

SPOTLIGHT — FAITH RUECKERT

Volunteer helps tax-prep service

By Shannon Maynard

For the Citizen Patriot

When Faith Rueckert began volunteering with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program five years ago, she did it because she enjoyed working with numbers. Since then, she's learned there's a lot more she likes about it.

"It has been very gratifying. ... I enjoy meeting the people," the 55-year-old Brooklyn resident said. "I'm helping people who need it desperately."

VITA is an Internal Revenue Service program that provides tax preparation to low-income residents at no charge.

Rueckert serves as a site coordinator for one of six VITA centers in Jackson County. She answers questions and assists volunteers.

Chris Kilmer, VITA community programs director, said he appreciates Rueckert's commitment to the program.

"(Faith is) dedicated, she has a heart to serve, and she's talented," Kilmer said. "You put all those together, and you have Faith. She's a really good volunteer."

Rueckert says the number of people using the program has increased every year.

The loss of jobs to people in Jackson has made the program more important, she said. "People can't afford a regular tax preparer ... there are a lot of people who wouldn't file (without VITA) because they don't have the money."

Volunteers and partners are vital to VITA. About 2,900 households in Jackson County were able to use the program last year.



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Faith Rueckert of Brooklyn puts her skills to work with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program at the Ayleko Resource Center in Jackson.

and more than 3,200 hours of work were donated in Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale counties.

In addition to the 100 hours per month she volunteers with VITA, Rueckert also has served with the CMS Community-Minded Service Club at Consumers Energy for

more than a year.

She has worked for Consumers for 37 years and is a senior insurance analyst.

Rueckert and her husband, Eugene, have been married 12 years. She has two children and four grandchildren.