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The ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS PAGE



By Sandra Stimson ADC, CALA, CDP
 Executive Director, [Alternative Solutions in Long Term Care](#)

Music: "Peg of My Heart" furnished by [Heart and Soul Music](#) "Providing Quality Music for Nursing Homes"

Volunteer Management Essentials for Long Term Care

Alternative Solutions in Long Term Care
 Sandra Stimson CALA, ADC, CDP

The holiday season is upon us. Now is the golden opportunity to recruit volunteers, showcase what your volunteers are currently providing and to remember your volunteers that currently work in your community.

"A retired couple came to volunteer in my community. They had just lost their only child, beloved son. They were still in the grieving process but wanted to fill a void in their life. They began a spiritual sing along and it became the most popular weekly event in the facility. They additionally, collected holiday gifts for every resident and wrapped each gift lovingly. When the day came to give out those gifts, her husband dressed up as Santa Clause, her church choir sang holiday songs while she personally handed out the hundreds of gifts. When she went to leave, we handed her a gorgeous gift basket. Her eyes filled up with tears and she was embarrassed to take the gorgeous gift basket." She said, "You have no idea how important it is to me and my husband to volunteer here. I love the residents and feel not only am I making a difference in their lives but they have given me a purpose and reason to live again."

Often times, people within your community will volunteer if they see an interesting story about volunteers working in your facility, specifically if the story is interesting. Statistics show that more people sign up to volunteer during the holidays. In the local media, place an interesting story and pictures show casing your volunteers and specific functions they perform. A picture speaks a thousand words and will grab the readers attention. Be sure to give specific information about their job, the title, hours they work, how long they have been volunteering. Ask the volunteers to give testimonials that is very specific about what they do and why they volunteer. You can provide a testimonial form with specific questions for the volunteers to complete. Always obtain the volunteers permission to post their pictures and to use the testimonials. The press release should be submitted to your community papers, facility paper, religious papers, church bulletins and other senior magazines published locally. It is recommended that press releases are submitted no later than December 1st. Address all press releases to the Editor and state specifically what section of the paper you want the press release to run in and the day of the week it should appear.

Place a volunteer table in your lobby during the month of December. Put up a display board with pictures of your volunteers and their functions. Have freshly printed volunteer applications and a list of opportunities in your facility. Ask that they take the time to complete the application and leave the completed applications at the front desk. Many times, the applicant has good intentions but does not follow through on completing the application. Try to provide every opportunity for the volunteer to complete the application before they leave your facility. Always have pens on the table. Alert the receptionist to be on the look out for people picking up applications and if she could ask that they complete the application before they leave the facility.

Be very specific about your needs such as Pet Therapy, Bingo Caller, Craft Volunteer, etc. Always include on the table information about the volunteer opportunities such as, the time commitment and days of the week they are needed. Applicants are more apt to volunteer if they see that only a small amount of time is needed. If you are to general or not specific in your volunteer needs, applicants will not take the time to complete an application. Always call the Volunteers immediately back and schedule an appointment for an interview.

Send a letter to the local churches to be placed in the church bulletin about your need for volunteers. Provide a list of job opportunities and time commitment. Also contact the local schools, fraternities and sororities as they are planning their upcoming volunteer assignments. Always give at least one testimonial in the flyer as it speaks volumes when they can read someone's else's views on volunteering. Speak to your Administrator about incentives you could offer young adults, such as reference letters for college and jobs, scholarship for college and possible employment. Highlight the skills the young adults will be learning during their volunteer assignment. Such as working as a team, taking direction and multi tasking. Often times the local grocery store can provide discount cards for those seniors who will be volunteering. Make an appointment with your local grocer and see if this is possible. Offer lunch for those who volunteer on a weekly basis. Incentives often times may be the reason someone volunteers.

During the holiday season, the Activity Director should meet with the Administrator and Marketing Director about the holiday gift the facility will be providing to the volunteers. Now is not the time to skimp on the holiday gifts as it appears cheap, could be very insulting to the volunteer. A gift basket of fruit, cheese and candy is recommended. Often times, the Marketing Directors are ordering baskets for their referral sources and have gotten a price discount for the baskets. The Marketing Director needs to know in advance if she will be ordering the baskets, how many, date you need them by and if it is coming out of the marketing budget.

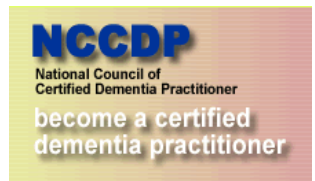
The Activity Director will need to determine how the baskets are being delivered. Are the baskets to be given out in person or sent to a person's home? Baskets should be given to those volunteers who are there at a minimum, on a monthly basis. Be sure to remember the volunteer clergy and members of the executive board of your resident council.

All other volunteers who come in less than once a month should receive a facility holiday card. Through out the year, the Activity Director should be keeping a list of all volunteers who have come to

ABOUT SANDRA

Sandra Stimson has experience as a corporate consultant, Corporate Trainer and National Speaker. Her experience is in long term care, as Activity Director, Director of Alzheimer's Units and Assistant Administrator of a 550 bed long term care county home. She is Co-founder of Pet Express Pet Therapy Club, is a Life Replay Specialist. Sandra implements dementia units nationwide. Sandra has written several books, Volunteer Management Essentials for Long Term Care and Pet Express Pet Therapy Program. Sandra has been a facilitator for Alzheimer's support groups and is the Awards Chair for the NJ Association of Activity Professionals. Sandra is the Executive Director of **National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners**
<http://www.nccdp.org>.

[Alternative Solutions in Long Term Care](#) offers resources for health care professionals in many areas of dementia care, care plans, Snoezelen products, dementia activity calendars, adult day care calendars, sensory calendars, reminisce videos for dementia, activity books, and dates to remember, party supplies, resources and links.



the community. This includes children's groups, entertainers, community groups, speakers, religious groups, etc. The list should include the contact information, phone number, name, address, email address and the contact web address. Keep the list current and up to date. Often times the volunteers who come in seasonally will come back just because you took the time to send a holiday card.

"The greatest gift any resident could receive is the relationship built with a volunteer."

Volunteer Management Essentials for Long Term Care is an excellent resource book and can be purchased at www.activitytherapy.com

Happy Holidays

Alternative Solutions in Long Term Care
Sandra Stimson CALA, ADC, CDP
Lisa Reidinger CTRS, LNHA, CSW, CDP

"Volunteers"

author unknown

Submitted by Alternative Solutions in Long Term Care.

Many will be shocked to find,
When the day of judgment nears,
That there's a special place in heaven
Set aside for Volunteers.
Furnished with big recliners,
Satin couches and foot stools,
Where there are no committee chairman,
No yard sales or rest area coffee to serve,
No library duty or bulletin assembly,
There will be nothing to print or stable,
Not one thing to fold or mail,
Telephone lists will be outlawed.
But, a finger snap will bring,
Cool drinks and gourmet dinners
And rare treats fit for a king.
You ask,
"Who 'll will serve these privilege few
And work for all their worth?"
Why, all those who reaped the benefits,
And Not Once volunteered on earth.

Recommended Gifts for Alzheimer's and Dementia

Submitted by: National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners
www.nccdp.org

One of the most requested information we receive from the public is suggestions for gifts during the holiday season. We have provided a list of suggestions to aide in gift giving.

For Dementia residents some possible gifts are:

- * CD player at bedside with music of the resident's choice.
- *Stuffed animals and dolls if appropriate.
- *Body Pillows sprayed with the loved ones cologne or perfume. These can be purchased at
- Linen and Things or Bed Bath and Beyond.
- *Pretty pictures for the wall.
- *Build a Bear with a prerecorded message from the loved one.
- *Artificial plants. If appropriate a live plant.
- *New slippers.
- *Sweater
- *Sweat Pants & Top
- *Relaxation DVD's. We recommend www.activitytherapy.com
- *Books on Tape
- *A small fish tank or bowl with a Beta Fish. But know who will be taking care of it.
- *Mobiles for the room.
- *Knick knack's of interest to the resident.
- *For men. Sports memorabilia for their room, such as pennants, baseball caps, etc.
- *Perfume and cologne
- *Nail Polish and Nail Polish remover.
- *Money for hair appointments.
- *Money for trips.

Often times families would like to donate to the Activity Department. Print up a pretty brochure and call it: "Holiday Giving Ideas for the Dementia Unit." Next to the brochure, place your favorite catalogues and paper clip the pages with the items you most want. You could provide a list of items and ask that people check off those items as they purchase them. Place this list in a binder next to the catalogues.

Some gift suggestions are:

- *DVD's about animals, children and reminisce videos.
- *Relaxation videos. www.activitytherapy.com
- *Craft donations
- *Fish tank and fish
- *Donations for a pet bird and cage.
- *Eldersong CD's
- *Sensory room items.
- *Jewelry boxes and costume jewelry.
- *Pretty calendars of animals and children.
- *Rocking Chair

- *Gift cards for craft stores, book stores, party stores, grocery stores.
- *Donation for an entertainer.
- *Donation for books and magazines.
- *Subscription to some favorite magazines such as AARP, Highlights (they have hidden picture game books).
- *Gift card for Wal-mart or Target
- *Gift card to the local plant nursery.
- *Donations for staff to attend local seminars on Alzheimer's and Dementia topics.
- *Donation for videos and books on Alzheimer's and Dementia topics.
- *Amazon.com gift card.

Happy Holidays
National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners
www.nccdp.org



THE ACTIVITY DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

*Providing Internet Resources
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in Long Term Care Settings*

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