



## The Technical Assistance Center for Lifespan Respite Fact Sheet Number 18, Sept 2010

### Volunteer Respite: Valuable Resources

#### Purpose

The purpose of this fact sheet is to identify and provide information on options for recruiting, screening, training, utilizing and retaining volunteers to provide respite services to caregiving families in various settings.

#### Introduction

Respite is temporary relief for family caregivers from the ongoing responsibility of caring for an individual of any age with special needs. A wide spectrum of respite programs and services produces many opportunities in which volunteers can find satisfaction. Any activity or time that provides safety, security and care for loved ones with special needs, while also providing meaningful relief for the family caregiver, might be considered respite.

#### Volunteer Respite Opportunities

Respite can be provided in-home or out-of-home, with various types of providers and environments. With appropriate training and staff supervision, volunteers can be used in almost any respite model and fulfill many roles.

For example, volunteers can be used to provide direct care, organize and oversee activities, and carry out a variety of other tasks in programs such as day or overnight camps for individuals with special needs, adult daycare, after-school programs, and park and recreation programs. Even in-facility respite, which can take place in nursing homes, residential facilities, assisted living, crisis nurseries, and group homes, can use volunteers on some level.

Most frequently, volunteers are used to provide direct services to care recipients of all ages and

disabilities. In order for volunteers to provide direct services, comprehensive training, ongoing support and supervision, as well as a specific job description, are necessary. More complex medical needs among children or adults with disabilities, or older care recipients with later stages of dementia, may require more highly trained individuals to provide respite. With appropriate training and supervision, however, volunteers may be able to do this work.

Many innovative opportunities for respite program expansion and service rely on the use of volunteers. Examples include:

- *Activity/Event Respite* – Hosting an event for a group with special needs can often be respite for family caregivers. For example, a day of horseback riding for children with autism, or a lunch program for those with dementia can

#### *Event Respite*

**Respite Outreach Care for Kansans Organization, Inc** (ROCKO) provides respite care and enrichment services throughout Sedgwick and Butler Counties in cooperation with five church community partners who donate space and volunteers to host respite events. Respite events for school-aged youth ages 3-23 years are held weekly. With trained and certified professionals on-site, volunteers serve in a variety of roles, including meal preparation for respite events; assisting with crafts and enrichment activities at respite events; helping with general office duties; fundraising; or participation on the Leadership Team to help expand lifespan respite and social resources for Sedgwick County. Contact: Gina Ervay, Executive Director & Founder, ROCKO, Wichita, KS, (316) 687-5700; [gervay@rockoinc.org](mailto:gervay@rockoinc.org); <http://www.rockoinc.org/index.html>

provide a much needed break for family caregivers. Volunteers can be used to support and implement the programming.

- *Mentoring programs* - Volunteers are matched with a client in a targeted population. The volunteer provides support, guidance and activity. The time the mentor is spending with the care recipient often provides relief for the family caregiver.
- *Coop Respite* – Family caregivers collaborate to provide relief for each other. Once members of the cooperative have organized and come to agreement on how and where the program is to occur, exchange of services can begin. Families generally train each other on the particular needs of their care recipients and use different strategies for tracking exchanges.

Through use of volunteers, programs can stretch limited resources to provide services to more family caregivers and care recipients. However, keep in mind, volunteer respite is not free. Recruiting, training, and supervising volunteers require ongoing staff time and resources.

Although most of the examples of volunteer opportunities discussed so far involve use of volunteers to provide direct services, volunteers can fulfill additional roles. For example, volunteers can also provide:

- Support to paid providers, such as:
  - transporting family caregivers or care recipients to and from the program (increased liability insurance recommended)
  - running errands, i.e., shopping and delivering supplies to the respite provider
  - providing encouragement and support to the respite provider
  - providing back-up to the respite provider
  - sorting and cataloging supplies, or other needed items, for the program
- Administrative support
  - organizing mailing lists and mailings
  - writing a program newsletter

### ***Cooperative Respite Programs***

**The Caregiver Cooperative Respite Program** is an innovative cooperative approach to expanded respite services for caregivers of older adults maintained by the Asian Community Center of Sacramento Valley Inc. (ACC) is a nonprofit organization providing culturally sensitive health and social services for older adults in Sacramento, CA. The program allows caregivers to "buy" respite for their family member in the cooperative through volunteering once a month. Caregiver volunteers plan and lead activities for the program which operates once a week and provides up to five hours of recreation, socialization, physical exercise, and mental stimulation to older adults with dementia and physical limitations. The cooperative has provided over 9,000 respite hours to more than 150 caregiver co-op members. Contact: Asian Community Center of Sacramento Valley, Inc. 7375 Park City Drive Sacramento, CA 95831 Phone (916) 393 9026; <http://www.accsv.org>

**The Lifespan Respite Cooperative**, run through the Arc of Jackson County, Oregon, is community site-based respite, offered at different times for different populations. The Respite Cooperative's Kid's Club and The Social Club (for Seniors and adults with disabilities) allow parents and family caregivers to give each other a break for a few hours a week at low cost or for free. The Respite Cooperative is designed to assist seniors, adults, and children with disabilities, ages 5 and above, who require care around the clock. Family caregivers have the option of volunteering hour for hour or paying \$5.50 an hour. Contact: The Arc of Jackson County, Medford, OR, Phone: (541) 779-4520; [trishapelzel@thearcjackson.org](mailto:trishapelzel@thearcjackson.org) <http://www.thearcjackson.org/programs-what-the-arc-does/lifespan-respite-cooperative.html>

- serving as a receptionist
  - recruiting additional volunteers
  - providing back-up clerical support
  - organizing or sponsoring special events for the care recipients or family caregivers
- Fundraising and public awareness
    - organize special events
    - assist in capital campaigns
    - solicit supplies and dollars from businesses and organizations

## What Do Volunteer Respite Programs Look Like?

Over the last decade, countless local volunteer respite programs have sprung up to meet the growing gap in respite capacity. Here are a few more examples of community-based respite efforts in different settings. In some programs, volunteers are the mainstay of the program; in others, they provide critical backup and

### *National Volunteer Program*

#### **The former Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States (ADDGS), now known as the Alzheimer's Disease Supportive Services**

**Program**, funded notable volunteer respite activities in the past. Several states engaged in efforts to enhance in-home respite services using volunteers:

Alabama and North Carolina have employed [support teams](#) to assist in the provision of in-home respite services. Alabama's project used support teams or "caring teams" to provide in-home and community-based support for caregivers and persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Caring teams hold monthly meetings to coordinate the time and tasks of the team and reflect on their experiences with the client.

Virginia's former ADDGS program supported the Caregivers Community Network that is part of James Madison University's Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services. The program provided training to the institute's nursing and social work students to provide respite for people with Alzheimer's in the community. For more information: Administration on Aging, Alzheimer's Disease Supportive Services Program National Resource Center, Toolkit: [Supporting Family Caregivers, Home and Community Based Services for People with Dementia and their Caregivers](#).  
[http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/HCLTC/Alz\\_Grants/docs/Toolkit\\_8\\_Supporting\\_Family\\_Caregivers.pdf](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HCLTC/Alz_Grants/docs/Toolkit_8_Supporting_Family_Caregivers.pdf)

administrative support. These programs are provided here without value judgments and are made available only to illustrate the breadth of volunteer opportunities in respite.

### **Emergency Respite**

- [Volunteer Families](#): The Easter Seals UCP Volunteer Families for Children program in North Carolina provides short-term respite through a network of licensed volunteer families. This respite service ranges from 1-30 days and is utilized to support families involved in challenges or needing short support to maintain the family system. *Contact*: Phyllis Stephenson, Easter Seals/UCP NC and VA, Gibsonville, NC; (336) 449-7904; [pstephenson@nc.eastersealsucp.com](mailto:pstephenson@nc.eastersealsucp.com); <http://nc.eastersealsucp.com/services/volunteer-families/>

### **In-home Respite for Adults**

- [Respite Volunteers of Shiawassee](#) is an interfaith non-profit agency, which places trained volunteers with families who live in Shiawassee County, Michigan. The program is a member of the Faith In Action Network Collaborative of Michigan. Volunteers help those caring for an adult in their home by providing 1 - 4 hours of companionship to the person who is ill, giving the caregiver much needed respite. *Contact*: Helen Howard, 710 W. King Street, Owosso, MI; (989) 725-1127; [respitevolunteer@verizon.net](mailto:respitevolunteer@verizon.net); [www.shiarespice.org](http://www.shiarespice.org)

### **In-home Respite for Children**

- [CareBreak](#) provides volunteer respite to families of children (birth to 16 years old) who have been diagnosed with a variety of disabilities, including autism, cerebral palsy and other neurological impairments from Allegheny, PA, and surrounding counties. Respite is provided for a few hours a week by a committed trained volunteer in the home. In 2006, CareBreak volunteer Edith Hope received the Presidential Volunteer of the Year Award from President George W. Bush.

Last year, the program director assisted the National Easter Seals Association with developing a volunteer training curriculum for children with autism based on her previous work in the field. *Contact:* MaryJo Alimena Caruso, The Watson Institute, Sewickley, PA, (412) 749-2863; Fax (412) 749-2891; [maryjoa@thewatsoninstitute.org](mailto:maryjoa@thewatsoninstitute.org) <http://www.thewatsoninstitute.org/services.jsp?pageId=0690200091781082058914060>

### **Respite Addressing Cultural Diversity**

- Idaho's EVA (Empowering and Valuing the Aging) is a volunteer respite program serving Latino families. Spanish-speaking coordinators personally visit homes, conduct assessments, and match families with volunteers. Volunteers provide a range of services including visitation, light housekeeping, meal preparation, household maintenance, and a short break for caregivers.<sup>i</sup>
- Oklahoma's Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States (ADDGS)<sup>1</sup> program hired a family counselor who worked directly with churches in the African American community. The family counselor visited homes of potential clients to conduct preliminary needs assessments, connect families with information and services, and schedule the family for volunteer respite services.<sup>ii</sup>
- Puerto Rico's ADDGS program used volunteers to provide in-home respite to families caring for bedridden individuals with Alzheimer's disease. These volunteers received specialized training on topics like nutrition and the handling of bedridden seniors, as well as a small stipend for their services.<sup>iii</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The **Alzheimer's Disease Supportive Services Program** (ADSSP) supports state efforts to expand the availability of community-level supportive services for persons with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ARD) and their caregivers. Formerly known as the **Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to the States** (ADDGS), the ADSSP was created by Section 398 of the Public Health Services Act.

### **National Volunteer Program**

**TimeBanks** is a national cooperative program that helps individuals, agencies and communities build exchange systems. For every hour spent volunteering, one Time Dollar is earned. Its philosophy, structure, and methods can be replicated for a variety of service exchanges, including respite. The RI Lifespan Respite Program will use TimeBanks to grow its volunteer respite programs for all age groups and disabilities as part of its developing statewide respite service delivery system. For more information on TimeBanks USA, see <http://www.timebanks.org/>. For RI information, *Contact:* Paulla Lipsey, RI Department of Elderly Affairs, 401-462-0561; [plipsey@dea.ri.gov](mailto:plipsey@dea.ri.gov) or Ellen Kreutler, Lifespan Respite Project Coordinator, Parent Support Network of RI; [e.kreutler@psnri.org](mailto:e.kreutler@psnri.org).

### **Successful Volunteer Recruitment Strategies**

As a manager of volunteers, or marketing/outreach staff charged with the task of recruiting volunteers, one must have a clear vision of the role recruits will play in the respite program. Maintaining a solid belief in and understanding of the program for which one is recruiting is also essential. Successful recruitment begins with engaging a potential candidate and is fulfilled by appropriate, beneficial and rewarding placement. The following are some general strategies for engaging all volunteer types:

- Ask current volunteers to spread the word and help recruit other volunteers
- Ask family caregivers/parents if they know anyone that would like to help – often they are connected to people who care about the cause or have someone specific in mind that they would like to see provide respite
- Talk to civic groups
- Use newspapers/magazines and other local media

- Use school/college internship, AmeriCorps, VISTA programs, Senior Companions, and local volunteer match organizations
- Host informational sessions/orientations on a frequent and regular basis in a variety of areas and settings in your community
- Reach out to already established networking groups, women’s professional groups, sororities, fraternities, neighborhood associations, teachers’ groups, Junior League, Chamber of Commerce, etc.
- Build community partnerships with other organizations and non-profit agencies, such as United Way, Community Shares, etc., and refer volunteers to each other
- Distribute flyers and other literature throughout the community, on bulletin boards, in utility bills, at the library, and other public places
- Encourage your volunteers to get their own families involved in volunteering
- Attend volunteer fairs and other local community events
- Approach faith communities (See ARCH Fact Sheet 53, [Respite in the Faith Community](#), Updated May 2010)

### Recruiting Specific Groups of Volunteers

#### *Students*

Using students for volunteer respite can be very beneficial for programming, as well as very fulfilling for the students. Recruitment into a volunteer respite program allows the students to explore a particular career field, gain experience, and hone skills. It also allows them to feel like they are part of the larger community outside of their campus. Volunteer hours may also count for course credit, extra class credit, or fulfill a community service requirement, as well as build their resume.

For the program, it is an opportunity to gain volunteers with new fresh perspective, flexible schedules, and high energy. It also brings

#### ***Respite Using Student Volunteers***

**Respite University** - Working with universities, the Tennessee Respite Coalition recruits student volunteers and pairs them with community respite programs and caregiving families to provide respite services. *Contact:* Jennifer Abernathy, TRN, Nashville, TN; [Jennifer.Abernathy@tnrespite.org](mailto:Jennifer.Abernathy@tnrespite.org); 1-888-579-3754; 615-269-8687; [info@tnrespite.org](mailto:info@tnrespite.org) <http://www.tnrespite.org/node/17>

#### **Central Massachusetts Respite Project**

(CMRP) is a collaboration between Seven Hills Foundation, Central Massachusetts Partnership for Children and Youth with Special Health Needs, UMASS Memorial Children’s Medical Center, Quinsigamond Community College and the MA Consortium for Children with Special Health Care Needs to develop a respite program for children, youth, and adults with special health care needs in Central Massachusetts using student interns as respite providers. The program recruits college students from the Community College’s Human Services Program and other local colleges and matches them with families needing respite. University of Massachusetts Medical School and Seven Hills Foundation trains students, including In-Home and Community-Based Respite Worker Training. In addition to meeting respite needs, this program develops a practicum for students that leads to a career path. *Contact:* Barb Donati, CMRP Program, Worcester, MA; 508.755.2340. <http://www.sevenhills.org/affiliates/centralMassResp.php>

volunteers that have a hunger for knowledge and perhaps even a base of knowledge and skill set in a particular area. For example, a volunteer recruited from the psychology department may be a great match for a family caring for a loved one with autism, dementia, or a mental health diagnosis. Further, a student from the nursing program may be great paired with a camp respite program or a family caring for someone with a medical condition. The following are tips on recruiting students for volunteer respite opportunities:

- Inquire at a local community college or university to see if they have a specific

volunteer office or if they host volunteer or other community fairs.

- Contact the high school principal's or college dean's office for guidance on contacting specific department heads who may be interested in recommending students.
- Ask to be involved in school orientations for new students. Timing is essential since these opportunities most often take place at the beginning of each semester.
- Partner with professors who might be willing to offer extra credit for volunteering. Timing on this can be especially effective toward the end of the semester when students are looking for extra points to raise their grades.
- Contact honor societies, sororities, fraternities, or other school-based groups. If they have regular meetings, you may be allowed to attend and speak to the group.
- Hire a part time student recruiter on campus.

### *Intergenerational Respite*

Easter Seals, a frontrunner when it comes to using, training and developing volunteers, partnered with the National Council on Aging, Generations United, the Watson Institute, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Autism Society of America and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging to develop *Generations & Autism Connect*, a six-module curriculum to train older adult volunteers to provide respite for children with autism. As many baby-boomers exit the workforce and look for meaningful ways to contribute to community, they provide a source of volunteers. This training guide provides a valuable tool to train this cadre of potential volunteers to meet the needs of children with autism. Contact: Patricia Wright, 233 S Wacker, Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60606; 312.551.7226; [pwright@easterseals.com](mailto:pwright@easterseals.com)

### *Retired Baby Boomers*

Retired baby boomers provide an excellent source of volunteers with work experience who may even have the specific skills you need for your program.

This generation has so much to offer organizations. In addition to their years of experience, they often have flexible time schedules, as well as energy they would like to give back to their community.

Marketing your recruitment efforts as "opportunities to apply skills" may be much more effective than "recruiting volunteers" when approaching the retired baby boom generation, who are often looking for a way to use their expertise to fulfill a community need. Presenting them with meaningful opportunities that don't segregate them from regular paid staff can also present an attractive recruitment strategy. Word-of-mouth recruiting can be very effective. Baby boomers and retirees often are around others in their same position. Their ability to spread the word among their social circles, professional groups and neighborhoods can really extend the reach of your message.

Those retired baby boomers who have free time and disposable income can frequently be found at:

- Restaurants - Table displays, restroom ads, or just literature where community information is allowed can be a great way to reach boomers while they are enjoying some time at their favorite eatery.
- Golf – From simply leaving literature about your respite program at the pro shops or in the adjacent "19th hole", to hosting a golf tournament to raise money for a respite program, there are many opportunities to reach boomers at the course.
- Airports - Boomers are a large section of the traveling community. Airport eateries, restrooms, check-in, baggage claim, or in airport shuttles, are good places to market your program. It is a good idea to carry a few brochures/cards for distribution anytime you travel, too.
- Health Facilities – From doctors' offices to health clubs, boomers are there and taking care of themselves. They are actually one of the first generations to continue fitness into

their later years. Many health-related facilities (dentists, doctors, pharmacies, therapy centers, and fitness clubs) provide opportunities to leave information about your organization and its volunteer needs.

### *Professional Field*

Recruiting skilled volunteers can sometimes be tricky. Often, if a volunteer has a skill set directly related to the work they do on a daily basis, they may not want to volunteer doing the same thing they do at work. On the other hand, the experience can be quite rewarding if they are able to make a specific and meaningful impact through volunteer work, especially if it is by doing something they long to do in their job. For example, a nursing home administrator may be skilled in nursing, but does administrative work most of the time. Volunteering to provide respite for a family caregiver with a loved one that is medically fragile may allow he or she to use their skills, but also feel satisfaction from the impact their skills are providing. The following are some useful tips on recruitment for volunteers who have desired skill sets.

- Market to professional associations. For example, if the state or local chapter of a Social Workers Association hosts monthly meetings, it might be possible to get on their schedule to speak to the group.
- Advertise or provide an educational piece for professional publications. It will be difficult to get space in a professional journal, but there are many community newspapers and magazines geared toward professionals.
- Get insider information: Ask a therapist, nurse, or social worker how and where you can effectively get your message to other professionals like them.

### *Faith Community*

It is helpful to have a contact in the faith community from which you are interested in recruiting. (For more information on [Respite in the Faith Community](#), see ARCH Fact Sheet 53, Updated May 2010.) The following are some suggestions on how to work with faith

communities to gain the valuable resources they have to offer:

- Talk with a congregant to find out how decisions are made. This will help you work within the well-defined structure of the faith community. You'll have a better understanding of where to spend your initial marketing time.

### ***National Volunteer Program***

**Senior Corps (Senior Companions, RSVP and Foster Grandparents).** Volunteers with the Senior Companion Program (SCP), which began in 1974, serve frail older adults, adults with disabilities, those with terminal illnesses, and offer respite for caregivers. In FY 2008, 9,000 family caregivers were provided respite. Senior Companions serve between 15 and 40 hours a week and typically serve between two and four clients. Volunteers must be 55 years of age or over. Those who meet certain income guidelines receive a small stipend. All SCP volunteers receive accident and liability insurance and meals while on duty, reimbursement for transportation, and monthly training.

RSVP, another program under Senior Corps, recently funded new projects including those that will use senior volunteers to assist individuals, including frail seniors and veterans of recent conflicts, with independent living support, including respite for family or informal caregivers. RSVP is open to all people age 55 and over. Volunteers do not receive monetary incentives, but sponsoring organizations may reimburse them for some costs incurred during service, including meals and transportation.

Since 1993, Senior Corps has been administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. For more information on the Corporation, visit [www.NationalService.gov](http://www.NationalService.gov).

- Tap into groups within the faith community. Some examples include supper clubs, special ministry groups, specific outreach groups, youth groups, etc.
- It is important to know the faith community's calendar and its membership demographic. It will aid you in your strategy for recruitment. For example, if you know that most of the congregation is young families, recruiting for respite for families with children that have special needs might best relate to the group.

### Screening, Selecting, and Placing Volunteers

Once an individual has indicated an interest in volunteer work, certain procedures should be followed:

**General Orientation:** Meeting with individuals and talking about the following are very important to ensure volunteer candidates' placement and retention in satisfying roles. The orientation should include at a minimum:

- program's history and services
- volunteer positions available with job descriptions identifying the knowledge and skills needed
- organization's minimal expectations for its volunteers
- question and answer session

**Application:** It is very important that your application gathers the information you want to know about your volunteer. It is part of your recruitment strategy and very important for placement. Some factors to include are:

- Areas of interest
- Areas of experience/expertise
- References related to past work and volunteer experience, personal integrity or both
- Background Checks asking about any criminal background and/or child abuse complaints filed against the individual.

In most states, it is possible to check on a person's criminal background through the local or state

police. There is a small cost for each check, but it serves an important purpose in protecting the consumers of the program. The program staff should be looking for evidence of crimes against people: spouse battering, other assaults, child abuse, rape, etc. If the volunteers will be transporting consumers, check the volunteer's driving record. These background checks also help to verify the truthfulness of information provided on an initial application. (See Resources)

**Interview Process:** In keeping with your recruitment strategy for each type of volunteer (skilled volunteer, general volunteer, volunteer created position, etc.), and as follow up for information you collected on the application, an interview with your volunteer candidate should be held. Things to consider during an interview:

- Qualities based on job descriptions for specific positions/needs
- If considering someone for general volunteering, not a specific position - discuss what makes the most sense for both the organization and volunteer.

Programs should make an effort to find a volunteer position for all interested and qualified applicants. In the unlikely event that there are no openings for an individual, inform the applicant that the application may be filed for future needs.

**Contract:** Many programs use and recommend a simple contract between the organization and the volunteers. This agreement identifies:

- Volunteers' duties
- Expectations and role of organization
- Requirements for termination

### Training Respite Volunteers

Once volunteers have been through the screening process and assigned a job, they must be appropriately trained. The adequate training of volunteers is critical to a successful volunteer experience. Well-trained volunteers reduce the risk to the program in using such personnel. Training also can be an incentive to the volunteers to stay on the job.



The training program for each volunteer position will vary according to the knowledge and skills needed to perform a particular set of tasks.

### ***National Volunteer Respite Program***

#### **VA Volunteer Support In-Home Respite Program.**

The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVAS) and the Office of Care Coordination (OCC) have joined to form the Caregiver Support Network. The Respite program is designed to help provide compassionate support to those caregivers who give care to America's Veterans in their homes. Twelve pilot sites were established throughout the United States. The pilot programs are training small groups of volunteers and matching them with veterans age 18 and over living in their neighborhoods. The volunteer support caregiver provides respite to a Veteran's family caregiver. The sites are in Augusta, GA; Baltimore, MD; Lexington, KY; Los Angeles and San Francisco, CA; Richmond, VA; Minneapolis, MN; Seattle, WA; St. Louis, MO; Syracuse, NY; Temple, TX; Tucson, AZ. *Contact:* Laura Balun, National Director of Voluntary Service, US Veteran's Administration; [laura.balun@va.gov](mailto:laura.balun@va.gov)

Minimally, any program volunteer should receive new employee pre-service training, which includes:

- a history of the organization
- the current range of services
- general information about family caregivers and respite needs and benefits
- specific information on the conditions or disabilities of the care recipient
- the program's liability/risk management policies

- information on basic responsibilities
- confidentiality requirements
- basic first aid course which includes CPR and universal precaution training
- basic communication and boundary setting skills
- signs of abuse or neglect

The training needed by any volunteer beyond pre-service training will be dependent upon the specific job assigned to the volunteer. Programs should develop training for each job the volunteers will be performing, as would be available for paid staff. An appropriate training program provides:

- job descriptions for each volunteer job
- knowledge and skills needed to perform the job
- Methods for evaluating and providing feedback on how well the training of each individual translates to actual job skills.

When a volunteer is providing in-home respite or respite with one or a few specific people, families may participate in the training or even provide the training themselves, based upon the specific needs of their care recipient. A list of guidebooks for helping consumers find, hire, train and keep respite providers are available to assist family caregivers at the ARCH consumer site, [The ABCs of Respite Care](http://www.archrespite.org/consumer-information) (<http://www.archrespite.org/consumer-information>)

### **Volunteer Retention**

One of the most common problems programs need to address is the turnover rate of volunteers. Most programs ask for a minimum commitment of one year from volunteers. Whether or not volunteers stay longer than the initial commitment oftentimes depends upon how they feel about the volunteer experience, including their impressions of how the program values them

and their work. Volunteers give of their time and energy and want to feel appreciated for both their donation of time and the skills they bring to the agency. Providing ongoing supervision and training of volunteers and volunteer recognition events will help retain volunteers.

**Supervision:** Ongoing supervision is critical to providing support, preventing burnout or allaying fears of making a mistake. The supervisor may need to assist the volunteer in setting goals and limits, to reassure the volunteer it is okay to say "no," and to provide direction in working with family caregivers as well as care recipients. It is the supervisor who will work with the volunteer to identify the personal goals of the volunteer, the skills the volunteer wants to develop, and the skills the volunteer brings to the program. It is through supportive supervision combined with the experience of making a difference in someone's life that will produce commitment by the volunteer to the program.

Volunteers who have been serving the organization in one capacity for a period of time may be more vulnerable to burnout, especially if they are providing direct service work. The supervisor may talk with such volunteers about moving to another role. A needs assessment and/or interest survey may be used to help determine a volunteer's new role. Using flexibility and sensitivity in dealing with the volunteer staff will allow people to move from one role to another and remain with the organization for longer periods of time.

**Recognition:** Volunteer recognition events are important and should occur, at a minimum, on an annual basis. Volunteer recognition events send a message to the volunteers and staff about the importance and value of the volunteers and the work they perform for the program. Recognition should also be an ongoing experience. The following are some general suggestions on how to recognize volunteers on a regular basis:

- Calling them by their name and personally thanking them

- Handwritten notes from staff and/or clients
- Although volunteers generally do not want to receive expensive gifts, handmade gifts are a nice touch
- Awards, certificates of recognition

### **National Volunteer Respite Program**

**The Brookdale Foundation's National Group Respite Program.** The Brookdale Foundation's National Group Respite Program is a social adult day care model that provides dementia-specific group activities for participants and respite time for caregivers. The Brookdale Foundation funds 15 programs annually. Grants are for \$7,500 in the first year, and \$3,000 in the second year. Applicants must be non-profit organizations or public agencies seeking to provide dementia specific day services. Programs must be based on a social day service model and must provide caregiver services. Services must be available for at least four hours a week. Programs must be staffed by at least one paid professional staff member who is responsible for the supervision of program assistants, including trained volunteers and students. Sponsoring organizations must provide 100% matching funds either in cash or in-kind support. Applicant organizations must demonstrate that a concrete fundraising plan has been established to sustain ongoing services. Most programs operate on annual budgets of \$15,000 to \$20,000. Information about delivering a package of core services using the Brookdale model and the grant application process can be found on the [Brookdale National Group Respite Program](#) website. Contact: Evelyn Yuen, TA Resources Manager, Phone: (510) 540-6734, Fax: (510) 540-6771 or e-mail: [ey@brookdalefoundation.org](mailto:ey@brookdalefoundation.org).

- Recognition of the volunteer to their friends, families and employers
- Regular thank you column in a newsletter and other organizational publications
- National Volunteer Week Celebrations

**Recognizing Specific Volunteer Types:** As was discussed earlier, special recruitment strategies for specific volunteers can take extra effort, but is often worth it. A good way to retain these volunteers is to cater your recognition strategy to them as well. The following are ideas to recognize these special volunteers.

#### *Students*

- FOOD! Students love free food. Survival baskets during finals with toiletries, snacks, or other necessities are always a hit.
- Educational opportunities that they can use to build their resumes.
- Professional opportunities – let them sit in on meetings, planning sessions, staff trainings, etc. This gives them invaluable knowledge they can use later.
- Recognize them among their professors, parents, and peers
- Gift cards for groceries, discount stores, or gas are always a hit
- Letters of recommendation

#### *Professional Field*

- Offer educational opportunities and CEU credit when available
- Offer opportunities to attend conferences or other professional educational opportunities
- Invite them to be part of management team meetings, strategic planning sessions, or other opportunities
- Recognize them among their peers and colleagues.
- Personal recognition or small tokens related to their own hobbies or activities can really let them know you appreciate THEM.

#### **Risk management for Volunteer Programs**

Every volunteer program, from the smallest to the largest, can take steps to avoid risk when it comes to providing a meaningful experience for its

volunteers. Risk management should be part of planning and implementation of your program and should correlate to the size and capacity of your organization.

See ARCH [Risk Management](#) Fact Sheet 17 and [ARCH Risk Management: A Training Guide](#) by Robert Horowitz and Marcia Sprague, American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law. While focused on children’s programming, the information may be applicable for programs serving all ages.

A free tutorial from the Nonprofit Risk Management Center is available to help guide you in your risk management process: <http://nonprofitrisk.org/tools/volunteer/volunteer.shtml>

#### **Insurance**

When using volunteers, respite programs should be particularly mindful of the type and amount of insurance coverage they are carrying. Volunteers working on behalf of your organization are sometimes covered under your general liability coverage, but you need to check with your policy or your agent to make sure. Even so, with the sensitive work involved in volunteer respite, it is a good idea to carry extra coverage, especially if the volunteer is driving. The average cost for volunteer insurance ranges from \$10-15 per volunteer per year. For more information, see ARCH Fact Sheet [Volunteers](#) Fact Sheet 16. These companies provide volunteer insurance:

- CIMA  
<http://www.cimaworld.com/htdocs/volunteers.cfm>
- Philadelphia Insurance Company  
<http://www.phly.com>

#### **Liability for Specific Volunteers**

*Students* often have liability coverage through the university. The school’s office of risk management should be able to give you more information. You

may be able to waive getting extra insurance for them with your liability policy if this is the case. *Skilled* volunteers may carry professional liability coverage as an individual. It would be advantageous to see if they are covered in volunteer situations, too.

### Volunteer Respite Costs and Benefits

There are many benefits to using volunteers in respite programs. Volunteers, if efficiently recruited, trained, placed and retained can help build capacity by increasing the number of family caregivers served with respite.

The monetary value of volunteers can be very important for organizations to track. Sometimes the monetary value of volunteers can be used as match funds for grants, or to support the organization's capacity in proposals to funders. According to the Corporation for National and Community Services, the average value for a volunteer's time in 2009 was \$20.85 per hour. State-by-state values for volunteer time can be found at:

[http://independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](http://independentsector.org/volunteer_time)

Despite the great value in volunteers providing respite, it should not be misunderstood that volunteer programs are free. Programmatic as well as administrative costs to implement volunteer programs must be considered. Management, recognition, screening, and evaluation are just a few of the costs related to these programs. Additional liability and insurance considerations must also be taken into account.

### Putting Fact Sheet Information into Action

Volunteers are a vital and important part of the staff of many respite programs and respite service delivery systems and can serve in many different capacities. In order to have a successful volunteer respite program, investments in adequate and ongoing recruitment strategies, training, supervision and recognition activities must be made. The information in this fact sheet may

inspire you to create or expand a volunteer respite program in your community.

## Resources

### Volunteer Management support

- [Energize](http://www.energizeinc.com/) creates and selects relevant and innovative resources in volunteer management. <http://www.energizeinc.com/>
- [Idealist](http://www.idealists.org/) is a clearinghouse of nonprofit and volunteer resources. <http://www.idealists.org/>
- Resources, tips and tools on managing volunteers can be found at the [National Council of Nonprofits](http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/resource_s/resources-topic/volunteers) [http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/resource\\_s/resources-topic/volunteers](http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/resource_s/resources-topic/volunteers)

### Volunteer Organizations

- [The Corporation for National and Community Service](http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/), <http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/> and its [Resource Center](http://nationalserviceresources.org/via) provide tools and training for volunteer and service programs. <http://nationalserviceresources.org/via>
- AmeriCorps State and National supports a broad range of local service programs that engage thousands of Americans in intensive service to meet critical community needs. <http://www.americorps.gov/Default.asp>
- [AmeriCorps VISTA](http://www.americorps.gov/about/programs/vista.asp) provides full-time members to community organizations and public agencies to create and expand programs that build capacity and ultimately bring low-income individuals and communities out of poverty. <http://www.americorps.gov/about/programs/vista.asp>
- The [Senior Companion Program](#) brings together volunteers age 55 and over with adults in their community who have difficulty with the simple tasks of day-to-day living. Companions help out on a personal level by assisting with shopping and light chores,

interacting with doctors, or just making a friendly visit.

<http://www.seniorcorps.gov/about/programs/sc.asp>

- [VolunteerMatch](#) strengthens communities by making it easier for people and causes to connect. <http://www.volunteermatch.org/>
- [United We Serve](#) encourages all Americans to volunteer in their community. <http://www.serve.gov/>
- [The Support Team Network](#) is a training and resource center for the development of volunteer Support Teams for persons with health concerns or other special needs. <http://www.supportteam.org/Templates/Home.aspx?pid=70147>

### Volunteer Respite Cooperatives

Respite Association of Wisconsin, [Building a Respite Cooperative – Why it Makes Sense and How to Make it Happen](#), 2006  
[http://www.respitecarewi.org/docs/Building\\_a\\_respite\\_cooperative.pdf](http://www.respitecarewi.org/docs/Building_a_respite_cooperative.pdf)

[Family Connection of South Carolina](#) runs 12 respite cooperatives for children with disabilities around the state. For more information, see [http://www.familyconnectionsc.org/get\\_involved/volunteer/respite\\_cooperatives/](http://www.familyconnectionsc.org/get_involved/volunteer/respite_cooperatives/)

### Background Checks and Screening Employees and Volunteers

- Article from Blue Avocado: [Criminal Records Checks for Prospective Staff and Volunteers](#).
- Bridgespan's Nonprofit Hiring Toolkit: [The Reference Check - More Than a Formality](#)

### Volunteer Training

[Caring to Help Others: Training Manual for Preparing Volunteers to Assist Caregivers of Older Adults](#) sponsored by Eisei, Inc. The purpose of this manual is to help community-based organizations to prepare volunteers to more effectively assist primary caregivers of older adults. It is meant to

be used by organizations involved in volunteerism and in support and outreach services to older people and their primary caregivers.

<http://www.caringtohelpothers.com/html/about.htm>

*Generations & Autism Connect* is a ready-to-use modular training curriculum that will assist volunteer coordinators with their training responsibilities in preparing individuals who will be volunteering with children with autism. Each module contains a PowerPoint presentation, a script for the presentation, and supporting handouts. Module Topics include: 1) Overview of Autism; 2) Families; 3) Communication; 4) Behavior; 5) Community Integration; and 6) Socialization. Contact: Patricia Wright, 233 S Wacker, Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60606; 312.551.7226; [pwright@easterseals.com](mailto:pwright@easterseals.com)

[Caregiver Support Network Volunteer Training Manual](#). Veterans Administration Voluntary Service (VAVS) and the Office of Care Coordination (OCC) have joined together to form the Caregiver Support Network to prepare volunteers to more effectively assist primary caregivers of veterans. This training manual is designed to help community organizations and volunteers to provide compassionate support to those offering care to America's veterans in their homes.  
[http://www.kofc.org/un/eb/en/leadership\\_institute/resources/serve/vavs\\_caregivers.pdf](http://www.kofc.org/un/eb/en/leadership_institute/resources/serve/vavs_caregivers.pdf)

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[http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/HC](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HC)

[LTC/Alz\\_Grants/docs/Toolkit\\_8\\_Supporting\\_Family\\_Caregivers.pdf](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HCLTC/Alz_Grants/docs/Toolkit_8_Supporting_Family_Caregivers.pdf)

Administration on Aging, Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States (ADDGS) National Resource Center, Toolkit: [Serving African-American Families](#), Home and Community Based Services for People with Dementia and their Caregivers.

[http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/HCLTC/Alz\\_Grants/docs/Toolkit\\_4\\_Serving\\_African\\_Americans.pdf](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HCLTC/Alz_Grants/docs/Toolkit_4_Serving_African_Americans.pdf)

Administration on Aging, Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States (ADDGS) National Resource Center, Toolkit: [Serving Hispanic Families](#), Home and Community Based Services for People with Dementia and their Caregivers.

[http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/HCLTC/Alz\\_Grants/docs/Toolkit\\_6\\_Serving\\_Hispanic\\_Families.pdf](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HCLTC/Alz_Grants/docs/Toolkit_6_Serving_Hispanic_Families.pdf)

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#### *About the Author*

**Kelly Tipler**, has worked for the past 20 years in many roles, from direct care to advocacy. She has worked in a variety of settings, including skilled nursing facilities, adult day care, geriatric psychiatry, both inpatient and outpatient mental health, respite care, and assisted living. She served as the Executive Director for the Tennessee Respite Coalition for 9 years, and currently is the president of the board.

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Administration on Aging, Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States (ADDGS) National Resource Center, Toolkit: [Serving Hispanic Families, Home and Community Based Services for People with Dementia and their Caregivers](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HCLTC/Alz_Grants/docs/Toolkit_6_Serving_Hispanic_Families.pdf).  
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<sup>ii</sup> Administration on Aging, Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grants to States (ADDGS) National Resource Center, Toolkit: [Serving African-American Families, Home and Community Based Services for People with Dementia and their Caregivers](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/HCLTC/Alz_Grants/docs/Toolkit_4_Serving_African_Americans.pdf).  
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