

March 2008 Nutrition InfoGram

Issue Number: 21

A bimonthly Electronic Newsletter from the Nutrition and Health Promotion Team of the California Department of Aging (CDA)

Inside this Issue:

- **Resources of Interest**
 - **Volunteerism**
 - **Survey Summary of Volunteerism in California's Elderly Nutrition Program**
 - **Recruiting and Keeping Volunteers**
 - *Barriers to Volunteering* by Susan J. Ellis
 - **Volunteer Trends**
 - *Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends Since 1974* by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development
 - *Volunteering in America: 2007 State Trends and Rankings in Civic Life* by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development
 - **Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA)**
 - **Introducing *Seniors Express* Meals on Wheels Software**
 - **Senior Disaster Preparedness**
 - **Preventing Chronic Disease Public Health Research, Practice, and Policy: *Disaster Preparedness and the Chronic Disease Needs of Vulnerable Older Adults*** by Nancy Aldrich and William F. Benson
 - **Customer Service**
 - ***Seven Steps to Creating Customer Experiences that Delight*** by UK based consultant Andy Hanselman
- **Contact Information**

Resources of Interest

Volunteerism

Survey Summary of Volunteerism in California's Elderly Nutrition Program

Purpose of the Survey:

In August 2007, the California Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) participated in completing a "Use of volunteers in the Elderly Nutrition Program (ENP)" survey. The purpose of the survey was to identify how the ENP was meeting State Plan Objective 23, "Expand opportunities for older adults to volunteer their time and expertise in activities that benefit the public good and increase the number of

volunteers of all ages in programs serving older adults.” AAA responses were kept confidential.

Survey Results:

Volunteer Participation in the Elderly Nutrition Programs

Results of this survey are shown as % (n), n = 23.

Narrative responses are summarized below.

1. Use of volunteers:

- 95.7% (22) use volunteers in their home-delivered meal program.
- 95.7% (22) use volunteers in their congregate meal program.
- 91.3% (21) of nutrition programs would not be able to function without volunteers.

2. Hours donated by volunteers:

- The average amount of hours donated by volunteers for their home-delivered meal program is 2,276 per month per PSA.
- The average amount of hours donated by volunteers for their congregate meal program is 2,268 per month per PSA.
- Volunteer hours in the past year have:
 - Increased: 34.8% (8)
 - Decreased: 17.4% (4)
 - Stayed the same: 30.4% (7)
 - Unsure: 17.4% (4)

3. Types of activities volunteers do:

- Meal service: 100% (23)
- Driving: 82.6% (19)
- Cleaning: 82.6% (19)
- Meal preparation: 56.5% (13)
- Other: 87% (20)
 - Obtain intake and reassessment information
 - Fundraising and marketing
 - Participate in committees and boards
 - Hostess
 - Recordkeeping, receptionist, office support
 - Entertainment (i.e.: crafts, games, bible study, music, exercise classes)
 - Meal delivery, runner
 - Meal preparation
 - Client checkups/telephone reassurance
 - Pet food delivery
 - Decorate sites
 - Congregate site coordinator

4. Average ages of volunteers:

- 35 to 44 years old: 4.6% (1)
- 45 to 64 years old: 27.3% (6)
- 65 years old and above: 68.2% (15)

5. Retaining volunteers:

A. Reported challenges encountered with trying to retain volunteers:

- Increased cost of transportation: 82.4% (14)
- Job is too physically demanding: 58.8% (10)
- Need to leave to care for family member: 52.9% (9)
- Too time consuming: 41.2% (7)
- Other:
 - Conflicts with other volunteers
 - Other interests
 - Volunteers move out of the area
 - Volunteers are aging with increased demand for services
 - Do not want to be scheduled
 - Personality conflicts
 - Volunteers need to work or attend school

6. Recruiting volunteers:

A. Reported challenges encountered when trying to recruit volunteers:

- Unable to donate time: 77.8% (14)
- Lack of interest: 72.2% (13)
- Physically unable to do the job: 55.6% (10)
- Financial burden: 50.0% (9)
- Other:
 - Transportation
 - Caregiver
 - Lack of awareness and interest
 - Too demanding
 - Computer system is difficult to operate

B. Activities done in the past year to increase the number of volunteers:

- Word of mouth: 91.3% (21)
- Advertisements: 82.6% (19)
- Volunteer recognition awards: 69.6% (16)
- Working with volunteer recruitment organizations: 69.6% (16)
- Other:
 - Service organizations (i.e.: WECARE program, Americorps)
 - Participation in community fairs/meetings
 - Presentations (i.e.: corporations set up tables outside businesses; employee health fairs)
 - Ongoing outreach (i.e.: consistent press releases)

C. Activities that PSAs plan to do to increase the number of volunteers in the future:

- Advertise: 72.7% (16)
- Work with volunteer recruitment organizations: 68.2% (15)
- Workshops: 27.3% (6)
- Other: 68.2% (15):
 - Outreach: Community, faith based organizations, meetings, newspapers, recruitment fairs
 - Provide volunteer recognition activities
 - Use volunteer recruitment organizations
 - Utilize local students (i.e.: help with assessments/reassessments).
 - Partnership with non-profit organizations
 - Word of mouth.
 - Engage a sponsor for a day of delivery

7. Volunteer trends:

A. Trends programs have noticed concerning nutrition program volunteers:

- Physically job is too demanding
- Aging volunteers are unable to donate as much time
- Volunteers are grandparents raising grandchildren
- Costs of inflation (i.e.: gas) impacting ability to donate time and reimbursement is unable to keep pace with gas prices
- Difficulty recruiting young volunteers
- Delivery drivers require large time commitment (Routes are 5 days per week)
- Volunteers become territorial
- Volunteers lack dedication to the program
- Older worker needing to go back to work
- Volunteers are between the ages of 45-65 years old
- Volunteers are not computer savvy
- Once senior volunteers are involved they stay involved

Recruiting and Keeping Volunteers

Barriers to Volunteering

by Susan J. Ellis

Key elements of volunteer recruitment:

Your language:

If you are more interested in qualities of prospective volunteers other than formal education, review your words more carefully. Shorter, more common words will be most welcoming. Jargon is a turn-off. Do not use abbreviations or acronyms. The label of “volunteer” is not universally welcomed. Use terms like community service, helping out, taking action, making a difference. Never head a poster “Volunteers Wanted.”

Photographs and artworks:

The wrong picture can do a lot of harm. Use as many photographs as possible, with a wide range of activities and types of people pictured.

Where you place materials:

When you leave flyers in different places around town, you clearly imply your desire for volunteers from those locations. A flyer seen at a senior center conveys an interest in senior volunteers, while one left in a college dormitory welcomes young adults.

The people who represent you:

Recruiters need to understand the expectations of the setting. It may work best to assign recruiters in pairs, making sure that the two representatives are different from each other, even if they are not a match to the target audience.

The applicant's reception:

When someone calls with an inquiry about volunteer work what happens? Does the voice mail system offer an option for contacting the volunteer office? If the right person is not in, how is the message taken on the phone? Is the prospective volunteer thanked for calling? Assured that s/he will be called back? Is the receptionist or security guard friendly?

The volunteer's reception:

Involve current volunteers in the plans to recruit a more diverse group of volunteers and engage them in running orientation programs for the newcomers.

To view this entire article visit: www.energizeinc.com/art/npbarriers.html.

Volunteer Trends

Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends Since 1974 **by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development**

The 2005 data indicate that volunteering rates are at a 30-year high. The percentage of teenagers who volunteer more than doubled between 1989 and 2005 (from 13.4 percent to 28.4 percent). The Corporation's College Students Helping America report recently highlighted a 20 percent increase in the number of college students volunteering between 2002 and 2005 (p. 6). Baby Boomers (ages 45-64) are the primary reason for a 37 percent increase in volunteering among mid-life Americans since 1989 (from 23.2 percent in 1974 to 30 percent in 2005). Older adult volunteering has been on an upward trajectory through the last three decades, going from 14.3 percent in 1974 to 23.5 percent in 2005 (a 64 percent increase in volunteer rate) (p. 7).

The proportion of older adults who volunteer 100 or more hours a year is 46 percent higher today than in 1974. Today, older adults are the most likely group to serve 100 or more hours a year. The increase in episodic volunteering (contributing 99 or fewer hours in a year) since 1989 is largely driven by teenagers and adults ages 45-64. Episodic volunteering may provide opportunities for individuals who are not able to commit extended time to volunteering, but still wish to serve. A 1989 survey showed that 79 percent of non-volunteers said that they would volunteer if given a short-duration task. To foster greater volunteer growth, it will likely be important to remain sensitive to the time constraints and other responsibilities that individuals and families face, particularly baby boomers and teenagers.

Not only is volunteering one way for individuals to help their neighbors and enhance their communities, it also provides opportunities for youth to develop valuable skills, older Americans to remain healthy by being active and connected to their community, and adults to share their professional and work expertise.

Nonprofit organizations continue to rely on volunteers to help them run their internal operations and provide service to the community. Eighty one percent of nonprofit organizations in America utilize volunteers.

To view the full report, visit:

http://www.nationalservice.org/pdf/06_1203_volunteer_growth.pdf.

Volunteering in America: 2007 State Trends and Rankings in Civic Life
by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Policy Development

Trends and Highlights:

- In 2006, 6.47 million California volunteers dedicated 858.5 million hours of service.
- Between 1989 and the present, California's volunteer rate increased by 7.1 percentage points. California ranked 26th in the country for volunteer rate changes.
- California had the largest number of volunteers of any state in the nation.
- Over a three year period, California ranked 38th in the country with a 25.5 percent volunteer rate. Utah ranked 1st with 45.9 percent volunteering. Nevada ranked last with 17.5 percent volunteering.

Volunteer Activities:

- 20.9 percent of volunteers collect, prepare, distribute or serve food.
- Most volunteers (32.2 percent) participate in educational or youth services.
- 12 percent of volunteers participate in social or community service.

To view this full article, visit: http://www.cns.gov/pdf/VIA/VIA_fullreport.pdf.

**Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA):
Introducing *Seniors Express* Meals on Wheels (MOW) Software**

Is your MOW running on spreadsheets and note cards? We have exactly what you've been looking for! Seniors Express is uncomplicated software everyone can use. It was designed with the help of people who run MOW programs. We even recruited a person who hated computers to help us. Seniors Express is a very inexpensive solution tailored to meet your Meals on Wheels needs. There are many Seniors Express users in California and our customers share ideas with each other. That means you save time and money by not reinventing the wheel! Do your MOW a favor and take five minutes to check us out. You'll be glad you did.

Request a free CD and information packet, a [Free Demo](#) and read more at <http://www.seniorexpress.org/>.

**Senior Disaster Preparedness:
Preventing Chronic Disease Public Health Research, Practice, and Policy:
Disaster Preparedness and the Chronic Disease Needs of Vulnerable Older Adults by Nancy Aldrich and William F. Benson**

About 80% of older adults have at least one chronic condition that makes them more vulnerable than healthy people during a disaster. These chronic conditions combined with the physiological, sensory, and cognitive changes experienced as part of aging result in frail older adults having special needs during emergencies. Planning and coordination among public health professionals, emergency preparedness professionals, and professionals who provide services for the aging are essential to meet these special needs. Several tools and strategies already exist to help prepare these professionals to protect and assist older adults during a disaster. These include having diverse professionals train in coalitions and using community mapping data to identify areas where many older adults live.

Please view this full article at:
http://www.cdc.gov/PCD/issues/2008/jan/pdf/07_0135.pdf

Customer Service

***Seven Steps to Creating Customer Experiences that Delight*
by UK based consultant Andy Hanselman**

Customers are an organization's biggest asset. There's much written and spoken about customer care, customer service, even customer 'delight', but what does it all mean? How does it relate to your business, your people, and most importantly, to your customers? Here are a few tips to help you look at your own

business and identify some steps to improve the service experience you create for your customers to delight them.

Step 1

Ask yourself, “How easy are we to buy from and deal with?” So many businesses don’t even get the basics right: telephones that aren’t answered properly (some not even answered!), sales people are not trained (or even interested!), and people and systems stop customers from getting what they want. We call them ‘Sales Prevention Officers’ ... they lurk throughout the business ... who, what and where are yours?

Step 2

Eliminate your Sales Prevention Officers: No, don’t fire your receptionist! Too often they are the very ones dealing with the consequences of your real Sales Prevention Officers. Investigate and find out what’s preventing your customers from getting what they want. Ask your frontline people, “What causes Sales Prevention Officers in our business? Look in the mirror too ... have you ever refused a call with “tell them I’m not in?”

Step 3

Get feedback from your customers: Ask them “What lets us down?”, “How could we improve?”, “What irritates or annoys you about us?”, and “How can we exceed your expectations?” Email them, call them, and visit them. Find out what they really think about you.

Step 4

Act on the feedback! (No explanation needed here!)

Step 5

Identify ways to ‘delight’ your customers: Not “Have a nice day” or “Missing you already” but surprising customers with the level of service you provide (in a positive way, please!). Customer delight has a personal touch, it appears spontaneous, and makes customers feel good. Think about ‘thank you for your order’ notes, ‘Welcome’ signs in the reception, send them articles of interest, anticipate their needs and solve their problems.

Step 6

Reward customer delight: Encourage your people to ‘go that extra mile,’ to generate ‘delight’ ideas and to create ‘raving fans.’ What’s the reward in your business for ‘delighting a customer’ ... what’s the consequence for not? And finally,

Step 7

Ring up your business and ask for yourself!!! This can be a real eye opener. It’s sometimes quite scary!!! In reality it means standing in your own queues, sitting

in your own reception, and listening to your own switchboard. Find out what it's like to be a customer, and identify areas for improvement. The pursuit of customer delight is a constant process ... it never ends. After Step 7 go back to Step 1 and start again!

To view this article online, visit

http://www.customerfocusconsult.com/articles/articles_template.asp?ID=34

Contact Information

Elliot Hochberg, Policy Manager, ehochberg@aging.ca.gov

Barbara Estrada, Nutrition Consultant, bestrada@aging.ca.gov

Andrea Bricker, Nutrition Consultant, abricker@aging.ca.gov

Margaret Stahler, Nutrition Consultant, mstahler@aging.ca.gov