

PANEL DISCUSSION “ENGAGING RESOURCES”

ELDER JUSTICE SUMMIT

6/21/2019

ANGELA BERNIER, SPCA VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR FOR MONTEREY COUNTY:

MAIN # 373-2631

WWW.SPCAMC.ORG

Angela has been with the SPCA for 6 years. She has been in the field for 20 plus years managing volunteer programs. She has seen first-hand the benefits of volunteering for people of all ages.

A lot of non-profit organizations rely on volunteers. They cannot fulfill their mission if they do not have volunteers. Angela shared a power point slide on volunteer position available at the SPCA. They have many opportunities for anyone in the community to help animals. If they don't want to come out and volunteer right away, they can make blankets from their homes. When they bring it into the shelter and they see the cute dog that they made it for, it makes them want to come back and stay a little longer. People can make treats for dogs, and toys for cats. They really get a lot of different skill sets that come through. Below are some of the positions available.

Core positions:

- Adoption Center (the most popular area to work in, where you work with cats and dogs or small animals)
- Barn
- Benefit Shop
- Clinic
- Fostering
- Wildlife

Other positions:

- Administration
- Hug-a-Pet
- Photography
- Outreach & Special Events
- Maintenance
- Transportation
- Paws to Recycle
- Paws to Read

The youngest volunteer is 12 years old. Their oldest volunteer is 94 years old.

Commitment is a minimum of 36 hours (3 months). Volunteers can make their own schedule in some of the positions. Adoption Center is flexible.

Volunteer tasks in the Adoption Center are:

- Walk and Socialize
- Spot clean
- Laundry/Dishes
- Customer Services

Volunteering opportunities at the SPCA can give seniors:

- A break from isolation
- A sense of purpose
- A place to share their life skills
- Exercise and slobbery kisses

MARIBEL TREJO, ALLIANCE ON AGING TRANSPORTATION CENTER:

MAIN # 758-4011

WWW.ALLIANCEONAGING.ORG

The Alliance on Aging, they do not provide any rides, they connect the seniors to the agencies that provide the services. Two agencies they partner with are MST and ITN. Any senior who needs any transportation assistance, Alliance on Aging will provide all the information and services that they may know will benefit them.

Services provided to seniors are:

- MST
 - Mobile ADA Paratransit Services (RIDES). This is a curb to curb service for those who are disabled or temporarily dealing with a condition that doesn't allow them to travel safely on their own. This involves an application process.
 - Taxi Voucher Program with MST. Discount services for Seniors over 65.
 - Taxi Voucher Program for those that are disabled. If you are part of the RIDES Program, you can benefit from the Taxi Voucher Program.
 - MST TRIPs Program, which is a mileage reimbursement service for those who live outside of the service area or any senior or person who is disabled or a veteran who lives three fourths of a mile walking distance from the nearest bus stop. They can choose their own driver (could be a family member), or it could be to supplement a membership that you are currently a part of that provides transportation services.
- ITN
 - Membership based program that provides hands on assistance to seniors or adults over the age of 18 who have a visual impairment. Annual membership is \$60.00. You can program your rides, call and reserve your trips.

- American Cancer Association
 - Anyone who has cancer and needs assistance getting to their appointments. Contact the American Cancer Society and with their volunteers, you can be sure to obtain the best care and be sure to get to all the treatments you need.
- GoGo Grandparent.
 - Available throughout the United States. You call their toll-free number after you become a member. They will have your number on file. You can program your five favorite addresses to the different numbers on your dial tone and call that same toll-free number and select the number (i.e. #5 if you wish to go to your local grocery store, or you can connect with a customer service representative and provide a new address of where you would like to go.

TISH SAMMON, COMMUNITY BUILDERS FOR MONTEREY COUNTY:

MAIN #: 373-6628

WWW.COMBUILDERSMC.ORG

This is an emerging organization. Tish has been a leader in the field of volunteer management/community engagement. She started her career over 30 years ago by starting a volunteer center in Alvarado County.

Community Builders for Monterey County is a reimagined approach to volunteer centers, where they connect people to volunteer opportunities that make a difference in the community. They also work with community organizations, government, and education, to help them have the most effective volunteer program that they can have. As volunteers come into their organizations, they are treated well, and know what they must do. SPCA is an excellent example of that, but not all organizations are that organized.

Their focus is shifting to the elder area. All of us, no matter the age, want to feel valued, feel like we have a purpose and volunteering is one of the best ways. Finding those connections to build a social network, where you can feel valued, that you can feel connected, and have a sense of purpose. The new Blue Zone Project has a huge focus on volunteering and sense of purpose. That is one of Blue Zones 8 and 9 building blocks.

In working with some of the seniors, Tish realized that there are some significant barriers. As you have been through the workforce you felt valued, you knew what your goals were, you have retired, you are excited about that, you have seen the grandkids, you have traveled the United States, and you go, now what? What else is there? There has got to be more than this? Isolation and depression can start at any time, whether it's losing a spouse, or friends moving away because they can't afford to stay here or feeling isolated. If they don't have those connections or know how to make those connections, Community Builders helps with those connections. As you start seeing that purpose, that value, that potential in doing something new and different out of your comfort zone, it makes a world of difference, and that is across all ages.

One pilot program they are working on is putting together an assessment. A small group of 4 to 8 seniors will take the assessment to try to help them reconnect, with a spark, on something that they had forgotten that they could do, something they dreamed they could do. And how do we take that assessment and talk about creating that spark and that connection with what are the next steps? Is there an opportunity? How do we take this energy and really kindle the spark into something that ignites? It may be creating something within this group that they can do independently than necessarily going into a specific non-profit.

TRACY POWELL, COVIA VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES:

MAIN#: 925-956-7400

WWW.COVIA.ORG

COVIA provides housing and services for older adults for over 50 years. They have:

- Life Plan or Market Rate Communities (such as a Canterbury Wood). They have 8 of those in 7 Counties.
- Affordable Housing
- Residence Service Coordination in about 20 to 30 other communities across the State of California.

The fun work Tracy gets to do is called the Community Services. About 87 to 97% of the people want to live at home. People want to age well at wherever they call home. The programs that COVIA provide really target shared housing concepts and alleviate social isolation, as well as addressing issues of food insecurity.

One of the programs they have is called Market Day. This is a produce market offered at the Oldemeyer Center, Sally Griffin Senior Center in Pacific Grove, and at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Salinas. It started as an idea of seniors needing to get great quality produce at wholesale prices.

The first one started in West Oakland. It was a food desert, no access to great produce. Tracey was so focused on the food and people getting affordable food and eating better, that what she totally didn't think about was the community. You couldn't do it without the older adults that help volunteer. In the community of West Oakland, was about 200 people, speaking about 7 or 8 different languages and no one had a reason to come out of their apartment. On this first day of the market, people came out. They either smiled, bowed, met people and looked at them in their eyes and said thank you, and it started a community.

They used to have a great Farmer's Market in the City of Marina. Tracy was there one day helping, and an older woman was volunteering. She was taking a break with the older woman, and when the woman turned to her and said, "You know this market saved my life." Tracy thought the woman was exaggerating, as she tended to exaggerate. What the lady meant was, in the prior months, her husband and son passed away and she was so depressed she didn't leave her home. Some of her peers, volunteer friends, had called and said, "We need you." So, there was talk about being needed and having a sense of purpose. And that is what she meant.

She had a community there, and because they called and engaged her, she came out of her home, and was able to engage again and find that purpose and find some people.

They have these great markets and if anyone is interested, they usually offer them at Affordable Housing Communities, Senior Centers, Church sites, and anywhere where older adults can get to and gather. They are a great community resource.

One of COVIA's engagement programs is called **Well Connected**. It used to be called Senior Center Without Walls. Dr. Patrick Arbore really inspired the woman that started this, named Terry Englehart. About 15 years ago, when she was the Senior Resource Director, which was before 211 and all the great resources that were available, the program got started and older adults could call her about things like, where is the Senior Center? How do I get transportation? What do I do about my benefits? She realized that some of the same older adults were calling repeatedly and she was thinking, well I already answered this. What it was, is they were lonely. Terry was nice and would talk to them.

Terry started doing a little research and found an organization back East called the DOROT University, a University without walls. She took that inspiration and today they still work with them. Terry took that inspiration and changed it to a Senior Center without walls. At the time it was focused on the very frail older adult who couldn't leave their home due to a physical challenge, a transportation issue, or they were taking care of a spouse/ partner or something like that. They started with two classes, and one was Bingo, and another was just an activity group. Now they have over 70 course offerings every week, and it is in 41 States. If they are connecting on the phone or computer, there is no reason that people across the Country can't be involved. They have a weekly museum at home, arm-chair travel, art and reading, and created different kinds of groups. All the programs are offered by volunteers, most of them are participants themselves. They started a Spanish version of this program in April. It is free to all participants. One of the cool things is, if you have older adults living in the community, you can post something, and 30 to 40 people can be on the line at the same time. Or you can be in your own home and you can do it for two sessions. They have people that call in to about 10 classes every single day, and they have others that do something once a month.

Another program developed in terms of engaging people, is called **Social Call**. It is their version of a friendly visitor via the phone. It started in San Francisco about 10 years ago and is offered in 5 counties. They launched this much more intentionally and have been able to offer it in about 8 different languages because they can recruit a volunteer specifically for that activity. Now they can do this program across the Country. They can say someone in Kansas is happy to call someone in Mill Valley, California because they have similar interests. This program has blossomed.

Well-Connected has daily gratitude calls that happen two times during the day. It's one of the coolest programs and literally you call up and say what you are thankful for. Some people have said they can have a cup of tea while they are on this call.

In terms of inspiration, they had a woman, Lenny, who started as a participant and became a volunteer for the program, and she did it for 15 years. She posted several classes and the most

recent class she posted was when she was on hospice. It was called, Living through Dying. And she had this real sense of just talking about things, and meeting things head on. A lot of people know that many people don't want to talk about dying. But she thought no, I am going to address it. This was her approach to life:

Dig it and live it. Don't stop trying new things and ideas. Don't shrink away about talking about difficult subjects. Keep learning. Maintain a sense of humor. Listen to others mindfully. Problem solve and adapt to limitations. Be open to the opportunities that life presents and always learn.

So maybe she can inspire all of us to live that way.