

CAN VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Creative Aging in Nyack

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Volunteer Handbook

On behalf of Creative Aging in Nyack (CAN), thank you for the commitment, time, and caring you bring to CAN. Volunteering is the heart and core of our organization. This handbook was written based on research into the handbooks of well-established non-profit organizations with similar mission statements, and the brainstorming of several of our members, our Care Coordinator, and Care Specialist volunteers.

Goals:

- 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 a safe, pleasant and rewarding experience.
- To provide opportunities for more meaningful friendships to develop as we share experiences and mutual interests.

Volunteers Guidelines and Procedures:

Volunteering is vitally important in supporting member's needs. All volunteers must read this handbook, and sign as read, before they help members.

Volunteers need to keep brief records of all interactions with a member to show CAN is meeting its stated mission and non-profit requirements. All volunteers will have a one-time one-hour training session, at a CAN meeting, before assisting members.

What is Expected of All Volunteers: Boundaries of Responsibility

1. Confidentiality

A primary responsibility of each volunteer is to respect the privacy of each member. Confidentiality means not sharing the member's personal information 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. Enter the facts only: Name of member, task, date, and a simple check on a scale from Poor to Great.

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, no housecleaning.

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

3. Safety

Volunteers cannot engage in any activity that might endanger either 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?", or some facsimile. 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.

6. Brief Record of volunteer experience:

On a sheet of paper, or a form you create on the computer, list name of member served, task performed, date, and brief evaluation of experience:

poor _____ fair _____ good _____ great _____

After ten volunteer experiences give or email the record to Susan Travis stravis.31@gmail.com. We will use this to see how the volunteer system is going and together revise what needs changing.

7. Scenarios

We will, in trainings, role play situations that the volunteer might need help handling. For example, what if you are asked to do something you are not there to do for the member? If the member clearly seems unwell and in need of medical attention? If a serious condition, 911 would be called. If not at that level, the volunteer must ask PERMISSION to call a family member or friend.

8. Help and Support in Non-Medical Situations

CAN has developed a list of members who have volunteered to help in the areas below. An email was sent to all members with the names and contact information for each of these volunteers. You might want to keep a copy of this volunteer list easily accessible to you. It is the responsibility of the member in need of assistance to call a member volunteer listed in their area of need.

- **Computer Help/Technologies**
- **Dog Walking/Plant & Pet Sitting**
- **Friendly Home Visit; Cuppa Tea!**
- **Help W/Gardening/Plant Care**
- **Help W/Home Organization**
- **Help W/Minor Household Chores/Repairs.**
- **Local Errands/grocery shopping**
- **Receive or make phone calls – social call or “Check-in”**

9. Volunteers for Medical Situations:

Numbers for Immediate Contact in a Medical Situation

If a member has a medical need due to illness or injury, that person will call Mary Loughran (845-304-9263) who will assign a *Care-Specialist* to assess the member’s needs and to call volunteers to meet those needs.

A *Care-Specialist* will be called to make an in-person interview of the member in need. The Care-Specialist will be responsible to get the volunteers to help with this longer term need due to accident or illness.

Drivers to Medical Appointments

Certified drivers will be used for medical appointments. They are required to provide a copy of their driver's license, driver's insurance liability coverage, and allow CAN to do a routine DMV background check. This is the basic requirement for volunteer drivers in most non-profit organizations to ensure the safety of the member, driver, and the organization. It is required by our liability insurance coverage.

- A member, needing a driver, must be able to get to and into the car.
- The volunteer cannot be responsible to lift and put a wheelchair in the trunk.
- Any specific travel needs must be told to the volunteer in advance.
- A volunteer can accompany the member to the doctor's office but not go into the actual appointment.
- Grocery Shopping
Volunteer may go with or for the member.

Evaluation

Every four months we will have a "15-minute revisit" of our Volunteer Handbook to brainstorm, based on our experience as volunteers, what additional information needs to be added, or reworked, if any, to make the volunteer experience more successful and rewarding. CAN wants your volunteer experience to be comfortable, rewarding and not burdensome!

I have read the volunteer guidelines, on and will follow these guidelines in my interactions with CAN members.

Signature _____ Date _____