



*Helping People,
Changing Lives*

Helping Hand

Welcome

Welcome to the first 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.

Roseville Point Health & Wellness Center Celebrates National Volunteer Month

Established in 1991 as part of President George H. W. Bush's 1000 Points of Light campaign, **National Volunteer Month** is an opportunity to recognize volunteers who freely give their time and talent. Every April, charities, businesses, and organizations recognize volunteers and foster a culture of service within their community.

For National Volunteer Month this year, staff at Roseville Point Health & Wellness Center took time to appreciate and celebrate their two-legged and four-legged volunteers. Staff and volunteers met over a delicious spread of snacks and desserts. Volunteers were awarded certificates of appreciation for their efforts along with gift baskets filled with goodies. Four-legged volunteers even received their own goodie



bag, complete with a doggie bowl and treats!

Administrator, **Brandon Stroughter** (pictured left), and Activities Director, **Sharon Orona** (pictured far right), did a wonderful job of letting volunteers know that their service at Roseville Point Health & Wellness was appreciated and valued. This was truly an unforgettable volunteer appreciation event for all involved!

Handbook Highlight

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

It is important for all potential volunteers to feel welcome in your facility. A Welcome Letter can help to communicate both your appreciation for their interest and some important information about volunteerism in skilled nursing. Such a letter should include information about the volunteer application, the need for a background check, requirements for orientation and training, confidentiality, and health information.

Importantly, this letter should also include a clear explanation that skilled nursing volunteers perform roles that are humanitarian in nature and that enhance the quality of life of nursing home residents without pay or the expectation of future employment. Please refer to the handbook for a **sample Welcome Letter to Volunteers!**

Upcoming FREE 2019 Webinars

Stop Recruiting/Start Attracting Volunteers

Wednesday, June 12

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

Dr. Bill Wittich
Consultant
Knowledge Transfer

Goal Setting and Action Planning

Wednesday, August 14

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

DeAnn Walters, NHA
Director of Clinical Affairs and Quality Improvement
California Association of Health Facilities

Volunteer Retention

Wednesday, October 9

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

Trudy Harris
Executive Director



Create a Successful and Sustainable Volunteer Program!
Free 2019 Topic Webinars

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

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

Volunteer Recognition

Wednesday, December 11

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

Amanda Davidson

Volunteer Engagement Project Manager

California Association of Health Facilities

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

Click [here](#) to register for live webinars on the CAHF/QCHF calendar.

Click [here](#) to register for recorded on-demand webinars.

Meg's Messages

Meg Thayer, Ph.D.

Geriatric Psychologist

1:1 Visits as a Focus for Skilled Nursing Facility Volunteers

The effects of loneliness on the health and well-being of older adults has been widely studied. Researchers have found that loneliness may negatively impact physical and mental health by raising levels of stress hormones, increasing inflammation in the body, and weakening the immune system. Perceived loneliness has been associated with increases in heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, arthritis, depression, and dementia.

Loneliness has been shown to negatively affect functioning as well. Older people who reported they felt lonely and isolated also reported decline in their ability to perform ADLs, such as dressing, bathing, eating, and getting up from a chair or bed. While some decline in functioning is expected with increasing age, those who reported feeling lonely experienced this decline in their ability to carry out important daily activities at **twice** the rate of those who did not report loneliness.

So why would a resident in a skilled nursing facility feel lonely, when there are so many people around? An interesting finding of research into loneliness is that people can experience significant loneliness even when they are surrounded by others – what is important is their **perception of the depth and personal nature of their**



interactions. While staff in nursing homes work hard to take care of the physical and emotional needs of their residents, interpersonal interaction is often within the context of providing care and limited by the number of residents needing assistance. Individual interaction provided by a volunteer on a regular basis that focuses solely on the resident and that is perceived as emotionally rewarding can do much to curb those feelings of loneliness and isolation, helping residents to feel known and appreciated.

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