



Helping People,
Changing Lives

Helping Hand

Welcome

Welcome to the fourth 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.

Five Final Lessons Learned

Amanda Davidson

Volunteer Engagement Project Manager

In February 2018, the CAHF Volunteer Engagement Project launched its first topic webinar, [Top Ten Lessons Learned](#). The webinar shared information that was gathered during the first five site visits of the project (big thanks to Group 1!).

As I leave CAHF and the Volunteer Engagement project, I'd like to reiterate some of those lessons learned as well as add a few of my own. I'll stick to five, in order to keep this article brief:

- **Building a successful volunteer program takes time.**

Does creating a successful volunteer program happen overnight? No way. However, by putting in time and effort on the front end you will inevitably create a solid program that will enhance the quality of life of your residents.

- **Volunteers can help.** Volunteers can plug in in ways that staff may not be able to.



Volunteers come with their own unique skills and experiences. Utilize the strengths of your volunteers in a way that most benefits your facility and your residents.

- **Volunteers want to know that they are appreciated.** Don't forget that your volunteers have chosen to be in your facility when they could be somewhere else. Tell them and show them how much you appreciate that they are freely giving their time.
- **Enthusiasm and team buy in are key.** As with any quality improvement project, it takes the whole team's involvement to ensure success (**see Meg's Messages**). Your facility's volunteer program should never be a one-person job. Every staff member must play a role in attracting, retaining, and appreciating volunteers.
- **Skilled nursing facility staff are remarkable people.** I know this last one isn't much of a lesson per se, but it's the truth! My most memorable experiences during this project occurred during site visits. From an impromptu conga line (**Windsor Gardens Healthcare Center of the Valley**) to an IDT meeting that made my sides hurt from laughing (**Villa Rancho Bernardo - pictured below**), I was lucky enough to meet some of the most wonderful people with the biggest hearts.

This has been an immensely rewarding project to be a part of. There is more work to be done and I know that the end results will be positive. I have so enjoyed working with all of you. Keep up the great work and thank you for everything that you do every day on behalf of your residents!

Handbook Highlight

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

An important aspect of attracting, training, and retaining volunteers is to make it clear what you want a volunteer to do! A specific description of the activities, duties, and time commitment you expect can help you attract the right volunteer for every job.

A new volunteer will have a less than optimal start if she shows up at your facility only to find out that her role is unclear, is vastly different from what she thought she signed up for, or that your program is not organized enough for her to feel welcome in your SNF community.

As you make a plan for your volunteer program, write a volunteer role description for each role you would like a volunteer to fulfill.

Please see the **Volunteer Role Descriptions** section of the handbook and utilize the **Sample Volunteer Role Descriptions!**

Upcoming FREE 2019 Webinars

Volunteer Retention

Wednesday, October 9

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

Trudy Harris

Executive Director

Team Giving

Registration coming soon!

Volunteer Recognition

Wednesday, December 11

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

Registration coming soon!

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

The Importance of Teamwork

In the challenging and rewarding field of skilled nursing, a multidisciplinary approach has become the standard for providing quality care to residents. A multidisciplinary approach, however, is only as good as its communication, coordination, and support of team members.

Medicare publications define the purpose of the interdisciplinary team is “to foster frequent, structured, and documented communication among disciplines to establish, prioritize, and achieve treatment goals.” Naturally, this very definition can easily be applied to facility goals as well as resident treatment goals. When interdisciplinary teams meet on a regular basis to establish and prioritize facility goals, the likelihood that they will be completed improves dramatically.



Multiple studies have suggested that when people participate in goal-setting as part of a team they feel more personally invested and are more motivated to work toward those goals. Better outcomes have also been associated with less hierarchy in the interaction patterns of team members – so members from every department at every level should feel comfortable sharing their ideas about how to attract, train, recognize, and retain volunteers who will have a positive impact on your residents and your community.

A true team-based model of care is vital to providing individualized medical and psychosocial care to skilled nursing residents. This model also significantly improves a facility's ability to work on its Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) goals, including volunteer engagement. Make your volunteer engagement goals a regular agenda item for interdisciplinary team meetings. When they are, these goals will be viewed as a priority and as a joint effort, ultimately increasing the likelihood of a successful volunteer program.

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