AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Peace Corps, USA on Watch, Volunteers in Police Service (VPS), Fire Corps, and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

The Medical Reserve Corps keeps our communities a safe place to live by supporting existing State Emergency Preparedness, Fire, First Responder, and Health professions. We assist neighbors in times of need during public health emergencies such as pandemic flu. We also actively try to educate citizens about being prepared for an emergency and teach health in schools and other venues.

MRC members have access to free trainings and Continuing Education Units. Members build their resumes while having fun and helping neighbors to stay safe and well.

We welcome anyone with nursing or lab experience, public health workers, emergency medical technicians, and pharmacists. However, we also need people for logistics and planning and for finance positions. Basically, anyone who is willing to roll up their sleeves and who can pass a background check can find a meaningful niche in Medical Reserve Corps.

Andover's MRC

In New Hampshire there are 15 Medical Reserve Corps units. Andover belongs to the Central New Hampshire

MRC and CERT, which is administered through the Plymouth Public Health Region. Our unit was one of the first organized in New Hampshire and has been very active with state emergency preparedness. We have conducted H1N1, hepatitis, and flu clinics in 28 towns, engaged in drills for setting up regional emergency shelters, and provided logistical support to the state in a medical crisis. We sponsored the first state radiological traffic disaster tabletop exercise, to which President Obama sent Cabinet members!

There is no binding agreement regarding a volunteer's length or frequency of service. There is a training program. All materials and equipment are provided free. There are six meetings a year. Applicants must pass a background check.

So who joins Medical Reserve Corps? Well, I do. I am Heather Makechnie, a resident of East Andover, an EMT with the town's rescue squad, a mother of seven boys, and grandmother to 15. I volunteer with American Red Cross (I served two deployments to NY for Hurricane Sandy and I am an Instructor for New Hampshire Region Red Cross Disaster Response). I am a member of the New Hampshire Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team (I served at Portsmouth Regional Hospital during the Greenland Police shootings). I am also ... (take a deep breath) ... a Cub Scout Den Leader.

Some of my fellow Medical Reserve Corps members are a retired pediatrician, two school nurses, several EMTs, two Town Emergency Managers, a former fire chief of New York City, a former director of forensic mortality in New York City, a number of ham radio operators, a former chauffeur in New York City, a number of nurses, a ski patrol leader, a bed and breakfast owner, a selectwoman, a former policeman, an animal rescue director, a former detective, and a tractor trailer repairman. We currently have 43 members in our MRC unit. Our most recent deployment was a flu clinic at Plymouth State University.

If you have a desire to meet new people and engage in adventures that can possibly be the critical glue that holds state, regional, and local responses together in an emergency, I strongly advise that you look into Medical Reserve Corps. I have found it to be one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

Contact me at 738-4002 or HMakechnie@aol.com to get more info.



New Hampshire Electric Cooperative and Northway Bank teamed up to raise more than \$258,000 for the New Hampshire Food Bank. Officials from both companies presented a check at a ceremony attended by Governor Maggie Hassan. From left, NHEC Chairman Earl Hansen, Northway Bank Retail Banking Executive Dawn Champiny, Governor Hassan, New Hampshire Catholic Charities CEO Tom Blomski, and New Hampshire Food Bank Executive Director Mel Gosselin.

Over \$250,000 Donated to New Hampshire Food Bank

NHEC, Northway Bank lead the challenge

Press release

At a ceremony attended by New Hampshire Governor Maggie Hassan, officials from the New Hampshire Electric Co-op and Northway Bank capped one of the largest-ever fundraising campaigns for the New Hampshire Food Bank with the presentation of a check for \$258,427.

The NHEC and Northway Bank Food Bank Challenge was launched in September 2013 with the goal of raising \$150,000 for the state's only Food Bank, which annually donates nearly 10 million pounds of food to be distributed at 400 agencies across the state to the estimated one in nine residents in the state who are considered "food insecure."

The campaign got a big boost when the NHEC Foundation announced it would match up to \$70,000 of the total raised and Northway Bank would match an additional \$40,000. Donations came from all over the state – from businesses and individuals, including employees of New Hampshire Electric Co-op and Northway Bank who participated via a payroll deduction program.

On March 24, officials from both companies met with Governor Hassan in the Executive Council chambers to present the donation check to New Hampshire Food Bank Executive Di-

rector Mel Gosselin.

“We have so many thank you's to make as we wrap up this hugely successful campaign,” said Earl Hansen, Chairman of the New Hampshire Electric Co-op Board of Directors. “The size of this donation and the number of people involved in making it happen says a lot about this state and the generosity of its people. The power of partnering with Northway Bank and the New Hampshire Food Bank proved to be a great match.”

“We couldn't be prouder of the partnership with the New Hampshire Electric Co-op and the New Hampshire Food Bank. Our customers and associates opened their hearts and their wallets in amazing ways. We have a 133-year history of serving the citizens of the Granite State and are committed to doing our part in eliminating food insecurity within our communities,” said Dawn Champiny, Senior VP of Northway Bank.

“The generosity of New Hampshire Electric Co-op, Northway Bank, their employees and the many businesses and individuals who supported the NHEC and Northway Bank Food Bank Challenge is truly inspiring. We are very grateful to everyone who took part in this very successful challenge and helped to provide 516,854 meals to the one in nine men, women, and children in need in our state,” said Mel Gosselin, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Food Bank.



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