



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF HEALTH FACILITIES

**VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT  
PROJECT**

Helping People,  
Changing Lives

# Helping Hand

## Welcome

Welcome to the second 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.

## 2019 Points of Light Conference in St. Paul, Minnesota

Amanda Davidson

Volunteer Engagement Project Manager

***"We can find meaning and reward by serving some higher purpose than ourselves, a shining purpose, the illumination of a thousand points of light...we all have something to give."***

- President George H.W. Bush, Points of Light Founder

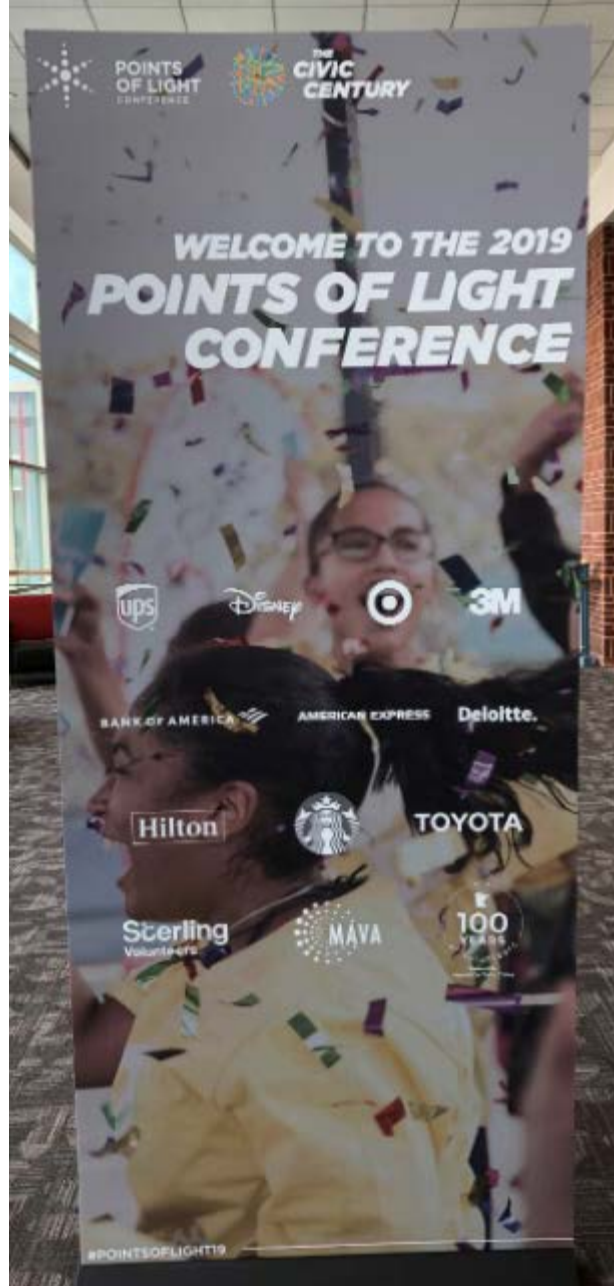
In his 1989 inaugural address, former President George H.W. Bush shared his vision of a "thousand points of light" – individuals and organizations across the nation helping others through service. In 1990, the [Points of Light Foundation](#) was created as an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization.

Last week, I had the privilege of attending the 2019 Points of Light Conference, the world's largest service-related interchange, and found it to be nothing short of remarkable and inspiring. I was surrounded by impassioned individuals who work with volunteers on a day-to-day basis. Their successes and challenges mirrored those experienced by our CAHF Volunteer

Engagement project pilot facilities.

Describing all the knowledge and energy that the conference left me with would take far more words than allotted here, but I'd like to share a few takeaways:

- **The exact definition of a volunteer varies.** For some, corporate volunteer programs, required community service for students, and work experience programs live in a murky volunteer gray area. Regardless of why the volunteer began their service in the first place, recognizing the many benefits of volunteering can make the volunteer experience more inclusive and rewarding for all involved **(see Meg's Messages)**.
- **Ensuring that all staff members are aware of the volunteer program and have techniques and the ability to handle volunteer issues when they arise is imperative.** This does not have to be a lengthy training, but instead could be something short and interactive where staff learn to better manage volunteer issues through practice and demonstration. I sat next to one Volunteer Manager who told me that a 10 minute orientation to the volunteer program was required during the onboarding process for all new staff joining her organization.
- **Determining the value of your volunteers will strengthen your volunteer program.** How do you and your facility assign value to your volunteers? Is it through the number of residents served by volunteers? Or is it the quality of service provided to residents by your volunteers? Perhaps value for you is determined by the total number of volunteers at your facility or maybe it's the number of volunteer hours that they contribute. No matter what value you assign your volunteers, monitoring and tracking that value will help you set attainable goals for the future that will enhance your volunteer program **(see Upcoming FREE 2019 Webinars)**.
- **Your facility's story is unique and special – share it!** One of the most effective ways to attract volunteers to your facility is to tell your story. Many people volunteer because they care about a specific cause and want to make a difference. Through effective storytelling, tell potential volunteers about the life-changing volunteer work that your facility has to



offer!

## Handbook Highlight

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

The State Operations Manual for skilled nursing facilities generally includes volunteers in any training that is required for paid staff. Training in required topics may take the form of in-person instruction, video/computerized training, or written handouts. While the areas of training for both paid staff and un-paid volunteers are similar, training should take place separately, to help make the difference between volunteer status and employee status absolutely clear. It is very important for your facility to document that required volunteer training has taken place.

For the duration of the CAHF Volunteer Engagement Project, the list of volunteer training requirements will be updated as the State Operations Manual is updated. Please see the **Volunteer Training Requirements** and **Volunteer Acknowledgement Form!**

## Upcoming FREE 2019 Webinars

### 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

Team Giving

### 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.



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

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# Meg's Messages

Meg Thayer, Ph.D.  
Geriatric Psychologist

## The Psychology of Helping

For years, psychologists have studied why people choose to spend time volunteering. When attracting volunteers to assist in a skilled nursing facility, we are often asking them to develop an on-going, supportive relationship with complete strangers who may be frail. Why would anyone want to do this?



While there remains some disagreement about whether people help others for altruistic reasons or because they experience personal gain from helping people in need, most psychologists who study helping behavior understand that both constructs are likely in play when people decide to volunteer. Commonly reported motivational reasons for volunteering include satisfying personal values, a specific community concern, to gain a better understanding of others, and personal development.

Studies of the emotional benefits of providing support to others consistently find that helping behavior results in a decreased risk of depression, anxiety, and stress. In addition, those who help others show increased ability to receive support when they need it and to show gratitude for it.

There is also evidence for a biological basis for the rewards of giving. Research using functional brain imaging (fMRI) has demonstrated at least three brain areas that benefit from giving social support. This suggests that from an evolutionary perspective, our brains were wired to feel more rewarded for selflessness and giving. Such studies also suggest that, like many activities that feel rewarding, selfless giving over a period of time creates a neural feedback loop that makes people want to continue.

The positive bottom line of all this research? The rewards of giving and receiving social support just might create the ultimate win-win situation.

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