

Newton Senior Center Volunteer Handbook

Staff:

Director of Senior Services- Jayne Colino

Administrative Coordinator - Alice Bailey

Program Coordinator- Joanne Fisher

Geriatric Clinical Social Worker- Kathy Laufer, LICSW

Outreach Worker

Site Managers- Van Drivers- Custodians

Administrative Assistant - Social Work Intern

**"People who say it cannot be done,
should not interrupt those who are doing it."**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Newton Senior Center is a place for older adults to gather in an atmosphere that promotes and utilizes life experiences and skills.

The Center's goal is to provide an environment that validates the changing needs and interests of the individuals and enhance growth, dignity and connection with each other and the greater community.

Through creative programming, The Newton Senior Center provides participants opportunities and resources in the areas of physical and mental health, nutrition, recreation and education.



Weather Closings

Weather closing announcements for the senior center are made on:
WRKO Radio-- Channel 7 News-- Newton Cable-NewTV
and on the senior center phone recording (617-796-1660).

Please check these before venturing into bad weather!

WHO IS A NEWTON SENIOR CENTER VOLUNTEER?

A Newton Senior Center Volunteer is a man or a woman who enjoys being a part of the center in a helpful and productive way. He or she may use the skills of a lifetime or learn new ones to then share with friends and participants. It is the joy and commitment of these volunteers that make the Newton Senior Center the dynamic and vital place that it is.



PHILOSOPHY OF VOLUNTEERISM

The staff of the Newton Senior Center is indebted to its corps of volunteers for all that they teach us through their work and support of our goals and missions.

It is our philosophy that volunteers are our greatest resource. We try to place them in positions that will be pleasing and satisfying to them and will contribute to the overall betterment of the center and its offerings. Our volunteers are encouraged to speak their minds, in appropriate forums, so that we are always improving our systems and providing an ever better workplace. Our volunteers are never required to do any task that they do not care to, for any reason.

Our goal is to have a smooth-running corps of “para-professionals” who are receiving, as much as they are giving in their contributions to the life of the Newton Senior Center.



- ◆ to be supportive of The Senior Center and its mission.
- ◆ to participate in the orientation and training required for the volunteer's position.
- ◆ to perform assignments to the best of the volunteer's abilities.
- ◆ to participate in the planning and reviews relevant to the volunteers position (meetings).
- ◆ to be dependable, cooperative, and accountable.
- ◆ to contribute constructively to the resolution of problems and conflicts.
- ◆ to value and express appreciation for the efforts and achievements of others.
- ◆ to accord all others respect, equal opportunity, and fair treatment.



- ◆ equal opportunity and consideration throughout recruitment, appointment, training and service.
- ◆ information concerning volunteer opportunities and appointments based on the volunteer's interests and capabilities.
- ◆ a written position description.
- ◆ an orientation to the Senior Center and the program to which the volunteer is assigned, and the training needed to carry out the responsibilities of the position.
- ◆ encouragement, guidance, and the resources necessary for successful performance.
- ◆ inclusion in the planning and decision making relevant to the volunteer's activities.
- ◆ respect, recognition, and appreciation for the volunteer's efforts and contributions.

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

POLICIES:

TRANSPORTATION:

Van transportation is available to any Newton Senior who wishes to come to the Center. We try to meet individual needs as to time of pick up and departure. Homebound seniors may be transported with the last departure at 3:45. Reservations must be made one day in advance. Each ride has a suggested donation of \$3 (round trip, \$6) and is paid with a pre-purchased voucher available from our administrative office. These can be purchased individually or in books of 20. Other transportation available through this program is explained on a separate sheet available from any staff person.

LUNCH:

The Newton Senior Center serves hot/ cold lunch choice on weekdays at 11:45. We ask that reservations be made by 11:00a.m. the previous day. If one is coming on a Monday this means call by 11:00a.m. Friday. These lunches have a suggested donation of \$1.75 each to be made confidentially *near* our “Lunch Check-in” table. A volunteer sits at this station until lunch is cleared. He/she takes new names, checks off reserved names and hand out tickets. Upon sign-in, each diner receives a ticket. No one is served without one. In this way, we can keep an accurate accounting of diner’s names. Those without reservations are asked to wait until those with reservations have been served. If we have enough food we will graciously serve those waiting.

FRONT DESK:

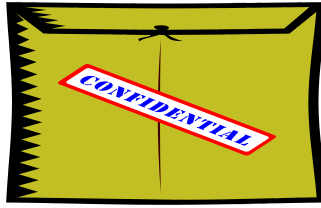
Every Senior Center participant (/visitor/ volunteer), is asked to swipe their card at the front reception desk (main entry at rear of building). This is done each day of attendance. New participants fill out an information form to have a swipe card made for them. Those without a card are entered into the system, manually. In this way, we will collect important data that will help us to answer questions asked by our funding sources.

DONATIONS, PAYMENTS, ETC.

The Newton Senior Center has many sources of funding and many costs attached to the successful running of such a Center. Because our costs and our expenditures are very close, we need to make clear that donations are needed from all. Those who cannot afford the suggested amounts are encouraged to give what they can, when they can. Volunteers are cautioned that any knowledge they may have concerning individuals and their donations, must remain confidential, as this is sensitive information and each individual’s right to privacy must be respected. *Volunteers, by definition, are not paid, and are therefore expected to make donations and payments as any other participant.*

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION:

The staff of the Senior Center has put together a list of “Guidelines for Participation” that provides a guideline for determining who is and is not an appropriate participant here. This was done with the understanding that our staffing cannot responsibly oversee those who are not at level of independence where their safety can be assured. These will be provided to any individual upon request.



CONFIDENTIALITY

Our volunteers have always been adept at dealing sensitively with participants. It is our aim to provide each participant with a sense of security derived from a policy of confidentiality and mutual respect. This is especially highlighted in our system of "resource and referral" when individuals may need to reveal themselves to get needed information. We maintain a master list and it is available for staff and volunteer purposes. Please maintain confidentiality. **Do not hand out names and addresses.** (If a situation arises take the name and number of the person calling and you make the contact for them. If you get permission you may exchange phone numbers.)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

1. Volunteers are considered unpaid employees and as such are accountable to State Ethics Commission Rulings.
2. Volunteers may not solicit paid clients for their services while at the Senior Center.
3. Volunteers may not hand out business cards while at the Center.
4. Volunteers may not advertise their services at the Senior Center or in Senior Center publications.
5. Volunteers may not offer information about their for profit services at the Senior Center.
6. Volunteers may not use their position to gain benefit others may not receive.

YOU COUNT!

Every day that you come to the center to volunteer, to participate, or both, it is very important that you "swipe-in"! Swipe cards are available through the receptionist or from Alice in the mezzanine office. If you do not have a card (lost, misplaced or not yet made up) we can put you into the system manually. What is most important is that we know you have been here and what you have done while here. This includes tracking the number of volunteer hours you have contributed.

WHY? Each quarter a report is generated that culminates in a yearly (annual) report. This cites the numbers of participants, the numbers of volunteer hours, etc. These reports are submitted to funding sources that want to know that the money they allot us is doing its job. Additionally it gives us information about what you want and what you need, so that we can serve you ever better. PLEASE remember to sign-in and remind others of the importance of this task.

One important factor in this is that many people use the front door, facing Walnut Street. They may forget or overlook the "swipe" machine located at the Main Entrance at the rear of the building.

Remind yourself and others to make sure that you are COUNTED!

(As with any technology, sometimes there are problems. If you cannot sign-in please find a staff person to assist you, or leave your name and information at the reception desk to be put into the system later.)

Volunteer Meetings

General Volunteer Meetings

Quarterly meetings are held for all volunteers. This is a time for discussion about Senior Center business and an opportunity to look at what is being planned for the future. All volunteers are welcome to attend these meetings.

Computer Teacher Meetings

These meetings are held periodically through the year. Discussion ranges from issues of hardware and software and curriculum to teaching methods. This is an open forum designed to allow teachers access to each other.

New Computer Center

The Earle Barcus Computer Center on the lower level of the senior center has a new look. The Grover and Richmond Rooms locked except when in use by our computer teaching program or our SHINE Representatives. The public may access the two computers in the hall. Our wireless access has been expanded to reach all parts of the building.

Receptionist Meetings

These meetings are held periodically to update the receptionists on new information they will need while at the front desk. This is also a time to raise questions and concerns and make suggestions. Scheduling concerns are addressed at this time.

Tax Aide Meetings

These are held twice annually. The Fall meeting is to organize for the upcoming tax season and the Spring meeting is to review how the season went.

Individual Teacher or Group Leader Meetings

These are arranged individually throughout the year to offer support and supervision pertaining to specific area of interest.

PAC Meetings

We now have a Participant Advisory Council that meets a few times year. This group is to act as a liaison between participants and staff thus offering yet another opportunity to hear the voice of the senior community. Anyone interested in being a part of this council should contact any staff person.

Volunteers are encouraged to contact the Program Coordinator at any time to discuss their volunteer work in a private meeting. All communications remain confidential unless otherwise requested.





Recruitment, Performance Evaluation, Retirement /Termination

Recruitment:

Volunteers come to the Newton Senior Center from many sources. The Program Coordinator advertises the need for volunteers with specific interests or skills (ie. Bridge Teacher, Lunch Server, etc.) in the monthly newsletter, local newspaper, local cable TV and Craig's List. Links with other volunteer resources are also employed- SOAR (Service Opportunities After Retirement and the city volunteer clearing house. Many volunteers seek out the center on their own.

Each potential volunteer is interviewed by the Program Coordinator to determine what job he/she will be assigned. The interview includes collection of pertinent personal information and screening for appropriate job placement. If volunteer is unfamiliar with the center, a tour is included. A CORI check is done through the Department of Human Resources. The volunteer is then, scheduled to begin training and work.

Performance Evaluation

The Program Coordinator and/or the immediate supervisor will review the volunteer's job performance as needed. If job performance issues arise, every effort will be made to address the issue: additional training, support or reasonable accommodations conducive to the volunteer position. If this need arises there will ongoing job review until problem is resolved, a new more suitable position found or retirement/ termination.

Retirement

The decision to retire may be one made solely by the volunteer or by the volunteer and the Program Coordinator, together. Sometimes the volunteer task becomes too taxing or complex for the volunteer and sometimes the job is eliminated due to changes in the center's operations or programs. The volunteer is encouraged to discuss this decision with the Program Coordinator in a confidential manner.

Volunteers who have given their time for one year or more are considered "volunteers emeritus" upon retirement. This is our way of saying thank you for your time and efforts. This entitles the volunteer to attend the annual Volunteer Appreciation Brunch and any other benefits open to volunteers.

Grievance

If a volunteer should have a grievance about anything pertaining to their volunteer service, they are encouraged to speak with the Program Coordinator and/ or immediate supervisor. If they prefer they can speak with the Director of the Department of Senior Services.

The Mayor's Office, through the Citizen's Assistance Officer, is always open to hear citizens grievances, as well.

LIST OF VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

1. **Lunch Program Volunteers** - Meal prep and serving and special events
2. **Lunch Check-in Desk**- greet lunch diners, take names, give out lunch tickets, take future reservations. Hours from 10:30 to 12:15, Monday through Friday.
3. **Water and Condiment Cart Manager**- Prepare water pitchers and cups and distribute to tables just before lunch is served. Circulate during lunch with condiment cart for diner's pleasure. Collect water pitchers and bring them to the kitchen after lunch to be washed and readied for next use.
4. **Coffee Table Manager**- Keep coffee table stocked and clean. Assist those needing help with hot drinks.
5. **Reception Volunteers** - Greeting, phone answering, resource and referral.
7. **Group Leaders or Teachers**- Computers, Arts, Languages, Writing, Bridge, Fitness, Music, etc. also, Bingo callers and other game leaders.
8. **Store Clerk**- Oversee inventory and display, sell items, record money taken in.
9. **SHINE Volunteers** - answer insurance questions and provide information.
10. **Tax Volunteers** - assist with preparation of tax forms
11. **Sunshine Volunteers** - send notes, cards as needed.
12. **Administrative Volunteers**- Assist with office duties including book-keeping, data entry, mailing preparation, etc.
13. **Sewing & Craft Volunteers**- Work both here and at home creating beautiful items to sell at our store.
14. **Knitting & Crocheting Volunteers**- All year long they create beautiful items to be distributed around the holidays. *Santa's helpers!*
15. **Band Volunteers**- Our Greater Newton Swing Band meets weekly at open rehearsals at the Center and then performs for the Center and other groups. They are about 15 musicians, dancers and vocalists.
16. **Performers**- musicians and vocalists that volunteer to entertain at lunch and special events.
17. **Low Vision Group Volunteers**- those who assist vision-impaired members of this group in attending meetings, negotiating the building and getting through lunch.
18. **PAC Members**- Participant Advisory Council members.
19. **Special projects**
20. **Miscellaneous**

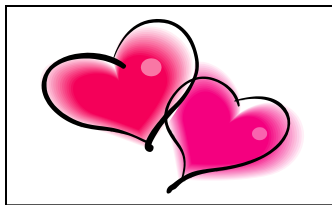
VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

VOLUNTEER TEACHERS OR PROGRAM LEADERS

- Will be supervised by Program Coordinator.
- Will agree upon a schedule and be responsible to alert supervisors when unable to attend.
- Will attend pertinent training and information meetings.
- Will be responsible for preparation of items and space needed, and will communicate with staff about program needs and changes.
- Will act in harmony with mission and goals of the Center.
- WILL BRING SENSE OF HUMOR!

ADMINISTRATIVE VOLUNTEERS

- Supervised by Administrative Coordinator.
- Will assist with the many office duties of the center (i.e. mailings, data collection, filing, etc)
- Will assist with money counting and tracking.
- Will communicate with supervisor about hours and work accomplished.
- Will respect confidentiality of information in the office.
- Will maintain a sense of humor!



LUNCH PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

- Primary supervisors are Lunch Site Managers from Springwell.
- Will assist in set-up, serving and clean up of daily hot lunch. Seating, reservation table, coffee table oversight.
- Will HAVE ASSIGNED TASKS DETERMINED BY THE SITE MANAGER.
- Will commit specific days and hours to work.
(Volunteers are expected to contact center when unable to work.)
- Will commit to attend volunteer meetings and training (no more than once a month).
- Will abide by the Health rules of Springwell, i.e. wearing gloves, kitchen etiquette, and etc.
- Will be sensitive to the needs of those being served.
- Will be a team worker
- WILL BRING SENSE OF HUMOR!



SENIOR STORE VOLUNTEERS

- Supervised by Program Coordinator
- Will keep store looking “appealing”
- Will price items with labels
- Will take in money and keep accurate records
- Will be sensitive and light-hearted in dealing with “customers”.
- Making money is secondary to offering people an opportunity for “window-shopping” and being friendly!



SEWING & CRAFT VOLUNTEERS

- Supervised by Program Coordinator
- Design and create items to sell at our store and for benefit of the group.
- May make items for personal use or special projects.
- Keeps sewing closet and machines maintained.
- Knit, crochet and sew throughout the year at the Center and at home making items for Holiday Gifts for designated groups
- Use our materials or other found materials.
- BIG HEART

Low-Vision Volunteers

- Supervised by Program Coordinator
- Will communicate schedule changes.
- Will be available to assist the vision-impaired attending monthly meetings to enter the building, find, meeting, attend lunch, depart.
- Will communicate with support group leader about concerns and special needs.
- Sense of humor.

Performers

- Communicate directly with Program Coordinator about scheduling, performance aids (ie. microphones, etc.)
- Sense of humor.

PAC Members

- Agree to bring their concerns and suggestions to the meetings held on an agreed upon schedule.
- Recognize that their job is to highlight issues that may arise.
- They are not a policymaking body.

Special Projects

- Volunteer will be assigned task(s) related to special project.
- Will work alone or with others.
- Program coordinator or other appropriate staff person will supervise.
- Typically a short term commitment is required.
- Sense of humor required!

TAX VOLUNTEERS

- Supervised by Regional Supervisor from AARP.
- Tested and trained through a program administered by AARP & the IRS.
- Assist seniors with preparation of tax forms.
- Commit to a schedule and communicate with staff about room usage and schedule changes. (February through April)
- HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR.

SWING BAND VOLUNTEERS

- Led by volunteer leader who is supervised by program coordinator.
- Meet every Tuesday afternoon for practice
- Team player. Willing to act in best interest of the group.
- Willing to do performances as booked.
- SENSE OF HUMOR

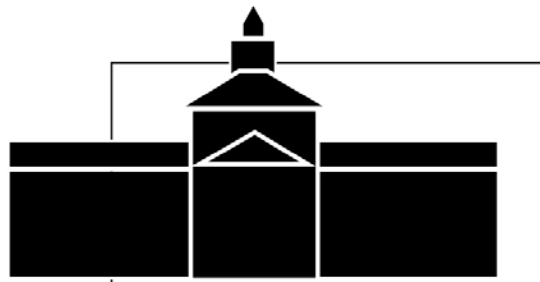
RECEPTION VOLUNTEERS

- Supervised by Administrative Coordinator.
- Meet and greet visitors to the center.
- Maintain daily event board.
- Answer phones and transfer calls.
- Take registration for various programs.
- Answer “general” questions when possible.
- Oversee use of swipe cards, take information to create new ones.
- Communicate with staff regularly.
- Attend reception volunteer meetings.
- Commit to schedule and keep staff informed of changes.
- Have a sense of humor.



**City of Newton
Department of Senior Services**

Newton Council on Aging



The Senior Center