

SPOTLIGHT ON AGING

The importance of water, hydration is explained

Water, the most important nutrient in the human body, has a great impact on you. One sign of its impact is just how much of it you need to function: some 60 percent of the body's weight is fluid. Another sign of water's importance is how quickly the body suffers from even a mild depletion. Headache pain, fatigue, confusion, forgetfulness and an elevated heart rate can happen if the body loses just 5 percent of fluid. Frequent sips

of water are crucial to maintaining good health and vitality because you can easily lose almost half of that amount in a day through urine and sweat.

Every part of the body and virtually all of its processes need water in order to work. Water is the primary component of blood and secretions like tears, saliva, mucus and gastric vital nutrients. So they can dissolve and transport vital nutrients, cells need water. Water dilutes

toxins and flushes them from the body, which some evidence suggests, may reduce the risk of cancer and helps to regulate body temperature. Fluid lubricates joints, makes skin supple and cushions the body's organs. Very few chemical reactions in the body can take place and none can be formed or repaired without water.

Fortunately, your body can control its water balance to a point. When fluid stocks run low, sodium lev-

els in the body rise. After the brain detects this change, it signals the kidney to slow excretion and generates the sensation of thirst. However, by the time you feel thirsty, you've already lost about two cups of fluids. To prevent even slight dehydration, it is wise to drink right to 12 8-ounce glasses of water a day.

Surprising amounts of water can be found in substances that might not strike you as "wet." Even though they seem hard as nails,

bones are 25 percent water, and lean muscle is 73 percent water. The same is true for foods; even "dry" items like bread contain water. So, while drinking enough water is important, you also help replenish your body with fluids by eating whole food.

Particularly good dietary sources of water are fruits and vegetables. Because fat does not mix well with water, fatty foods are poor sources of water.

In conclusion, water is

the life-giver. It does the following important things:

- Carries nutrients to cells
 - Flushes toxins
 - Forms blood and other body fluids
 - Keeps skin soft and moist
 - Lubricates joints and organs
 - Makes virtually all body functions possible
 - Promotes regularity.
- So be sure to drink up!

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Source: "Healing Foods"

Agency pairs 55-plus professionals with nonprofits

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. (AP) — As she got older, Gail McDaniel felt she should be doing more to make the world better.

She'd been laid off after a long career in retail, her career-coaching sideline was tapering off and she wanted to keep working — but only at something that would contribute to society.

"I wanted to do some good," McDaniel said. "It is not uncommon for people who are older to want to give back and do something that feels good."

Now McDaniel, who's in her 60s, is the assistant to the executive director at My Sister's Place, a women's shelter in the New York suburbs. The connection was made by a company called ReServe, which pairs professionals 55 and older, most of them retired or semiretired, with nonprofit groups or public agencies that can use their skills — at a discount.

McDaniel is making just \$10 an hour, and working just 20 hours a week, but said she's "never been happier."

"I wanted something that felt worthwhile and the mission here is very powerful," she said.

Nearly 1,500 "ReServists" have put in time over the past seven years, and more than 500 are working now at a broad variety of positions.

There are college mentors, bookkeepers, writers, teachers, paralegals, administrative assistants, doctors, nurses and even greeters at the wedding chapel in New York's City Hall.

"We could never afford these social workers, these retired accountants," said Janice Chu, who coordinates the ReServe program for 17 New York City agencies, including the departments of health, corrections and the aging. "They're such an asset with their years and years of experience."

New York City's is the original and largest ReServe operation, but the company has branches in Westchester County, N.Y.; Newark, N.J.; Baltimore; Miami; and southeast Wisconsin.

ReServists work an aver-

age of 15 hours a week at that \$10 wage — no health benefits — and the agencies get professional expertise without paying anything close to going rates.

Officials say that because nonprofits, never flush, are battling the slow economy,

some of the talents most in demand are fund raising and grant writing. Experience in personnel and accounting is also highly valued, as is the ability to speak a language besides English.

"Nonprofits can't afford to purchase those skills at mar-

ket prices," said Linda Breton, ReServe's director of affiliate relations.

The nonprofits pay \$15 an hour, of which \$2.60 goes to ReServe and \$2.40 to the company that manages payroll and taxes.

About 50 percent of Re-

Serve's funding comes from private foundations and public grants, said spokesman Jesse Dean.

Breton said there's been no trouble attracting qualified applicants.

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