

CAN HANDBOOK for Members and Volunteers



Creative Aging in Nyack

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CAN Handbook for Members and Volunteers

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Who we are:

Volunteering is at the heart of our organization. This handbook is intended to be used by members of Creative Aging in Nyack and by our medical and non-medical volunteers.

Goals of the CAN Volunteers:

- To support CAN's mission statement of providing services to members of the organization so that they can age in a place of their choice.
- To ensure that the volunteer/member interactions are safe, pleasant and rewarding experiences.
- To provide opportunities for more meaningful friendships to develop as we share experiences and mutual interests.

Boundaries of Responsibility for CAN Volunteers and Members

1. Confidentiality

A primary responsibility of each volunteer and member is to respect the privacy of every member. Confidentiality means not sharing the member's personal information, medical history, or personal story, including their name and other data.

Confidentiality as defined above, does **not** apply to the information needed for CAN's record of the volunteer experience. We enter the facts only – name of the member, task, and date.

2. Respect

Both the member and the volunteer must show a respect for boundaries. Upon arrival, the volunteer needs to **clearly explain** what help they are there to give. A volunteer cannot do anything that necessitates a professional: no skilled nursing, no therapy, and no housecleaning.

All volunteers and members are expected to show respect and appreciation for our diverse backgrounds and cultures in our interrelating.

Volunteers may break off communication with a member if they feel uncomfortable in any way. If a volunteer indicates that they can no longer be the person who can help, the member must accept this without objection.

3. Safety

Volunteers cannot engage in any activity that might endanger either the member or volunteer. Such activities include climbing ladders, carrying heavy items, lifting, etc.

4. Listening (Communication)

Listening is an invaluable skill, a gift. Listening comes from an open mind and a caring heart. To listen fully, with rapt attention, the volunteer must take him/herself out of the equation. Don't be tempted to listen with half an ear while being distracted by trying to solve the problem, or come up with some wise advice. After fully listening ask, "Is this what you just said?" and then repeat what you heard. This simple question avoids assumption and miscommunication. Listening also involves the awareness of body language that shows you are paying attention.

5. Observational Skills

Note any dangerous conditions. Be aware if the environment contains any hazards, rugs to slip on, loose steps, broken sidewalk, etc., and communicate your observations to the CAN member.

Who Are CAN Volunteers?

There are volunteers for medical situations and volunteers for non-medical situations. The Care Team helps members in medical situations such as an injury after a fall or during post-hospitalization. The Care Team includes the Chair of the Care Team who is also a Board member, the Care Coordinators, the Care Specialists, the CAN Certified Drivers, Medical Note-Takers, and the CAN Do Cooks. The CAN Do Volunteers help members in non-medical situations.

Volunteer Care Team Helps in Medical Situations

Care Specialists assist our members with health related situations following an injury, or while recuperating from an illness or are post hospitalization. The Care Specialists are led by two Care Coordinators who train all Specialists. Care Specialists assess members' needs and arrange for other CAN volunteers to meet those needs. If the member needs more than we can provide as CAN volunteers, the member will be referred to professional care by a Care Specialist.

Volunteers are not to do any tasks that would be done by a certified or licensed home health care professional, physical therapist, registered nurse, or by another medical professional.

The Care Specialists often coordinate with Certified Drivers to arrange getting the member to and from medical appointments, or CAN Do Volunteers to help with grocery shopping and other needs.

Numbers to Call in a Medical Situation

When a member has a medical need due to illness or injury, call a Care Coordinator, either Dorothy Whitton 845-323-5171 or Marie Thorpe 845-367-1328. The Care Coordinator will assign a **Care Specialist** to assess the member's needs and contact volunteers to meet their needs.

CAN Certified Drivers

Certified drivers are used for medical appointments. The drivers are vetted by providing a copy of their driver's license and a copy of their auto insurance card which allows CAN to do a routine DMV background check.

- People needing rides should contact the driver at least two days ahead, if possible.
- The rider needs to be able to get to and into the vehicle without assistance
- The volunteer cannot be responsible for lifting a wheelchair in or out of the trunk.
- Any specific travel needs must be told to the volunteer in advance.
- Drivers are not to accept pay or tipping. If there are tolls, the rider is expected to pay those tolls.

- A volunteer may accompany the member to the doctor's office but not go into the actual appointment unless the volunteer is a trained Medical Note-Taker.

Certified Drivers, please email Phyllis Eisenberg at pbels@aol.com after you have driven a member to a medical appointment. Phyllis is our Tracker for how these rides go. This is very important for our records.

The Tracker needs the following information:

- The date
- The name of the driver
- The name of the person being driven
- How much time was taken for the trip
- How satisfied were the driver and the rider

Medical Note-Takers

A **Medical Note-Taker** may come into the doctor's office with you to be an extra pair of ears and to provide you with their notes after the visit. For more information about this service contact Mary Loughran at loughranmary7@gmail.com.

CAN Do Cooks

The **CAN Do Cooks** provide meals for those homebound by illness. If you are ill and in need of a meal provided by the Cooks or would like more information, this service, contact Mary Loughran at loughranmary7@gmail.com.

CAN Do Volunteers Lend a Hand

CAN has compiled a list of members who have volunteered to help our members in the areas below. If you would like help in any of the volunteering categories listed, you may contact the volunteer directly. The members' names and contact information are on our website in the private Member Pages accessed through your account login. If you have difficulty accessing that information, or if you

would like to be a volunteer yourself please contact Donna Colorito at dcolorito@verizon.net.

- **Computer help/ Technologies**
- **Dog walking/ Pet care and sitting**
- **Friendly home visit/ Cup o' tea**
- **Gardening/ Plant care and sitting**
- **Grocery shopping** (Volunteer may go with or for a member)
- **Home organization suggestions**
- **Minor household chores/ Minor repairs**
- **Make social call or "Check-in" phone calls**

To all our volunteers

On behalf of Creative Aging in Nyack, our deepest gratitude for the commitment, time, and caring you bring to the members of our organization.

To all our members

Don't hesitate to call upon the CAN volunteers when you need a hand. Remember to **A.S.K.** – **Allow Someone's Kindness.**