

COVID-19 Response Service Award

DuWayne Gust, Coulee Region RSVP – La Crosse, WI

Explaining that “as I get older, I realized real happiness comes from giving rather than receiving,” DuWayne Gust started serving with the Coulee Region RSVP in 2018 to help out his local community.

Prior to the spread of COVID-19, he was providing transportation to seniors five days a week for their medical appointments and for other appointments and meetings, and picking up groceries.

Immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic started, the Coulee Region RSVP Transportation Coordinator reached out to see which volunteers would be willing to continue giving rides to those in need for essential medical appointments or grocery errands, with DuWayne quickly volunteering for this responsibility.

For the first few months of the pandemic, he was the only available volunteer driver, continuing to take individuals to necessary in-person medical appointments while also being tapped to do deliveries for the Coulee Region RSVP to make and deliver masks.

He made up to 25 to 35 deliveries or pick-ups a day, three days a week throughout the critical early months of the COVID pandemic crisis. He delivered materials to volunteers making masks, picked up completed masks, and helped deliver over 7,000 masks to over 70 local, nursing homes, senior centers, veterans health and other medical centers, and local businesses.

As the pandemic has continued DuWayne provide rides for seniors to medical appointments five days a week.

Throughout his two years as a Senior Corps volunteer, DuWayne has put in over 1,700 hours of volunteer time and over 24,000 miles helping individuals attend doctors’ appointments or assisting them with quality of life enhancing activities and providing the critical delivery services for the masks distributed throughout the La Crosse area.