

Agency

Continued from Page 13

“We have more people than we can place,” she said. “Recruiting retired professionals has proven to be very easy. They’re passionate about something and they want to give back.”

Getting the nonprofits to post positions is more difficult.

“Lots of them can’t afford people even at \$10 an hour,” Breton said.

Nevertheless, ReServe feels the wage is important to a professional arrangement.

“The stipend means everybody has skin in the game,” Breton said. “A volunteer can say, ‘It’s a crummy day, I don’t think I’ll go in.’ A professional doesn’t do that.”

Karen Cheeks-Lomax, the executive director at My Sister’s Place, said the \$10 “helps formalize the relationship, but in an informal way. It allows the ReServist to create a life in the non-profit but also continue her other life, or his other life, which may be golfing on Tuesday, book club, whatever.”

McDaniel said the \$10 helps her save for trips abroad, but she gets more from the feeling that she’s valued by her boss.

“I am told on a regular basis how valuable I am,” she said. “That’s sexy stuff. It beats the 10 bucks.”

ReServe was founded in 2005 by three men involved with nonprofits who “knew retirees who wanted to do something with their careers’ worth of skills,” Dean said.

The only basic requirement for applicants, besides being at least 55 years old, is computer literacy, Breton said, and “every day that’s less of a problem” as fewer older people resist computers.

At a recent gathering in Manhattan of people inter-

ested in signing up, staffer Suzanne O’Keefe mentioned a sampling of available positions — helping with an audit, getting elderly people to take their medications, working as a classroom aide for young children at a school near the Bronx Zoo.

The session attracted 19 people, including a doctor, a nurse, an architect, a TV executive, a few teachers and a real estate lawyer. Most had retired, some had been forced out and some were just looking for something different to do.

O’Keefe asked each to say what they would most like to do for 20 hours a week — a “dream job.”

“Ballerina,” said Marie Sevy of Englewood, N.J., to laughter. Then she said she had put off plans to teach while she raised her children, and “I want to go back to working with kids again now that I’m a grandma and my grandkids are far away.”

Retired architect Larry Litchfield, 80, of Manhattan, said he would enjoy mentoring.

“I’m still healthy and vibrant and I have time. I’d like to be useful.”

But he later received a postcard from ReServe saying the company had been “unable to find suitable placement” for him.

Richard Lee, 78, of Manhattan, said he’d retired three years ago from his business reproducing antique furnishings.

“After 31 years it was like being let out of prison,” he said. “But after a year I was climbing the wall. ... I didn’t want to sit at home.”

McDaniel said she’d never have found her current position without ReServe, and she’s grateful for the feeling that she’s working at something important.



Gary Webster, owner of American Eagle Cycles, takes one of the company's tricycles out for a spin at his Westfield, Mass., headquarters. Webster, a mechanical engineer, created the alternative to bicycles for adults — especially senior citizens — looking for a little outdoor exercise on a solidly-built machine.

AP photo

New bike designed for seniors

WESTFIELD, Mass. (AP) — Back when the recession first hit, mechanical engineer Gary P. Webster noticed the manufacturers that had always hired him to design and build automation systems for their factories were sending those factories overseas.

So he decided to come up with a product of his own and build it here.

“We had better start doing more manufacturing here, or otherwise my grandchildren will be stuck doing some pretty menial jobs,” Webster, who lives in West Springfield, said.

The thought lead to the American Eagle Cycle. It is a tricycle for adults — espe-

cially senior citizens or some living with disabilities — looking for a little outdoor exercise on a solidly-built machine but unable to balance themselves on a regular bicycle.

“I have a road bike and bad back,” Webster, 66, said. “A road bike and bad back do not go well together.”

After three years of tweaking the design, he says the American Eagle is ready for production. He already has four employees at his company, Berkshire Group, 184 Falcon Drive, near the Barnes Air National Guard Base.

Westfield was famous as the home of Columbia Bicy-

cles. But Columbia Manufacturing now focuses on school furniture and other products. Webster said he's showing his design, which he patented in February, to Columbia looking for feed-back.

Owning one won't be cheap. He plans to sell them for \$2,499 each plus shipping and handling. But he said all the bearings are sealed, so there will be no maintenance cost. He could have done it cheaper by buying foreign-built parts and materials.

Some parts, such as the Shimano wheel hubs, had to

come from overseas because there are no more domestic companies doing that kind of work. However, Webster owns the molds for the fiberglass seat and has them made for him by a Vermont company.

A lot of the research Webster did was on his target market. More than 40 million Americans are 65 and older, a figure expected to grow fast over the next few years as the nation's 78 million baby boomers age.

“As you get older it gets

See **Bike** / Page 15



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