



Helping People,
Changing Lives

Helping Hand

Welcome

Welcome to the 18th 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**. If you have any additional questions about COVID-19 in skilled nursing facilities, please refer to the [CAHF coronavirus webpage](#).

Stories from Your Peers: Holidays Bring Love, Cheer, and Volunteers!

Tina Hand
Volunteer Engagement Project Manager

November marks the beginning of the holiday season. While the year looks different than any other year, the holidays can bring a sense of tradition and normalcy in an extremely abnormal time. For skilled nursing facilities the holidays can also bring a surge in volunteer interest as people look for ways to spread the love and cheer that is typical of the season.

Even in a pandemic volunteer programs are still likely to see this surge, but holiday volunteering will look different than ever



before. Fortunately, there are lots of creative ways that you can make use of these volunteers while keeping your residents safe during the COVID-19 public health emergency.



For example, Veterans Home of California – West LA was recently contacted by a group of volunteers who wanted to help. They were unable to participate in virtual visits and writing letters was not a practical option for the group. So, Coordinator of Volunteer Services Pamela White suggested that they donate a Christmas tree for the facility lobby. This no-contact gesture allowed volunteers to have a direct impact on residents and their quality of life without training, testing, or technology to support their service. In offering this solution, Pamela demonstrated that it is possible to quickly engage holiday volunteers when you have creative ideas to meet volunteer interest. Other creative ideas for holiday volunteering include:

- Decorating resident windows from the outside with holiday décor
- Providing small gifts for residents, such as fuzzy socks to wear or small indoor plants to care for
- Donating mobile devices for virtual communication between residents and loved ones
- Share festive performances, holiday music, or books with residents. *For example:* [Lifting Spirits With Music](#), featuring video performances from young musicians.

Notice that all of these volunteer opportunities can be taken on by a volunteer who has not been trained in your facility. With a lot of volunteer interest during an already busy time, it's possible that volunteer managers may not have the capacity to train all the holiday volunteers. No-contact volunteering, such as the ideas suggested above, allows for volunteering in service of the residents without the resources required to fully onboard a new volunteer.

No matter how your volunteers serve in your facility remember that the holidays are not only about giving to others but also about giving thanks. Meg's article at the end of this newsletter will discuss why being thankful is so important for individual health and lasting relationships.

Handbook Highlight

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

When trying to recruit volunteers, are you ever faced with the question, "What's in it for me"? While we know that most volunteers do so out of the goodness of their hearts, volunteers may also want to know that volunteering may actually be good for their hearts! There are well-documented health and mental health benefits of volunteering, so make sure you highlight those when you recruit, in addition to the wonderful ways volunteers benefit your residents. Please see **Appendix R** in the Handbook for Eight Long-Term Health Benefits of Volunteering. [Download your copy of the Handbook here.](#)

Upcoming FREE webinars!

Lessons Learned Through the Volunteer Engagement (VE) Project

**Wednesday, November 11
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PDT)**



Registration is still open!

Receive one (1) CEU for NHAP and BRN

Growing Your Volunteer Base

Wednesday, December 9

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

Registration is open now

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



Click [here](#) to watch previously recorded webinars on demand.

*NCCAP continuing education units are only available during the live broadcast. NHAP and BRN CEUs are available for the on-demand webinar as well as the live broadcast.

Meg's Messages

Meg Thayer, Ph.D.
Geriatric Psychologist

Give Thanks

The Volunteer Engagement Project has had the opportunity over the past 28 months to enjoy assisting California skilled nursing facilities developing and maintaining their volunteer programs. We have been able to observe the positive effects strong volunteer programs have on nursing home residents and staff. We have also been pleased to hear about the positive effects volunteerism has on the volunteers!

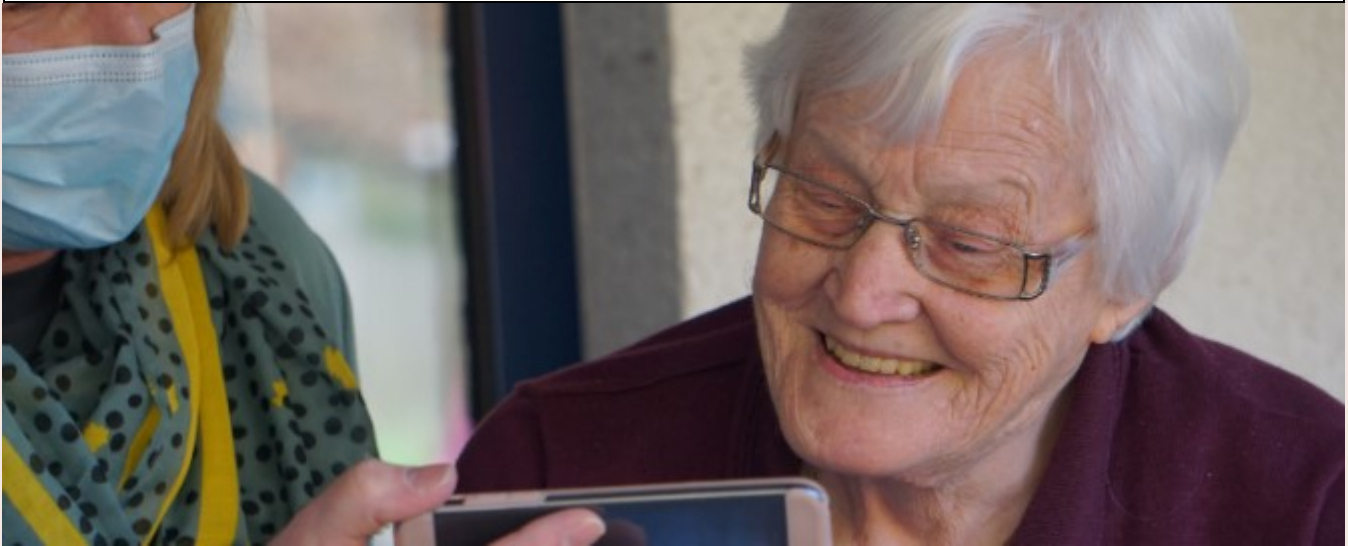
As we enter the holiday season, the topic of gratitude comes to mind. Even after months of stress and social-distancing, people make the effort to say thank you to those who have touched their lives and made their burden a little less. We know the effects of gratitude on those we thank. Could it be, like volunteerism, that gratitude is also good for the one expressing it?



Gratitude has, in fact, been a popular topic of research - and multiple studies have shown that grateful people experience a number of psychological and physiological benefits. Some of these benefits include less depression and stress, lower blood pressure, increased optimism, and more energy. In older adults, daily practice of gratitude slowed down some of the effects of neurodegeneration. Positive emotions such as appreciation have been shown to lower levels of cortisol, the "stress hormone" that can deplete the immune system and raise blood sugar levels.

And importantly, being thankful can increase the production of oxytocin, sometimes called the “bonding hormone,” which can foster calm and security in relationships.

Albert Schweitzer once said, “At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us,” which wisely reminds us about the importance of gratitude, both for others and for ourselves.



Resources for Activity Directors and SNF Staff

[NCCAP COVID-19 Resources for Activity Professionals](#): This is an additional list of resources for activity professionals and anyone working in a skilled nursing facility. The list includes activity ideas, resources for how to set up a zoom call, and recorded webinars about how best to continue your work during COVID-19.

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New this month...

[Alzheimer’s Association](#): This site offers a robust community for older adults living with dementia, as well as their caregivers. They also offer a free, 24-hour support line (800-272-3900), with augmented staffing during the COVID crisis.

[Collection of online worship services](#): This website, Online Faith Collective, houses a collection of online worship services, organized by faith. A number of Christian denominations, nondenominational services, and Jewish services are available.

[Duolingo](#): Free software to teach anyone new languages in bite-size lessons. The online website or mobile app can teach 35+ languages at no cost.

[Free technology instruction videos from Goodwill Industries](#): this page offers a variety of courses on basic technology, such as Microsoft Word, Gmail, and using the internet to get stuff done.

[Horoscopes for seniors, updated daily](#)

[UPDATED THIS MONTH! 'Lifting Spirits with Music' Shelter-in-Place Concert Series](#)

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Activities...

[AARP Games for Seniors](#): Free to play. Includes classics like Mahjong, solitaire, and word games plus arcade games and quizzes.

[Activities and Games for Seniors](#)

[Be My Eyes](#): This is an app for iPhone or Android smart phones in which volunteers (residents in your facility) can help blind and low-vision people lead more independent lives by answering requests. As a sighted volunteer you can help just by installing the Be My Eyes app. A blind or a low-vision user may need help with anything from checking expiry dates, distinguishing colors, reading instructions or navigating new surroundings. If residents have their own phone or mobile device, this service can help them to feel useful and fulfilled even in isolation.

[Californians For All](#): A statewide program created to match available volunteers with organizations in need. Volunteers can sign up to take phone calls with seniors, deliver meals, or take part in other opportunities in their local area. To post your organization on the website, email info@cv.ca.gov

[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).

[Crafts for Seniors](#)

[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.

[Easy-to-Grow Indoor Plants for Seniors](#)

[Fifty activities for the elderly in lockdown and isolation](#)

[Free e-Books for Amazon Kindle](#): Adult fiction, classic literature, children's books, etc.

[Free online art lessons](#): Including drawing and painting lessons plus free videos and e-books about creating art.

[Free online music classes and educational materials](#): Courses range from "Suitable for All" to "Professional" skill level and the content is varied in subject matter. Residents can participate in a History of the Beatles course or learn about the proper way to listen to music, among many other topics.

[Friendship Line](#): Accredited 24-hour crisis line for people aged 60 years and older as well as adults living with disabilities. Trained volunteers specialize in offering a caring ear and having a friendly conversation with depressed older adults. **Toll Free call 800-971-0016**

[Fun and free online games for seniors](#)

[GrandPad](#): Specialized tablets made specifically for seniors to call people, listen to music, browse the internet and more.

[How to enable captions on Zoom](#): For deaf or hard-of-hearing residents who may be connecting with family or volunteers through the Zoom platform. For captions in other video platforms, see [here](#).

[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.

[Live church services](#)

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

[Mon Ami volunteer management technology](#): Connect your residents with volunteers who want to chat on the phone or run errands.

[Music & Memory Certification Training](#): Offered at a 50% discounted rate which includes one year of Music & Memory training and support via the Music & Memory Care Community.

[Netflix Party](#): Google Chrome extension that allows two or more people to watch the same Netflix video on different computers. Netflix Party synchronizes video playback and adds group chat so people watching can chat about the show together.

[New York Botanical Garden](#): Offering photos, activities, and videos to engage with their botanical treasures while their doors are shuttered.

[Online Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings](#) via phone or Zoom Meeting.

[Pet Therapy Tele-visit](#)

[Play online music games](#)

[Play Wheel of Fortune online](#)

[Printable Sudoku games](#)

[Printable word search games](#)

[SAGE LGBT Elder Hotline](#): Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in English and Spanish, with translation in 180 languages. This hotline can connect everyone with a phone to an LGBT responder who is friendly, knowledgeable, and ready to listen.

[StoriiTime](#): A free service that connects isolated residents with children who are learning to read. You can sign up your residents to be a volunteer reader as long as they are over 50 years old.

[Top Songs from Every Generation](#): Listening to music has been shown to reduce rates of depression and anxiety. This list shows you what songs your residents may like depending on their age.

[Tour of the Holy Land in 360-degrees](#)

[Tour the White House in 360 degree](#)

[Twelve Board Games that can be played with friends or family \(or volunteers!\) from afar](#)

[Twelve World-Class Museums You Can Visit Online](#)

[Twenty Questions to Ask an Older Adult](#)

[Virtual Travel Experiences](#) that let you see the world from your own internet-connected device.

Destinations include Japan, the coasts of Northern Ireland, and the Great Wall of China. All free videos.

[Weekly Virtual Activities offered through Mississauga Seniors Centre](#)

[WellConnected and WellConnected Espanol](#): Offering free programs to connect seniors over the phone to discuss topics that interest them. Current group discussion topics include poetry, meditation and trivia. Well-connected members call in via a toll-free number at a set time each week, with some groups offering the option to connect via computer or mobile device. Visitors are welcome to join the call and just listen as long as you've let the group know you're there. A current catalog of programming can be found [here](#).

Entertainment...

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

[Baseball, the Ken Burns Documentary](#): Available to stream online for free.

[Bird watching](#)

[Broadway Living Room Concerts](#): Watch videos of Broadway stars and musicians singing songs from classic musicals and today's top shows.

[Comforting Bible Verses](#)

[Four YouTube Channels for Seniors](#)

[Grammy list of online concerts during COVID-19](#)

[Iconic Destinations Around the Universe in 360-degree panoramas](#)

[Librivox](#): Listen to free audiobooks from the public domain (books published before 1923).

[Lifting Spirits with Music](#): Concerts recorded by young musicians and performers in the Sacramento area. These videos were compiled specifically to show in nursing homes and long-term care facilities across California. These young people have volunteered their talents in the hopes of bringing joy to residents in isolation. Enjoy the two concerts currently available and subscribe to the YouTube channel so you will receive updates about new videos and live performances.

[Live camera of the beach in Naples, FL](#)

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

[Livestream concerts from LiveNation](#)

[Livestream of animals at the San Diego Zoo](#)

[Major League Baseball 2018/2019 Season Streaming](#): Online for free when you log in or create a free account.

[Metropolitan Opera](#): Nightly stream of opera at the Met.

[Musicians on Call](#): Program to provide Virtual Bedside Performances to hospital patients and anyone feeling isolated. By utilizing video conferencing technology, volunteer guides host a 30-60 minute live session with performances from a volunteer musician. They also have a program called Music

Pharmacy, providing technology to people in health facilities to listen to music, and a curated playlist called #MOCheals. **To express interest in the Virtual Bedside Performance Program, email volunteers@musiciansoncall.org**

[Neil Diamond sings “Sweet Caroline” updated for the coronavirus](#): “Hands, washing hands...reaching out, don’t touch me...I won’t touch you...”--It's a lighthearted take on a classic tune.

[Netflix for Seniors](#): Content suggestions by genre.

[NFL Game Pass](#): Replay NFL games from 2009-2019 and NFL Original Shows. Offer is still available.

[One Hundred Movie Recommendations for Seniors](#)

[PBS Nature](#): Full episodes available to stream online.

[Some Good News with John Krasinski](#): YouTube show created during the pandemic to highlight happy news and brighten spirits. Eight episodes available for free.

[Songs Suggestions for Elderly Adults](#)

[The Bash vendor list for nursing home events](#): You could hire one of these entertainers to visit residents outside their windows. Elvis outside my bedroom window? You could give residents an experience they will never forget!

[Tour of Anne Frank House](#)

[Tour of Buckingham Palace](#)

[Tour of the Great Wall of China](#)

[Tours of several different types of farms](#)

[Upcoming Online Events for Seniors by SeniorPlanet](#)

[Uplifting Classic Music playlist](#)

[Virtual Photo Walks](#): A free service that uses smart phones and video conferencing to enable people isolated by illness or disability to travel the world in real time.

[Virtual rides at Disneyland and Disney World](#)

[Virtual tour of Disney World](#)

[Virtual Tours from NASA](#)

[Virtual Tours from The Smithsonian Magazine](#): Including a tour of seven American artists’ historic homes and a virtual tour of a 17th Century shipwreck.

[Yo Yo Ma performs Bach Six Cello Suite](#)

Health and Wellbeing...

[CMP Communicative Technology Grant is still accepting applications](#): Your facility is eligible for up to \$3000 of communicative technology to assist residents in communicating with loved ones while they continue to isolate. Visit the [CDPH website](#) to learn more and apply.

[Common COVID-19 Related Scams](#): Post this flyer around your facility to remind residents (and staff)

that scams have increased since the pandemic began so extra vigilance is required for their own safety and security. The flyer is also available in [Spanish](#), [Chinese](#), and [Russian](#).

[Easy Tai Chi Videos for Beginners](#): Includes in chair exercises.

[Exercise that can be done in a chair](#)

[Facebook Group for Activity Directors](#): Share ideas with peers, learn about events in your industry, seek support from people who understand your challenges.

[Five Common Challenges Care-Givers Face and How to Handle Them](#)

[Free food for healthcare workers during COVID-19 \(updated 11/2/2020\)](#)

[Free Public Health Flyers about COVID-19](#): Translated into 30+ languages.

[Go4Life from the National Institute on Aging](#): Short videos featuring exercises and activities for older adults.

[Guide for Activity Directors and SNF Staff](#): PDF titled **Addressing Social Isolation for Older Adults During the COVID-19 Crisis**. Includes state-wide and national resources for skilled nursing facilities, including ideas for resident activities and staff.

[Guided imagery for destressing and self-care](#): In audio and video formats.

[Headspace](#): A meditation app, is offering free subscriptions to US health-care workers through the end of 2020. To qualify, you'll need to provide your [National Provider Identifier](#).

[NCCAP YouTube Channel](#): Featuring webinar recordings and live Zoom Cafes providing support from activity professionals for activity professionals. If you're at a loss for ideas or need to vent, you can tune into these webinars to connect with your peers.

[NCHPAD 14 Weeks to a Healthier You](#): The National Center on Health, Physical Activity, and Disability offers a free, personalized web-based physical activity and nutrition program directed towards people with mobility limitations, chronic health conditions, and physical disabilities. The goal is to help people get moving and making healthy choices, regardless of their limitations. This program is recommended by the CDC.

[Post Virtual Volunteer Opportunities on VolunteerMatch.org](#): Register your organization, post a brief description of services needed, and volunteers from all over the world can find you! VolunteerMatch has a section specifically for virtual volunteer opportunities and volunteering opportunities related to COVID-19. This way, you can continue to serve residents through volunteering.

[Psychological First Aid: Supporting Yourself and Others During COVID-19](#): An online only course designed to help individuals build resilience and support themselves and lend support to others during and following the COVID-19 outbreak. The course length is estimated at 60 minutes.

[Recommended exercises for older adults in isolation \(requires standing\)](#)

[Recorded Webinar from CDC](#) "Preparing Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities for COVID-19."

[Setting Minds and Hearts at Ease: A Clinician's Guide to End-of-Life-Care Conversations](#)

[Seven Tips for Managing Your Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[Sixteen Ways to Encourage Negative or Pessimistic Residents to Attend Activities](#)

[Spiro100](#): Video fitness and wellness classes for seniors. Offering free 30-day trial during COVID-19 crisis.

[Strategies for keeping resident and staff spirits up](#)

[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.

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

[Support Groups for Caregivers](#): Including groups for Spanish speakers, youth, LGBTQ+, and others.

[Talkspace COVID-19 Resources](#): Free mental health services for uncertain times, including free month subscriptions for health care workers, free therapist-led Facebook support groups, and a 16-day anxiety relief program to reduce and manage fear about COVID-19.

[Tips for Dementia Caregivers during COVID-19](#)

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

[Twenty-four stories of resident engagement during social isolation](#) These stories are full of clever ideas and messages of hope. Review them for ideas for your own residents.

[Wash Your Lyrics](#): Don't settle for washing to the tune of "Happy Birthday." This site will generate a hand washing poster with the song of your choice.

[YMCA New York offers Virtual Exercise Classes for Older Adults](#)



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