

CENTER FOR **DEMENTIA RESPITE** **INNOVATION**

Key Takeaways from “Building and Sustaining Volunteers for Respite Care Programs” 2025-26 Keys to Sustainability Webinar #8

Who is Volunteering Today:

- Largest group: Gen X (born 1966-1980), more women than men
- Key insight – Strong online visibility is critical, consider a website designer to help support searchability of your organization

Volunteer Recruitment Essentials:

- Foundations: clear, well-written program information
- Be fully prepared before launching recruitment
- Include: volunteer role description, time commitment expectations, impact of the role, visuals/photos, clear sign-up / contact information
- Respite Specific: Set expectation of 2-3 hours+ commitments to meet caregiver needs.

Recruitment Materials: Use diverse formats (brochures, trifold, flyers), Canva pro for designing, low-cost printing options available ([Best Value Printing](#))

Online Volunteer Recruitment:

- Key platforms: VolunteerMatch, Points of Light/Engage, AARP, HandsOn Network, Local volunteer portals
- Best practices for posting: Be specific (tasks, time, location), separate short-term vs. long-term roles, create listings for each service area, refresh listings regularly

Social Media:

- Platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor, X, TikTok
- What works: short videos/reels, volunteer stories and impact highlights, consistent branded templates, posting in local community groups

Community Outreach:

- Develop a targeted outreach plan
- Focus on – local businesses and retailers, community events, senior centers and vendors
- Always ask to post flyers, track contacts for follow-up, and maintain mailing lists

Volunteer Retention Strategies:

- First impressions matter – organized onboarding, quick communication follow-up, offer live and thorough training, provide a volunteer handbook
- Build community – host gatherings, newsletters, recognition events, include volunteer spotlight and appreciation activities.
- Create connection – personal cards, relationship-building with staff
- Show appreciation – volunteer appreciation month activities (April), thank-you notes, milestone recognition
- Demonstrate Impact – share stories, data, and testimonials, reinforce value of their work
- Engage volunteers- ask for feedback or opinions, offer leadership roles (ex. Advisory committee, board involvement)
- Respite Specific – ensure caregivers are actively using volunteers, maintain close follow-up early in matches