April is National Volunteer month!

Volunteer month serves as a dedicated time to celebrate and recognize the invaluable contributions of volunteers across the United States. Volunteerism is a cornerstone of civic engagement, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility.

Individuals who volunteer often find themselves gaining a profound sense of fulfillment and purpose. The act of giving back not only strengthens social bonds, it also enhances personal well-being. Numerous studies have highlighted the positive impact volunteering has upon mental health, citing increased happiness and reduced stress levels among volunteers.

From a societal perspective the impact of volunteerism is immeasurable. Volunteers play a crucial role in addressing pressing social issues; from lessening poverty to building resilient communities, to promoting social cohesion. The diversity of skills and perspectives volunteers bring to the table enrich our collective capacity to address complex challenges.

National Volunteer Month is an opportunity to encourage more people to engage in acts of service. By highlighting their stories and showing real-life outcomes of their efforts, the month-long celebration inspires others to join the movement. The ripple effect of volunteerism goes far beyond individual actions, creating a positive cycle of community involvement and empowerment.

In times of crisis, volunteers often serve as the backbone to relief efforts, providing essential services and support to those in need. Whether it’s responding to a natural disaster or assisting vulnerable populations, volunteers demonstrate the resilience and compassion that define the American spirit.

We salute the generosity and selflessness of our Senior Companion volunteers in their work with individuals who have intellectual and developmental challenges.

Inside This Issue

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Page 4: Training—Become a GREAT Senior Companion volunteer
Page 5: Stretch Your Brain — Sudoku and Unscramble Words
Page 6: April/May Birthdays
Paid Days Off
Trivia

Volunteer

If you know someone who would make a caring SCP volunteer, please have them contact: Melissa Slama

infoSCP@nsrc.net
707.566.3005
Here’s looking at you, kid!

The most famous birthday this month, within our group of trusty volunteers, is Dioscoro. He volunteers at Kaleidoscope Day Program with his wife, Teresita, and three other Senior Companion volunteers. Happy Birthday, Dioscoro, you share a birthday with some very famous people!
Thank you SCP Volunteers!

What Host Sites said about you...

- Demonstrates initiative
- Caring & Respectful
- Committed and Dependable
- Encourages Independence
- Exemplary work ethic
- Follows Instructions
- Enthusiastic and Fun
- Attentive to our individuals
- Knowledgeable
- Asks great questions
- Great Help on Outings
- Friendly and Upbeat
- Observes Boundaries
- Approachable
- Well-liked by all
Volunteering brings out the best in us. It changes our focus from ourselves to something bigger—a cause we believe in. It can expand our heart and mind to share experiences with each other. Volunteering helps us grow as individuals while at the same time we are helping make our corner of the world a little better for someone else.

Volunteering with individuals who have developmental and intellectual disabilities is not as hard as it might sound, especially since we serve only in professional and supervised settings. However, it does take special social skills to become a GREAT Senior Companion volunteer.

1. **Being patient and having empathy.** These qualities top the list of social skills needed; approaching each person with patience, respect and maintaining empathy for each person’s unique abilities and perspectives.

2. **Effective communication.** Use clear and simple language, use eye contact as needed (unless eye contact is a trigger for the client) and adapt your communication style to accommodate various abilities.

3. **Respect personal space.** Be aware of personal space and boundaries to maintain a safe and comfortable environment for yourself and your companion.

4. **Use an individualized approach.** Each person is different. Tailor your interactions to your companion’s preferences and strengths.

5. **Be flexible.** Plans are not legal contracts. Unexpected things happen. Allow time for your client to respond.

6. **Encourage independence.** Provide support when it is truly needed, but allow the individual to do tasks on their own and at their own pace.

7. **Positive reinforcement.** Acknowledge achievements, no matter how small. Be specific; “You were patient and waited for your turn.” or “You made a beautiful card for your mom.”

8. **Sensory awareness.** Be aware of sensory stimulation in the environment and how your companion is likely to react to various stimuli such as loud noises, transitions, new visitors, or sudden movement.

9. **Collaborate with staff.** Communicate regularly with the staff and ask questions about how best to manage any issue. They are professionals and want you to be informed and to succeed.

10. **Inclusive support.** Volunteering with individuals who have intellectual and developmental disabilities is about creating inclusive and supportive environments where everyone feels valued and included.

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**Action Item**

Which techniques to the left have you used at your site to grow your relationship with your companion?

Send an email to lbordner@nbrc.net to share your experience—and earn 1/2 hour training credit.

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**References:**

https://www.opportunityvillage.org/disability-services/ways-to-foster-independence-idd
## Sudoku Directions:
Use numbers 1 to 9 only once within each row, column, and block.

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**UNSCRAMBLE WORDS**

How many words can you make out of the letters in the word: VOLUNTEERING?
(Total possible words with 3 letters or more = 699)

https://wordmaker.info/how-many/volunteering.html
Upcoming Paid Days Off

<table>
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<th>NAME OF HOLIDAY</th>
<th>DAY OF HOLIDAY</th>
<th>DAY YOU TAKE OFF</th>
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<td>Cesar Chavez Day</td>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>Mon—April 1</td>
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<td>Memorial Day</td>
<td>Last Monday in May</td>
<td>Mon—May 27</td>
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<td>Juneteenth</td>
<td>June 19</td>
<td>Wed—June 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence Day</td>
<td>July 4</td>
<td>Thu—July 4</td>
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Celebration Days in April

- April Fools Day 01
- Autism Awareness 02
- Walking Day 03
- No Housework Day 07
- Cinnamon Roll Day 10
- National Grilled Cheese Day 12
- Thomas Jefferson Day 13
- National Volunteer Week 14
- National Animal Crackers Day 18
- Wear Pajamas to Work Day 19
- National Kindergarten Day 21
- National DNA Day 25
- Take Sons/Daughters to work 25
- National Super Hero Day 28
- National Peace Rose Day 29
- Adopt a Shelter Pet Day 30

Awareness & Education

- Autism Acceptance Month
- National Poetry Month
- National Volunteer Month
- National Garden Month

Is there something you’d like to learn more about? Let us know: lbordner@nbrc.net

North Bay Regional Center
North Bay Regional Center
520 Mendocino Ave
Santa Rosa, CA 95401 95401

Email: infoSCP@nbrc.net
Phone: 707.566.3005

Happy Birthday!

April 2024
Dioscoro (Boi) 4/22

May 2024
None

Shhhh...the answers are below!

This bunny is hiding somewhere else in the newsletter. Can you find him?

A

B

Happy Birthday!