

NCHPP Volunteer Section Chat – November 8, 2007



“Maximizing Volunteer Support Meetings”

Facilitated by Sandi Huster, Director of Volunteer Programs, Covenant Hospice in Pensacola, Florida; NCHPP Volunteer/Volunteer Manager Steering Committee member.



Read from last page to first, bottom of page to top.



2:58:42 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Any closing comments? If not, take care!



2:58:23 PM [LGPorterfield](#)  
You, too! Thanks!



2:58:07 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Thank you all for joining us today! Thanks for sharing great ideas. Have a wonderful evening!

2:57:44 PM [Mauna](#)
Don't miss state or local conferences near you.

2:57:38 PM [kim hughes](#)  
Thanks for chatting with me everyone! Have a great day!



2:57:10 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Also, join the NHPCP online membership. It's free and connects you with other vol coord. from around the country.

2:56:13 PM [kim hughes](#)  
I don't and I will. Thank you for answering my question

2:55:50 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Kim, if you don't have it already, order from NHPCO, the Hospice Volunteer Program Resource Manual.



2:55:20 PM [kim hughes](#)  
yes



2:55:02 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Do you mean in terms of training for a new volunteer coordinator/manager?

2:54:49 PM [kim hughes](#)  
Are certification programs recommended?

2:54:42 PM [cmt](#)  
No question; only a thank you as I've enjoyed chatting with all of you and found this very helpful!

2:54:23 PM [kim hughes](#)  
What has been most helpful to you in your jobs? Education wise

2:53:53 PM [sandrahu](#)  
We have about 5 minutes remaining. Does anyone have a question they would like to post? It can be on this topic or any other?

2:53:39 PM [kim hughes](#)  
We are brand new. I'm hoping to gain more knowledge this coming year. This is my 1st VC job

2:53:00 PM [kim hughes](#)  
I added 14 this year and retained 11 in addition to my original 2.

2:52:54 PM [sandrahu](#)  

We have over 1500 volunteers in 11 branch offices and 2 inpatient units. Retention is a real challenge and one that we're making a priority this year.

2:51:56 PM [kim hughes](#)  

I had 16, but lost 3. Leaving me at 13 now.

2:51:54 PM [cmt](#)  

I don't know what mine is...only that my base grows very slowly- only 5- 10 volunteer a year.

2:51:42 PM [sandrahu](#)  

Kim, that's excellent! How many volunteers do you have?

2:51:40 PM [LGPorterfield](#)  

Sorry - delayed response - Books we have in mind are "Tuesdays with Morrie", "The Black Death" (AIDS in Africa), "Becoming Dead Right" (hospice volunteer in Detroit), "Too Soon To Say Good-Bye", etc.

2:51:36 PM [kim hughes](#)  

When I came on board, last year at this time, there were 2 volunteers. We're new.

2:51:24 PM [sandrahu](#)  

I'm sorry that there is so much delay in this chat. I've observed that it's about one minute between reponse and appearance on the screen.

2:50:55 PM [kim hughes](#)  

I believe mine is at least 80%

2:50:26 PM [sandrahu](#)  

I'm making volunteer turnover a key indicator for measurement this year.

2:50:26 PM [Mauna](#)

It was expensive to obtain copyrights but one of the volunteers did most of the background work. I didn't spend much more that I have in other years.

2:49:15 PM [sandrahu](#)  

Since we're talking about support and retention. Do you know what your annual retention rate is?

2:48:23 PM [LGPorterfield](#)  

Mauna, how cool is that! Great idea

2:48:22 PM [sandrahu](#)  

No, Tree of Lights is separate from our memorial service. It's open to the community and is an opportunity to honor loved ones by placing an ornament on a tree. This can be for a living relative too

2:48:00 PM [Mauna](#)

Two hospice volunteer visiting musicians recorded a CD that I'm mailing to volunteers for Christmas this year. We have extra copies to share with patients.

2:47:22 PM [kim hughes](#)  

Tree of Lights Ceremony - is this an annual memorial service?

2:47:16 PM [bwexler](#)  



We also do a tree lighting - Light Up A Life - memorial service

2:46:39 PM [sandrahu](#)  



At the holidays, we have a Tree of Lights Ceremony and invite all volunteers and family members.



2:46:27 PM [Mauna](#)



yes



2:46:00 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Mauna, was that your fall retreat?



2:45:35 PM [Mauna](#)
sorry delayed response: We had two presenters: a pastor who is an RN and one of our chaplains. There was a labrynth for people to enjoy and lunch was provided.



2:45:29 PM [kim hughes](#)  
We are having a catered dinner party for Christmas. What do some of the rest of you do for the holidays?



2:45:07 PM [sandrahu](#)  
We've started rounding on all volunteers. The volunteer manager makes a personal call to each volunteer after their first assignment to see how things went. We also call monthly to check on voluntee

2:44:52 PM [bwexler](#)  
This year we had one of our volunteers, who makes greeting cards, design a special one for our volunteers for Thanksgiving - she gets the credit and a small fee & we get custom made cards



2:44:19 PM [cmt](#)  
We do cards too- especially when the volunteer is sick or has a death in the family- we circulate the cards at morning report so all staff can sign them. The volunteers love them.



2:44:07 PM [sandrahu](#)  
I love thank you cards! We have a volunteer of the month and take him/her out to lunch. They're also featured in the volunter newsletter.



2:44:00 PM [kim hughes](#)  
I send birthday cards and give small birthday gifts as well

2:43:17 PM [sandrahu](#)  
I think that IDT members are key in making volunteer feel valued. We need to get more buy-in for all staff in helping us to retain volunteers!

2:43:11 PM [LGPorterfield](#)  
We send lots of thank you cards and thinking of you cards also



2:43:10 PM [kim hughes](#)  
Yesterday, all of the staff had a carry-in dinner and we treated the volunteers to gifts and lots of praising. They enjoyed the attention



2:43:02 PM [bwexler](#)  
What books are on your list?



2:42:42 PM [cmt](#)  
Good ideas!



2:42:41 PM [LGPorterfield](#)  
we're planning to start a movie night and a book discussion group in January

2:42:24 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Fun!



2:42:20 PM [kim hughes](#)  
The volunteers enjoyed this as much as the patients



2:42:06 PM [kim hughes](#)  
For Halloween, we all dressed in costume. We got together to make goody bags and then delivered them to the local nursing home where several of our patients are.

2:41:48 PM [sandrahu](#)  
We've had group activities like learning to ballroom dance to playing cards!

2:41:15 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Glad to have you with us.



2:40:50 PM [LGPorterfield](#)  
Thanks, sorry I'm late



2:40:38 PM [sandrahu](#)  
What kinds of group activities do you do, Kim? Welcome, LG!

2:40:35 PM [cmt](#)  
By making sure we recognize their efforts, but including them as part of the team- and that means treating them like staff.

2:40:15 PM LGPorterfield entered the room.



2:40:09 PM [kim hughes](#)  
I have planned group activities in order to let them get to know one another.



2:39:37 PM [sandrahu](#)  
How do we show them that their work is valued?

2:39:14 PM [cmt](#)  
I think it's important to make them feel the work they do is valuable and it has to be fun when possible.

2:38:36 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Let's switch topics a slight bit to support of volunteers, in general. How do you retain volunteers?



2:36:25 PM [kim hughes](#)  
hello!

2:36:12 PM [sandrahu](#)  
We've talked about educational topics and socialization. What other kinds of activities would enhance volunteer supports?



2:35:01 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Hi, Kim! Welcome.



2:34:55 PM [Mauna](#)
We had two speakers, a pastor who was an e

2:34:37 PM kim hughes entered the room.



2:34:32 PM [cmt](#)  
I ordered the DVD thru NHPCO.

2:34:25 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Where can you get the DVD for Comfort Touch?

2:33:53 PM [cmt](#)  
Comfort Touch is a form of massage for the very ill or elderly. It involves direct pressure and allows the volunteers to provide that touch that is so often missing with our patients.

2:33:30 PM [sandrahu](#)  
What did you do at the fall retreat, Mauna?


2:32:33 PM [Mauna](#)
Our fall retreat last year was at a centrally located park. This year we went to a retreat center. All staff are invited (none come) and volunteers can bring guests.

2:31:46 PM [cmt](#)  

I also do a separate newsletter to the non-clinical volunteers with issues discussed pertinent to them.

2:31:30 PM [sandrahu](#)  

CMT, please tell me about the Comfort Touch DVD. Where can we get it?

2:30:54 PM [cmt](#)  

We invite all the volunteers to the quarterly inservices.

2:30:29 PM [sandrahu](#)  

How do you provide support to non-clinical volunteers? Or, do your meetings include all volunteers?

2:30:22 PM [cmt](#)  

We did the complimentary therapies too and showed the DVD "Comfort Touch," then ended with competency testing. Many of the volunteers use CT now.

2:28:53 PM [Mauna](#)

We met there. Since I had 5 programs scheduled volunteers could attend in another community if the day worked better for them.

2:28:46 PM [sandrahu](#)  



We had a very successful support meeting on complimentary therapies. We invited a massage therapist, aromatherapist and music therapist. Volunteers loved the relaxation and rejuvenation!

2:27:56 PM [Mauna](#)

And lunch(or at least snacks) too!

2:27:51 PM [bwexler](#)  

Did everyone drive and meet you there or did you get a van/car pool?

2:27:32 PM [cmt](#)  

Wonderful idea!

2:27:15 PM [sandrahu](#)  

A field trip!

2:26:55 PM [Mauna](#)

I contacted funeral homes in each city. They shared what services they offered and gave us a tour of the facility. We had a short memorial service also.

2:25:34 PM [sandrahu](#)  

How did you do funeral homes, Mauna?

2:25:28 PM [cmt](#)  

Did you bring in someone from the homes to talk?

2:25:11 PM [Mauna](#)

We did funeral homes at each office a few years ago, it was a big success.

2:25:01 PM [cmt](#)  

I think education is a big part of it, but yes, validating feelings, sharing successes and failures- all is needed.

2:24:10 PM [sandrahu](#)  

Do you think that volunteers need more chances to socialize and feel more a part of a team? Is that a main purpose for support meetings?

2:24:09 PM [bwexler](#)  

Has anyone taken their volunteers on a field trip to a funeral home or crematorium?

2:23:40 PM [cmt](#)  



I like that idea- it would certainly save some effort coming up with a new topic and researching it for inservices!

2:22:53 PM [bwexler](#)  

It's about 90 - 100 minutes - just enough time for discussion afterwards.

2:22:20 PM [cmt](#)  


Does it go 2 hours?

2:21:56 PM [bwexler](#)  

It's great - stars Emma Thompson - she has Stage 4 ovarian cancer and is a college professor.

2:21:38 PM [sandrahu](#)  



We're considering an annual volunteer forum. We'll invite senior leaders and provide an agency update and a chance for volunteers to ask questions, make suggestions!

2:21:02 PM [cmt](#)  

Never heard of Wit before. I'll have to check it out.

2:20:29 PM [bwexler](#)  

We showed Wit and the HBO one from 10 years ago, can't remember the name.

2:19:49 PM [cmt](#)  

I love the movie days! What movies have you shown?

2:18:22 PM [cmt](#)  

I would like to see the IDT attend- I think it helps the volunteers feel they are part of the team.

2:17:53 PM [bwexler](#)  

Ours are open to everyone within the agency, but very few other staff attend beyond the volunteer coordinators and myself.

2:17:38 PM [cmt](#)  

We've invited them, but they don't come unless they are forced- too much other work to do.

2:17:06 PM [sandrahu](#)  

Do member of the IDT attend your volunteer support meetings? Is that important to volunteres?

2:16:55 PM [bwexler](#)  

One of the best meetings last year was done by the medical directors and discussed pain & symptom management and the medical marijuana bill that was in the legislature.

2:16:26 PM [Mauna](#)



Our fall retreat was on spiritual and cultural diversity, 30 of 65 volunteers attended.

2:16:24 PM [sandrahu](#)  

That's a great idea! We did the same here and have started doing movie days, with popcorn, and related movies.

2:16:00 PM [cmt](#)  

We also have periodic meetings with volunteers who provide specific services- spiritual, office, etc.

2:15:47 PM [bwexler](#)  

Greetings ! We had in-services last week and showed the movie - Two Weeks. It was great - discussion questions at the end of the movie were really helpful, too.

2:15:40 PM [RitaB](#)  

I have a hard time coming up with education topics for volunteers since we have office and pt/family vols at meetings - any suggestions

2:15:20 PM [cmt](#)  

They also want topics that pertain to them- contagious diseases and how to stay safe, etc.

2:15:07 PM [sandrahu](#)  

What kinds of additional education/training do you provide?

2:14:29 PM [sandrahu](#)  

I agree, the number one thing that most volunteers ask for is more education and training.

2:13:56 PM [cmt](#)  

Honestly, I think that's what brings them in the most! Exciting topics help and good speakers.

2:13:54 PM bwexler entered the room.

2:13:51 PM [sandrahu](#)  

I agree, food is important! What else do they want?

2:13:43 PM [Mauna](#)

I have volunteers in 5 communities 20miles apart and used to offer cont ed to each. This is the second year that I just offered two.

2:13:26 PM [cmt](#)  

Lunch.

2:13:13 PM [cmt](#)  

Not as well as I'd like. I have about 150 volunteers in all. That's a small percentage that actually attend the meetings. It is usually larger attendance tho- closer to 30 in Muskegon County .

2:13:00 PM [sandrahu](#)  

To our group...what do you think volunteers want interms of support?

2:12:13 PM [sandrahu](#)  

Does that work well for you?

2:12:06 PM RitaB entered the room.

2:11:58 PM [cmt](#)  

No, quarterly.

2:11:49 PM [sandrahu](#)  

Do you have monthly support meetings?

2:11:28 PM [cmt](#)  

Only 5 this week- I did it last week to for another 17 volunteers in another county.

2:10:58 PM [sandrahu](#)  

How many people came to your inservice?

2:10:45 PM [Mauna](#)



I'm Mauna Cowan from Indiana

2:10:33 PM [cmt](#)  

I just came from an inservice meeting for our volunteers- topice was providing hospice services to terminally ill children.



2:09:56 PM [sandrahu](#)  



Welcome to everyone. I'm Sandi Huster and I'll be leading the chat. Today's topic is Volunteer Support meetings. What are you all doing?

2:09:37 PM [cmt](#)  
Hi- and who are you?



2:09:26 PM [Mauna](#)
We can talk later. Hi, cmt

2:09:17 PM [cmt](#)  
Volunteer Coordinator of Harbor Hospice.



2:09:00 PM [cmt](#)  
This is the first time I've done this- confusing.

2:08:46 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Hi, please us who you are.

2:08:23 PM cmt entered the room.

2:07:06 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Looks like we are the only ones on the chat at this time.

2:06:38 PM [Mauna](#)
Hi

2:04:42 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Has anyone else joined us today?

2:01:29 PM [sandrahu](#)  
Hi Mauna.

2:01:08 PM Mauna entered the room.

2:01:08 PM **Welcome to "VOLUNTEER MGMT", Mauna.**