



Helping People,
Changing Lives

Helping Hand

Welcome

Welcome to the final issue of the Helping Hand! You are receiving this newsletter because you are either a participant of 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 included an additional 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](#).

Announcements: Handbook Available in Spanish

How to Create a Robust Volunteer Program in Your Skilled Nursing Facility, the comprehensive handbook from CAHF's Volunteer Engagement Project is now available in Spanish! The handbook has been translated in its entirety to allow for greater access to this information. You can download the handbook in English or Spanish at the [CAHF Volunteer Engagement Project webpage](#) (www.cahf.org/volunteerprograms).

Final Thoughts on Volunteer Engagement

Tina Hand

Volunteer Engagement Project Manager

December marks the final month of the CAHF Volunteer Engagement Project. Through the last two-and-a-half years, we have learned from your volunteer programs and helped you to grow them to even greater heights. We know that skilled nursing facility volunteer programs are most successful when the entire facility staff is involved and volunteers are engaged. With that in mind, I want to leave you with some final thoughts on volunteer engagement.



Many volunteers struggle to stay engaged over a long period of time. SNF volunteer programs in particular are challenged with high rates of volunteer turnover due to the frequency of preset service commitments (i.e. educational service requirements). We have identified the following strategies to help you maintain a consistent group of engaged volunteers:

1. **Share the impact.** Volunteers want to know that their service is making a difference. This is why many of them choose to volunteer in the first place. You can keep volunteers engaged in your facility if you inform them of the impact they are making on the residents and the staff. Be specific and let them know often. It may also help to hook volunteers into your mission if you include stories of impact in the recruitment or orientation process.
2. **Listen to their perspective.** Volunteers see nursing homes from a unique position. From this perspective, they can help you spot issues in your volunteer program and even suggest solutions. Give volunteers many opportunities to provide feedback and listen to what they have to say. Volunteers feel more engaged in an organization when they feel like their voice is being heard.
3. **Keep service simple and focused.** For many, this may be their first experience in a skilled nursing facility or even their first experience volunteering. Help volunteers avoid feeling overwhelmed by giving them simple tasks that are well defined. Be clear about what activity you would like each volunteer to do and how long they are expected to do it. Expectations should be set early and revisited often. It also helps to make sure the activities assigned are of interest to your volunteers. They will be more engaged when they like what they are doing.

There are many ways to engage volunteers and no one way is the right way to do it. What matters is that you make the effort to keep volunteers engaged and you continue to invest in your volunteer program. If you do that, you will maintain a robust volunteer program for years to come.

Handbook Highlight

We at the CAHF Volunteer Engagement Project want to thank our 20 participating skilled nursing facilities as well as our Advisory Committee for their wonderful input and feedback for our Volunteer Handbook. It is now in its final version, and even translated into Spanish, for ease of use all over the wonderful state of California. We hope you find it useful as you begin, develop, and strengthen your volunteer program with the ultimate goal, of course, of improving the quality of life of skilled nursing facility residents.

[Download your copy of the Handbook here \(Available in English and Spanish\)](#)

Upcoming FREE webinars!

***Growing Your Volunteer Base
& Creating Meaningful
Volunteer Opportunities***



TOMORROW!

**Wednesday, December 9
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (PDT)**

Registration is still open!

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

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

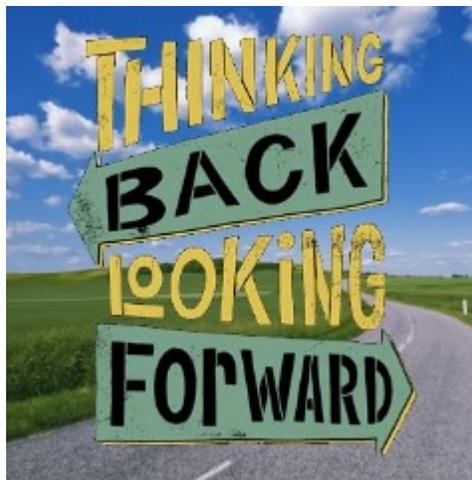
*NCCAP continuing education units are only available during the live broadcast. NHAP and BRN CEUs are available for the on-demand webinar as well as the live broadcast.



Meg's Messages

Meg Thayer, Ph.D.
Geriatric Psychologist

Thinking Back, Looking Forward



Thinking back to the beginning of the Volunteer Engagement Project in July 2018, we anticipated the development of resources and guides to help California skilled nursing facilities develop robust volunteer programs to alleviate loneliness and depression in their residents. We planned visits to twenty facilities where staff was excited about this program and anxious to learn how to grow their volunteer base.

The Volunteer Engagement Project proceeded as planned, with wonderful participation and exciting volunteer ideas in our first facilities. Of course, everything changed in March of this year; suddenly our facilities, and indeed those all over the world, were faced with a pandemic that affected the physical and mental health of residents and staff -- and that necessarily restricted the ability of volunteers to enter skilled nursing facilities to offer their services directly. This time has been challenging, to say the least.

What has been encouraging about this time, however, is that we have been inspired by the creativity and flexibility of skilled nursing facility staff and volunteers. Working together, people found new ways to utilize volunteers that maintained a sense of connection and relationship while keeping residents safe. Activity staff kept in contact with longstanding volunteers, who in turn offered to send mail, film YouTube videos, and participate in FaceTime and Zoom calls with residents. Community groups new to volunteering contacted skilled nursing facilities to ask how they could help remotely. Volunteers came to parking lots in front of nursing homes with their pets

to allow residents to enjoy them from a distance.

To look forward means to expect or to hope for. As we look forward past the end of the Volunteer Engagement Project, we expect the facilities who participated in the program to be well prepared to grow their volunteer base and have longstanding, robust in-person and virtual volunteer programs. We hope that other facilities will utilize the information developed from this project to do the same. And, of course, we hope for the improved health and emotional wellbeing of the residents who live in skilled nursing facilities.



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...

[UPDATED for the holidays! 'Lifting Spirits with Music' Shelter-in-Place Concert Series](#)

[Perks and freebies for COVID-19 healthcare workers](#)

[Receive postcards for Your Residents and Staff](#): Timeslips is a creative organization that is coordinating a Postcards challenge for volunteers across the U.S. You can add your facility information to this list so your residents and staff receive postcards from anyone involved in the challenge. To join the challenge, email info@timeslips.org with the subject link "Postcards – a Little Creative Care".

[Starbucks is offering free coffee to healthcare workers through December 31, 2020](#)

[Timeslips Creativity Center](#): An online platform that offers tools to spark meaningful engagement with older adults

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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](#)

[Alzheimer's Association](#): This site offers a robust community for older adults suffering 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.

[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).

[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.

[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.

[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.

[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.

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

[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.

[Horoscopes for seniors, updated daily](#)

[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 #MOChews. **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](#)

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

[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 \(updated 12/3/2020\)](#)

[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, LGBT+, 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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