



*Helping People,
Changing Lives*

Helping Hand

Welcome

Welcome to the eleventh issue of the Helping Hand! You are receiving this newsletter because you are either a participant in CAHF's Volunteer Engagement Project or you have expressed interest in it. Every month, we share ideas and best practices, updates from the project, and examples of volunteer programs making a difference across California.

We have added a new section in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: **Resources for Activity Directors**. Please see the end of the newsletter for activity ideas, suggestions, and online resources to support residents in isolation.

Announcements: Volunteer Appreciation Week starts on April 19th

April is National Volunteer Month! This is a time that we have been preparing for all year. However, the current circumstances in skilled nursing facilities are causing us to rethink how we can celebrate. As we planned, each of the participating facilities in the Volunteer Engagement Project are going to receive a box of small gifts that can be distributed to their volunteers. Boxes will be shipped this week, but distributing the gifts may not be possible at this time because of visitor restrictions.

So we came up with another idea! The Volunteer Engagement project team has created a digital bundle of graphics, email templates, and other virtual thank you gifts that can be sent to your volunteers via email or text. Right now, volunteers are missing their resident friends and looking for opportunities to connect in isolation so these digital notes will be greatly appreciated. Plus, you won't miss the opportunity to say thanks for all that your volunteers have done for your facility and residents.

If you are not a part of the Volunteer Engagement Project groups, you are invited to take advantage of these digital gifts as well. Email thand@cahf.org to claim your free bundle.

If you have any additional questions about COVID-19 and the recommended response, please refer to the CAHF webpage listed here.

<https://www.cahf.org/Resources/Media-Center/Coronavirus>

The Volunteer Engagement Project is adapting

Tina Hand

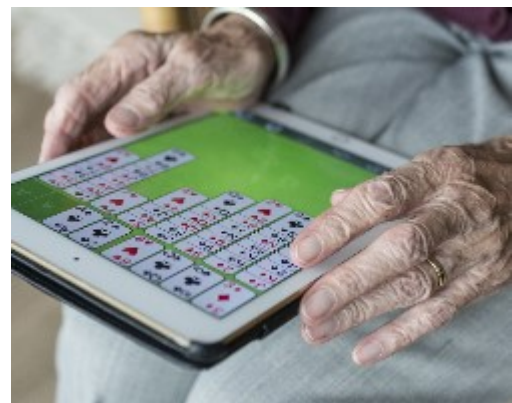
Volunteer Engagement Project Manager

While the majority of Americans, and the world, are sequestered in their homes healthcare workers are still coming to work and caring for the most vulnerable in our communities. We are incredibly grateful.

To show our gratitude, the Volunteer Engagement Project team is offering extra support and resources to Activity Directors during the pandemic. Most volunteers are not allowed to come into skilled nursing facilities at this time. These restrictions have been put into place to protect the health and safety of SNF residents and the general public, but quarantine measures can cause an increase in resident feelings of isolation and loneliness. These are the very issues that our project was created to address.

While your volunteer programs are on hold, our project will adapt. This newsletter includes a new section at the end listing resources for Activity Directors as you continue to navigate these unprecedented circumstances. **Every Tuesday, I will email an updated list of resources.** And while you may not be able to have volunteers in your facilities you can still engage them through digital connections or activities outside the facility. For example, you can request that your volunteers each write a card to your residents wishing them well. Just be sure to follow your facility's policy and procedure to safely deliver the letters and / or packages to residents when they arrive.

Even if you are not asking anything of your volunteers during this pandemic, it is crucial that you maintain connection with those that regularly do service in your volunteer program. You want to ensure that they know they are still valued and vital to the operations of the facility so they are eager to return to their post when this crisis is over. We don't know when, but we will get back to normal. And volunteers will always be a necessary part of the community in your skilled nursing facilities.



Handbook Highlight

From [*How to Create a Robust Volunteer Program in Your Skilled Nursing Facility*](#)

It's a challenging time to work on volunteerism when you can't admit volunteers to your facility. While you are focused on providing meaningful individual activity and social interaction with your residents, this might be a time to be in touch with your volunteer base to reassure them that your residents are well, that your facility is thinking of them at this difficult time, and that you are looking forward to their continued volunteerism when it is safe to do so. A quick email will help them feel valued and connected. Many of the suggestions in the **Volunteer Recognition** section of the handbook can be done virtually. Be creative!

Upcoming FREE webinars!

Voice of the Volunteer

Wednesday, April 8

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PDT)

Registration is now open!

[Click Here to Register](#)

Applied for one (1) CEU for NHAP, BRN and NCCAP (activity professionals).

Volunteer Training and Orientation Techniques

Wednesday, June 10

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PDT)

Registration will open soon.

Building an Intergenerational Volunteer Program

Wednesday, August 12

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PDT)

Registration will open soon.

Click [here](#) to register for upcoming live webinars or watch previously recorded webinars on demand.

Create a Successful and Sustainable Volunteer Program!

CAHF
VOLUNTEER
ENGAGEMENT
PROJECT

FREE 2020 Topic Webinars

One (1) CE available - NHAP, BRN and NCCAP (activity professionals)

Approved CE Educator

For more information, contact:
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CAPTAIN VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Meg's Messages

Meg Thayer, Ph.D.
Geriatric Psychologist

Managing Stress and Anxiety in the COVID-19 Pandemic



Healthcare workers are on the front lines providing care to those who have contracted COVID-19 and to those who experience anxiety and social isolation because of it. Caregivers in skilled nursing facilities are in an especially difficult position, providing care to those in an age group that makes them particularly vulnerable to infectious illness while they are cut off from family and volunteer visitors.

The well-being and emotional strength of workers in skilled nursing facilities are important components of maintaining healthcare services during the COVID-19 outbreak. This will require the support of facility

management. In addition to education about infection control, patient screening, and personal protective equipment, team meetings should include recognition of the emotional toll such caregiving causes. Stress and anxiety are normal and expected at this time, and staff should feel comfortable expressing their concerns without fear of negative consequences. Brief relaxation breaks, regular peer consultation and support, and focus on efforts that are within their power to change are recommended and can be encouraged and modeled by department managers.

Self-care strategies are also important in maintaining the emotional health and resilience of SNF staff at this time. Such strategies should include maintaining good sleep habits, getting fresh air, daily exercise, and maintaining important social contacts while practicing social distancing, such as through FaceTime. Keeping abreast of the latest facts is important and should be obtained through trusted medical sources. When the news feels overwhelming, turn it off, take a step back, and remind yourself of what you have to be grateful for. Understand that you will have to accept some anxiety during this time, but don't let it become the forefront of your daily life. These strategies and the links below could be shared, via email, to your volunteer work force as well.

Skilled nursing facility staff performs important work on a daily basis, and their continued willingness to put the needs of the elderly over their own, particularly at this time, is heroic. Steps to support their emotional strength and well-being are necessary to maintain their ability to safely and effectively do their jobs. For more information, please visit the following websites.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>https://www.ptsd.va.gov/covid/COVID_healthcare_workers.aspx<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/covid19-coronavirus-mental-health-expert-insights/>



Resources for Activity Directors

Activities...

[Care Not Covid](#): online campaign to collect videos messages of hope and appreciation to be shared with those living in skilled nursing and senior living facilities. You can share these videos with your residents or use the hashtag #carenotcovid to find similar videos across social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube).

[Dreamcatchers Foundation](#): non-profit organization that seeks to connect youth volunteers with seniors in assisted living, skilled nursing, or hospice care. They just launched the Kindness and Compassion Initiative, to develop virtual pen pal relationships between volunteer and in-care residents. Reach out to the staff on the About page to learn more about how to get this kind of service for your residents.

[NCCAP](#): includes activity ideas, resources for how to set up a zoom call, and weekly webinars about how best to continue your work as Activity Directors during COVID-19.

[Maria's Place](#): Search activity suggestions by ability level or type of activity, like "social" "physical" "spiritual" etc.

[Archive.org](#): Free download or stream of old TV shows, classic movies, or videos.

[Live Concerts Streaming](#): A list of live or recorded concerts available to watch online for free.

[Libby, for eBooks and Audiobooks](#): Free app to download or use online; requires a library card from participating library but it grants access to a vast collection of new and classic books to read or listen to.

[Music and Memory Support Webinar](#): On April 16th, 1pm EST, Music & Memory will host a webinar to share best practices for providing personalized music during this crisis, including methods for quickly starting a Music & Memory program, hygiene standards, and additional support options and materials for your immediate use.

Health and Wellbeing...

[Stress and Coping During a Pandemic](#): things you can do to support yourself, your loved ones, and

reduce stress. Specific messages for parents and responders as well.

[Tips for Emergency Responders](#): signs of burnout, developing a buddy system, creating self-care routines.

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#): related guidance and resources to assist individuals, providers, communities, and states across the country.

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