



Irene Briggaman

Irene Briggaman's contributions to charitable organizations and activities set her apart as a selfless and caring member of the Chapel Hill community. She is perhaps best known as the founder of RSVVP, but she has made a difference in countless groups that seek to provide help where it is most needed.

In 1989, Irene created the RSVVP fund-raiser to support a local food bank which has, in its 25 year history, helped provide almost 2 million hot meals to the Inter-Faith Council hunger relief programs. She remains committed to the annual RSVVP Day when local restaurants contribute 10% of proceeds to the hunger-relief efforts.

Irene arrived in Chapel Hill in 1965, and she has seen the growth of the community from a variety of perspectives – a nurse, a mother, a citizen, and an avid volunteer. When her children were growing up, she became actively involved not only in the public schools, but also in the local teen center in an effort to provide Chapel Hill's youth with a non-alcoholic and non-smoking place to gather and interact. She embraced the idea of asking for forgiveness rather than permission, and helped local teens achieve their request for a mud wrestling event. Her

volunteer interests expanded to include work with the Girl Scouts, the Red Cross, Family Violence Prevention Center, AARP, and the Triangle Land Conservancy. She is an Ambassador for the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce. Irene has been the recipient of many local and state awards recognizing her volunteerism; the Chamber of Commerce recognized her by creating the Irene Briggaman Lifetime Achievement Award for Volunteerism.

Whether working to create a Triangle-wide food bank system or volunteering with the Inter-Faith Council, Irene represents the great potential of what a committed individual can accomplish. Her dedication to Chapel Hill and its people leads her to think about her favorite contributions with the same unwavering love as though she were asked which of her children she loved the most—an impossible question to answer for any loving mother or community treasure.

Coming to Chapel Hill when it was a smaller town with only one high school, Irene grew to know the community inside and out as it continued to develop over time. She hopes to see the community grow and get better with full confidence that “the very thoughtful, caring people in Chapel Hill and Carrboro are going to make it work.”