



*Helping People,
Changing Lives*

Helping Hand

Welcome

Welcome to the seventh 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, exciting news on the project, and examples of volunteers making a difference across California.

Recognition is the Gift that Keeps on Giving

Tina Hand

Volunteer Engagement Project Manager

The holiday season is upon us. The end of the year is always a time of reflection and gratitude. We offer thanks for what we have and consider our hopes for the coming year.

The sentiment of this season offers the perfect backdrop for the topic we are focused on this month: volunteer recognition. As you will learn in Meg's Message as well as in the topic webinar this week (Dec. 11, 11:00 a.m.), recognition is about much more than a simple praise of "good job". Recognition, of both volunteers and paid staff, is an investment in your facility as well as your workforce.



There are [many great reasons to volunteer during the holiday season](#) and, historically, numbers of volunteers increase during this time. We hope that more volunteers in your facility means more opportunities to recognize their contributions and say thanks. You can even include your residents by inviting them to make holiday thank you cards for your volunteers. Showing appreciation may increase the likelihood that your holiday volunteers continue to donate their time once

the season is over.

I also want to take this time to recognize the incredible efforts of our project participants this past year. I look forward to continuing to work together to build your volunteer programs in 2020. On behalf of CAHF and the Volunteer Engagement Project, thank you and Happy Holidays.

Handbook Highlight

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

There are many ways to track your volunteer program and many ways to measure its success. Sign-in sheets and hourly logs are useful, but volunteer management software can provide an easy, standardized, online approach to volunteer tracking, reporting, measurement, and performance benchmarks. It can also enhance your ability to create and fill volunteer opportunities quickly and efficiently - and let's face it, everyone is online now! There are several volunteer tracking software packages available. Refer to the handbook section entitled **Volunteer Management Software** to find out which software package CAHF's Volunteer Engagement Project uses. Tracking and measuring your volunteer program is crucial to its success.

The last FREE webinar of 2019!

Volunteer Recognition
Wednesday, December 11

NEW TIME!

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (PST)

Registration is still open!

One (1) CEU available for NHAP, BRN and NCCAP (activity professionals)

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

If you have topic suggestions for 2020 webinars, please email Tina Hand at thand@cahf.org

The graphic is a purple and white promotional poster. At the top left is the CAHF logo (California Association of Health Facilities) and at the top right is the QCHF logo (Quality Care Health Foundation). The main text in the center reads "Create a Successful and Sustainable Volunteer Program!" followed by "Free 2019 Topic Webinars". Below this is a large, stylized letter 'V' where the right vertical bar is a silhouette of a person's head in profile. Underneath the 'V' is the text "CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH FACILITIES VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT PROJECT". At the bottom, it states "One (1) CE available - NHAP, BRN and NCCAP (activity professionals)".

Meg's Messages

Meg Thayer, Ph.D.

The Power of Appreciation

One of the earliest lessons we learn from our parents is to say “please” and “thank you.” Parents certainly want their children to be perceived as polite. But gratefulness goes above and beyond the notion of politeness. Some interesting studies performed at the Harvard Business School have looked at the prevalence and effects of gratitude toward others, and their findings are fascinating.

Researchers found that approximately half of us say “thank you” on a regular basis to someone we are related to, but only about 15% of us say “thank you” on a regular basis at work. The theory is that when we express gratitude we are somehow acknowledging that we were vulnerable and in need of help – but we are innately social beings and need to rely on others for our very survival.



The benefits of gratitude far outweigh any perceived negative idea about being in need of assistance. The percentage of people who continue to help others doubles when those helpers receive thanks and appreciation for their efforts. Appreciated helpers are also more likely to provide assistance in other situations. Gratitude reinforces that a volunteer’s contributions are useful and appreciated.

Gratitude is also beneficial to those who express it. People who show gratitude toward others are reportedly more attentive, alert, energetic, and happy. But the benefits are not limited to cognitive functioning and mood; grateful people also report better sleep, increased physical activity, and feeling more connected to others.

Consistent gratitude toward volunteers who choose to spend their free time in your facility is not just the polite thing to do – it provides sincere acknowledgment of their contributions, makes them more likely to continue to help you and others, and provides a boost to your staff when they express gratitude. Everyone wins, especially your residents.

Want tips about how to recognize and appreciate your volunteers? Please attend the CAHF Volunteer Engagement webinar on Volunteer Recognition on December 11th at 11:00 a.m.

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