

Volunteer Handbook



NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Georgetown Village

Office is located at
1801 35th Street NW
Suite 102
Washington DC 20007

Lynn Golub-Rofrano, MSW
Executive Director
202-999-8988
lynn@georgetown-village.org

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 3563
Washington DC 20027
www.georgetown-village.org



Message from the Executive Director

Dear Georgetown Village Volunteer,

Georgetown Village opened our doors for members to receive services on December 5, 2011, with 130 members. We currently have about 170 members and we have filled close to 4,000 service requests as of this publication. *The success of our village is the result of the enthusiasm and helpfulness of our volunteers!*

Georgetown Village runs on a Volunteer-First model of service provision. This means we attempt to find a volunteer to assist our members, prior to referring them to a paid professional service provider. *Our very important and cherished volunteers are vital to making this model work for our members!*

Volunteering for the Georgetown Village will look different for every volunteer. You each bring unique skills, abilities, and experiences to your role as a volunteer and I encourage you to get involved and freely share your skills with our members. Whether you are able to install software, change a light bulb, walk a dog, water a plant, make a daily phone call, drive a member, etc. you are a valued and important part of our Village community.

This handbook will explain the values and principles that are the foundation upon which Georgetown Village has been created. Please take the time to read this over and keep it handy as a tool to answer your questions. We have also included a resource section with tips for working with older adults. Of course, you can always call the office with any questions and we are happy to help in any way we can. The standards and policies that are included in this manual apply to our volunteers, our Board of Directors, Advisory Board, officers and staff.

We work with you to find and ensure good matches for your skills, abilities and interests. Please remember that volunteering should be a rewarding experience and if, at any point, a requested assignment does not fall into this category you should immediately decline the volunteer opportunity. We promise we will call you again, and hopefully with something that will better fit your schedule and interests.

We are very grateful to you for offering your time and talents to our Village members and playing such an important role in the creation and success of Georgetown Village! Years from now, when you look back at the experiences you have had as a Village volunteer, you will realize you were part of establishing a new norm for seniors who desire to remain in their homes and age in their community. As a way to thank you for all your help you are invited to participate in Georgetown Village activities and programs and you will receive our weekly email blast to keep you informed of these opportunities.

The Village movement is a sharing and giving community and we want to thank the many Villages who have helped us along the way, including Capitol Hill Village, Ashbury Village, Gramatan Village and Beacon Hill Village for sharing their resources and knowledge so generously! We are also extremely grateful to have the support and partnership with Iona Senior Services and Deb Rubinstein, who provided much of the helpful information for working with seniors.

With Gratitude,

Lynn Golub-Rofrano
Executive Director

Joan Kennan and Toni Russin
Co-Chairs Volunteer Committee



Volunteer Code of Ethics

- 1 As a volunteer I realize that I am subject to a code of ethics. I assume responsibilities and will be accountable for any ethical breaches.
- 2 I will observe, protect, and maintain confidentiality regarding Village members. When I tell the stories of the rewarding volunteer work I do, I will do so without any identifying information, such as gender, age, address, career or any other personal identifying information. Our Privacy Policy is included in this manual.
- 3 I realize that volunteering should be a rewarding experience and I promise not to overburden myself by accepting assignments I will later resent having to complete.
- 4 I interpret “volunteer” to mean that I have agreed to work without monetary or in-kind compensation, but having been accepted as a volunteer, I expect to do my work according to Georgetown Village standards, just as paid staff are expected to do their work to the same standards.
- 5 I plan to find out how I can best perform the activity for which I have volunteered and to offer as much as I can appropriately give, but no more, while always maintaining Georgetown Village members’ interests as my primary focus.
- 6 I will refrain from offering medical, legal, or financial advice to Georgetown Village members.
- 7 I will avoid any activity that may be construed as a conflict of interest and I will not accept any gifts or loans from village members.
- 8 I will respect the cultural, religious, and political views of Georgetown Village members and refrain from imposing my own cultural, religious, or political views on members.
- 9 I realize that I must live up to my promises, and therefore, will be careful to only commit to those activities for which I am qualified and available.
- 10 I understand that all Georgetown Village volunteer assignments will be issued from the office, and I will not accept any personal requests from Village members.



Privacy Policy

Georgetown Village respects the privacy of its members, volunteers, officers and staff, and adheres to the following privacy principles:

- To protect the confidentiality of personal information about individuals including; age, gender, address, career, or any other personal identifying information.
- To collect personal information directly from the individual concerned, or with the knowledge and consent of that individual.
- To inform each person of the purpose and use of requested personal information.
- To collect only personal information that is necessary to accomplish the purpose for which it is intended.
- To prohibit the sale or rental of personal information to third parties.
- To request Georgetown Village recommended fee-for-service providers respect the confidentiality of members' personal information.
- To delete or shred sensitive personal information from its records once such information, in the discretion of Georgetown Village is no longer needed.
- To enable individuals to update or correct their personal records at their request.

This policy is available as a PDF for staff, volunteers and service providers.



Volunteer Program Policies

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Volunteers are our ambassadors in the community. We value the role you play in spreading the word about the Village among your neighbors and friends. We encourage you to share your positive experiences with your friends and neighbors, in a confidential manner, and to share any concerns you might have about members with our Executive Director and any programmatic concerns with a member of our board.

We request feedback in a timely manner from our members and from volunteers after each service is provided. This feedback from the member includes reviews of services received as well as anything else our members would like to share about the experience. Volunteers should provide feedback after the provision of the service, including observations about any changes in the health or environment of the member as well as any concerns about the member.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

Volunteers should adhere to the rules and policies as discussed in the Volunteer training and written in this handbook and the volunteer code of ethics. Working closely with the Executive Director, and office staff, volunteers are expected to:

- Decline gifts or tips that may be offered
- Attend training sessions and volunteer meetings
- Accept volunteer service requests only from GV Office
- Consult with the Executive Director, or office staff before assuming new responsibilities
- Be prompt and reliable when reporting for a volunteer assignment
- Treat members with courtesy, respect and kindness
- Offer members a friendly smile and sympathetic ear when providing volunteer services
- Notify the Georgetown Village office as soon as possible when unable to fulfill a scheduled assignment
- Protect confidential information including age, gender, address, career, or any other personal identifying information.

CAVEATS

Volunteers often come into close personal contact with Georgetown Village members, as they provide transportation, help with minor in-home repairs, work in yards, and offer technical expertise. Volunteers should avoid performing personal services that require close personal contact. Such requests should be discussed with the Executive Director who may refer the member to a professional vendor for personal care. It is important to understand that physically assisting aging and frail members can endanger the member if the volunteer is not a health professional who has been trained to perform those functions. Volunteers should also be careful not to offer advice about a member's health or safety.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a Georgetown Village member or another volunteer. Such information should not be shared outside the organization during informal conversations with friends, or inside the organization with other volunteers.

Our Privacy Policy is included in this handbook, and should be reviewed so it is familiar before performing any services.

REPRESENTATION OF THE ORGANIZATION

Volunteers should not act on behalf of or make statements representing the official position of Georgetown Village unless they have been authorized to do so by the Executive Director or an officer of the Board of Directors. For example, volunteers should not make statements to the press or broadcast media without prior authorization. No volunteer is ever authorized to sign any agreement involving contractual or financial obligations.

Volunteer service at Georgetown Village should not become a burden. Volunteers should feel free to accept or decline particular assignments, depending upon their personal schedules and commitments. Volunteers are welcome to serve on a regular, periodic or sporadic basis — we appreciate any help you can give our members within the confines of your personal schedule!



Becoming a Volunteer

ELIGIBILITY

Georgetown Village invites all residents of the community who share in our belief in the mission of this organization to serve as volunteers. Many Georgetown Village members are also volunteers, but it is not necessary to become a member in order to serve and our success as a Village is largely due to the multi-generational make-up of our volunteer corps. Volunteer applicants must attend a training or orientation session and complete the application process, including participating in the background check before being officially accepted into the Georgetown Village volunteer program.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

All Georgetown Village staff and volunteers are required to successfully complete a background check. Georgetown Village uses Intellicorp, a third party provider for this purpose, and the Village pays for the cost of the background check. These checks are overseen by the Executive Director. Volunteer drivers will also have a check of their motor vehicle records completed. Volunteers who are unable to give permission for these checks will not be able to provide volunteer services to our members.

PLACEMENT

Volunteers are asked to take on assignments that coincide with their particular interests and abilities as well as the needs of the organization and its members. Please share any hobbies or interests you have with the office so we can try to provide you with volunteer assignments that suit your interests and skills. Volunteers are free to discuss a change in assignment at any time they feel a change is necessary or desirable.

BOUNDARIES

Boundaries are what makes volunteers different from friends or family. While it is important to be sincere and show compassion, it is also necessary to set appropriate boundaries. When you do not set such boundaries and you are emotionally and physically involved helping an older adult your

risk for burn out is great. In order to maintain a healthy relationship with the member you are assisting it is helpful to follow these suggestions:

- Avoid thinking the member is your responsibility
- Learn to say no
- Be on the lookout for member becoming too dependent on you as a volunteer
- Remain compassionate but do not immerse yourself in difficult situations or try to solve the member's problems when they share their difficulties with you

SIGNALS THAT YOU ARE CROSSING BOUNDARIES INCLUDE:

- You lose objectivity, become resentful or easily hurt by a member's comments or you become overly attached to a member.
- You feel stressed about your visits or depressed after spending time with the member
- You feel that you want to take over the member's responsibilities
- You are not comfortable saying no to a member who asks you to volunteer without going through the GV office

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Volunteer Drivers use their own insurance coverage when driving their own automobiles. Gas and mileage are deductible charitable contributions for income tax purposes. These expenses will not be reimbursed by Georgetown Village. Any parking fees that are incurred should be paid by the member.

RECORDS OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Volunteers should keep a record of each time they perform an assignment for Georgetown Village. Accurate and up to date records are important to Georgetown Village and the volunteer. This record can be verified by the office and used for proof of tax deduction for gas and mileage to and from an assignment. Please be sure to let the office know how much time you have spent on an assignment so that we have an accurate record of the amount of volunteer hours being provided to our members.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

Georgetown Village holds regular meetings and offers educational opportunities for our volunteers to learn more about the services we provide and further educate themselves to be better informed and prepared to assist our members.

Georgetown Village holds an annual Volunteer recognition event to highlight and reward the contributions of volunteers to the organization's programs. This event also offers our volunteers the opportunity to get to know each other and allows the volunteers to share ideas to improve Georgetown Village.

Our volunteers are also invited to participate in Georgetown Village programs and activities at the same cost as members as a thank you for their time and effort.

Georgetown Village reserves the right to take photos at activities, events, and meetings of people and groups associated with the Village and use those photos for promotional or marketing purposes, unless you have expressly informed us that you do not want your likeness used in this way.

RESIGNATION

Volunteer assignments are not permanent. A volunteer may decide to stop volunteering at any time. Volunteers are asked to inform the Georgetown Village office and to give as much notice as possible if resigning or interrupting the volunteer assignment for a brief or extended period of time. To help Georgetown Village grow and learn from its experiences, volunteers are asked to participate in an exit review before leaving the volunteer program.

If you are not enjoying a particular volunteer assignment, or working with a particular Georgetown Village member please let us know and we will find someone else to work that assignment and find you an assignment you will enjoy more.

TERMINATION

Georgetown Village may dismiss a volunteer if he or she fails to fulfill the duties of the position and/or fails to meet the basic standards of professionalism set by the organization and judged essential for the success of the Village. Grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: misconduct, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while serving as a volunteer, theft of property or misuse of the organization's equipment or materials, verbal or physical abuse of member, attempting to personally profit from members, or breach of confidentiality.



Volunteer Opportunities

TRANSPORTATION

Volunteer drivers pick up members, drive them to appointments and return them to their homes. Drivers are needed for regularly scheduled trips, periodic trips, and last minute trips. When appropriate the volunteer driver will assist the member to and from the front door of his or her house or apartment and help carry packages into the home. When driving some of our older or frailer members, volunteers will also be asked to pick up a volunteer companion to accompany the member to their appointment.

Trip destinations typically include:

- Grocery stores
- Doctor's offices
- Georgetown Village meetings or activities
- Shopping destinations including nurseries, big box stores, etc.
- Other destinations as requested by Georgetown Village members

TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Volunteers are needed to assist members with technology and computer usage. Members enjoy the benefits of technology but need assistance mastering some of the tools.

Some examples of requested assistance:

- Providing technical support for computers, cell phones, DVDs, TVs, Cable Modems, etc.
- Installing new computers or modems
- Training on new technology — i.e. cell phones, ipads, laptops, etc.
- Setting up sound bars or surround sound for TVs
- Assisting members with shopping online
- Purchasing airfare or other items for members online
- Teaching members how to use social media
- Setting up wireless networks in homes
- Assisting members creating photobooks or holiday cards

IN HOME ASSISTANCE

Many routine activities become difficult or impossible for members as they grow older, and help with what were once simple household chores can mean the difference between a day of frustration and one of accomplishment. Volunteers can help with tasks like those listed below; or may serve in a consultant capacity, by providing information and advice, discussing the need for home maintenance and repair, for example, and assisting members when they are meeting with vendors.

Service requests can include:

- Changing light bulbs
- Flipping mattresses
- Moving furniture or rugs
- Hanging curtains
- Putting up or taking down holiday decorations
- Making simple home repairs
- Raking, sweeping, or shoveling walks

CONVENIENCE SERVICES

At times a member may be capable of performing a particular task but simply unable to do so because of multiple commitments, family emergencies, scheduling problems, out-of-town travel, or some other reason.

Volunteers are needed to help with:

- Mailing packages
- Shopping for members — picking up groceries or prescriptions
- Reviewing/renewing government required documents
- Picking up or returning books to the library
- Preparing occasional meals
- Organizing files and paperwork
- Checking on homes while a member is away
- Waiting for a delivery or service repairman (at times with a member)
- Temporary dog walking
- Picking up mail or newspapers

GARDENING ADVICE AND HELP

While Georgetown Village will recommend a professional service provider for major gardening or landscaping work, we welcome volunteers who are themselves avid gardeners, willing to share their expertise and experience, and to help with small gardening chores.

Some examples of this would be:

- Watering indoor plants or outdoor gardens
- Weeding and planting
- Bringing large plants outside for the summer or inside for the winter
- Recommending plants that are aesthetically pleasing and do well in our area
- Spring or fall yard clean-ups

MEDICAL AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Georgetown Village will offer interested volunteers specialized training in order to help them assist our members during doctor visits. Volunteers can also help members assemble and organize medical history information in preparation for working with health-care professionals.

Medical and family support work might include:

- Friendly visits in a member's home
- Becoming a Chat Buddy — making daily phone calls to isolated members
- Helping prepare members for a hospital stay
- Serving as a med-pal/friendly companion in a medical setting during doctor's visits or hospital stays
- Taking notes for members during doctor appointments
- Organizing medical records and tax-related medical bills
- Helping file paperwork for medical cost reimbursement

OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Many of us have worked in a business office at some point in our careers, performed organizational and administrative tasks, and acquired skills that are essential to the functioning of an efficient organization. If that has been your experience, we need your help!

Office volunteers will be trained for their particular assignments, which may include:

- Answering phones
- Contacting members and volunteers to schedule appointments
- Bookkeeping and filing
- Data entry
- Managing the website and social media
- Follow up with member or volunteers after a service request is completed
- Calling members to inform them of upcoming programs and tracking rsvps
- Contacting and vetting Professional Service Providers
- Community outreach

SERVING ON GEORGETOWN VILLAGE COMMITTEES

GV's success is based on the hardwork of our committees. These committees are made up of board members and volunteers and we hope you will get involved with one of them to assist with:

- Fundraising efforts including soliciting individuals and businesses, grant writing, etc.
- Membership recruitment
- Volunteer recruitment
- Writing for the newsletter or other publications
- Planning and assisting with special events
- Planning and organizing programs, outings, or lectures for Georgetown Village members and volunteers



Volunteer Resources

RED FLAGS



As an outside visitor, a volunteer may be the first to notice a member's uncharacteristic behavior, unkempt appearance or bizarre expressions.

These may indicate serious underlying problems. In the elderly population, extreme anger, hostility and agitation could indicate emotional, mental or physical ailments. Marked personality changes are not a normal part of aging and are likely to be indicative of a problem.

The following is a partial list of **Red Flags**. These are some of the changes in behavior that may indicate members are in need of additional help.

Contact the office at **202-999-8988** if you observe the following:

- Changes in mood
- Confusion or disorientation
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Changes in physical health
- Neglect of personal hygiene
- Dangerous or unhygienic living situation
- Suicidal thoughts or wishes

GUIDELINES FOR AN EMERGENCY



If an emergency occurs when you are with a member it is important that you remain calm. Focus on helping the Member and on notifying the proper authorities that can render assistance.

If a Member has an Accident:

- If the Member is unconscious or incapacitated do not try to move the member except in a hazardous situation such as a fire. Call **911** immediately for emergency assistance and then call the GV office.
- Only drive a member to a hospital if instructed to do so by a doctor.
- If you think emergency hospitalization is needed always call **911**.



If a member does not answer a door within a reasonable amount of time follow the following procedures:

- Try calling the member on the phone
- Check the premises, look in the windows, and try the door. **Do not go in.**
- Contact a neighbor or building manager if you can find someone.
- Call the Georgetown Village office for assistance **202-999-8988.**
- If you are concerned or see something that looks out of the ordinary call **911** and explain the circumstances. False alarms are always preferable to ignored emergencies.

NEVER attempt to handle an emergency situation on your own. Always telephone 911 immediately. Be sure to notify GV office if an emergency has occurred.

HOW TO ASSIST WITH TRANSPORTATION



- Safety is the primary concern. Yes, we are all very experienced, careful drivers but acting as a volunteer driver puts an extra responsibility on our shoulders. Professional drivers, and you should now consider yourself a professional, do nothing else when they drive — no distractions, no wandering thoughts.
- The comfort of the member is a close second. This includes an awareness of any weaknesses or disabilities that the passenger might have. Nervous or stressed passengers require extra care.
- Seat belt use is mandatory by law. Cheerfully offer to assist in belting up if the passenger appears to be having problems.
- Confirm the ride with the member prior to the day of the appointment.
- Confirm the time and destination address and get a sense of the amount of time for the appointment.
- If you are returning to pick up the member exchange cell phone numbers
- Arrive on time, call if a delay is anticipated
- Ask the passenger if you may assist them in and out of your vehicle. If assistance is declined, consider standing and walking close by if you judge that there is a possibility that light assistance might be needed.

HOW TO ASSIST WITH SHOPPING



- Call to arrange a specific day for shopping and call to confirm your plans – both the time and the destination
- Have a clear plan, including the number of errands you are willing to complete and stick to it
- Offer to assist the member in carrying the packages into the home if shopping for the member

If shopping for the member:

- Make a shopping list that includes brand names, quantities and sizes – review the list before leaving to anticipate problems and questions
- Ask the member what to do if the preferred item is not in stock – should you get another brand or skip the purchase?
- Find out if price is important-for example if you notice a less expensive brand should you buy it instead
- For your protection, write out a receipt for any cash you receive from the member prior to shopping. Note the amount of the purchase and the amount of change on the receipt. Upon your return, present the receipt along with any change

When you return from shopping, ask the member if you can assist with unpacking and storing purchases. A few minutes of your time may be just as valuable as the shopping assistance you have provided.



HELPFUL HINTS FOR WORKING WITH SENIORS

Some of this material was adapted from Iona Senior Services Handouts and Capital City Village Volunteer Handbook

ASSISTING MEMBERS WHILE WALKING WITH THEM



- Always ask Members to tell you exactly what to do to assist them – don't assume you know what would be best for them.
- Make sure that if a member has walking aids they are within their reach.
- When escorting members always offer your arm and never grab onto them.
- Be familiar with the features of the Member's wheelchairs or walkers as well as their capacity to manage without assistance.



- If a member does not need your help encourage independence as members prefer not to be viewed as helpless
- Remember to lock a wheelchair or walker in place if a member is moving from a standing to a sitting position.

WORKING WITH MEMBERS WHO ARE HEARING IMPAIRED



Difficulty hearing is a common part of the aging process for many seniors. There is a good chance that as you interact with some of our members you will meet some who have difficulty hearing. Here are some suggestions for working with the hearing impaired:

- Be sure that you have the hearing impaired individual's attention before speaking.
- Politely ask the individual if there's something you can do which will help them to hear and understand you.
- Speak slowly, clearly, and more loudly than you usually do. Allow the person enough time to understand what you are saying and to respond. If the senior does not understand what you are saying try rephrasing the thought with different words.
- Avoid chewing gum or speaking with your mouth full.
- Be sure your face and lips can be seen clearly. Keep your hands away from your face while speaking and use body language and hand gestures. Some individuals with hearing impairments will rely on your facial expressions, tone of voice and simple lip reading to understand what you're saying.
- Face the person you are speaking to, be within five feet and on the same level. Most people with hearing impairments will have an ear in which they can hear better. Try to direct your voice towards this ear.
- If there is a great deal of background noise making it difficult for the senior to understand you, move to another location, or turn off the source of distracting sounds such as a television, radio, appliances, etc.
- Don't assume a person can hear you just because they are wearing a hearing aid. While aids can make sounds louder, they do not necessarily make them clearer. If you have reason to believe a hearing aid is not working properly, please alert the Village office.

WORKING WITH MEMBERS WHO ARE VISUALLY IMPAIRED



The number of people who experience loss of vision is increasing with the proportion of aging individuals in our population. Here are some guidelines to review with a visually impaired member:

- Don't be afraid to talk with the member with low-vision or vision impairment about what they are able to perceive and distinguish. The member is the first expert you should consult to guide you in understanding what aid they might require.
- Pay attention to light sources in the area. Avoid standing between a light source and the member you are visiting. Make sure there is adequate lighting. The average 80 year old person needs three times more light than a 29 year old person does to see well enough to read.
- Always make your presence known and identify yourself and others around the visually impaired person. Politely inform the senior when others enter the room, or make meaningful hand gestures.
- Just as you make your presence known when you arrive, make sure the member knows when you are stepping away from the room, or when you are leaving their company.
- Being visually impaired does not usually lead to being hearing impaired as well, but many people unconsciously raise their voices when speaking to the visually impaired. Try to avoid doing this.
- Speak directly to the member you are volunteering with in your normal manner. Don't omit words like "see" and "look". The visually impaired person understands that these words are parts of normal conversations.
- When walking be sure to describe where you are going and any changes in ground level such as steps, or texture such as movement from a tile floor to a carpeted one. Never pull or grab at someone in order to guide them or gain their attention!

WORKING WITH MEMBERS WHO HAVE MOBILITY DIFFICULTIES OR USE WHEELCHAIRS



- Always ask a member to tell you exactly what you need to do and how, in order to best assist them
- Some of our members need the assistance of canes, crutches, a walker or a wheelchair. Please make sure that they are in easy reach of the member.
- When escorting someone, ask them if they would like to take your arm, stand slightly ahead of them, and proceed at their pace. Never have them walk in front of you.
- If you are aiding a member who uses a walker, make sure they do not try to use the walker to pull themselves up. When a member using a walker rises from a chair, offer to support them by placing your hand on their upper arm.
- Members who use canes and walkers often need assistance carrying handbags, coats, or any other objects that may complicate the member's ability to use the walker or cane. Please offer to carry items for them.
- If you are assisting someone who uses a wheelchair, be familiar with the features of the wheelchair as well as the member's capabilities. If the member does not need you to push the wheelchair, do not insist, rather encourage their independence.
- Don't lean on a member's wheelchair. It is part of their personal body space.
- If your conversation with the member lasts more than a few minutes, consider sitting down or kneeling to get yourself on the same eye level as the member in the wheelchair.
- Remember to engage the wheelchair locks before transferring the person to and from the chair and any time the chair is stationary. When pushing a wheelchair around curbs or changes in ground level use the tipping levers at the bottom rear of the chairs.
- If there is an alternative to climbing up or down stairs use it! Experts suggest that seniors with mobility difficulties use their "stronger" leg or side to lead them up stairs and their "weaker leg or side to lead them down steps.



REMINISCENCE AND ACTIVE LISTENING

Actively listening to our members encourages reminiscence and can lead to mutually rewarding conversations and relationships. Reminiscence is a way of re-living or savoring events of the past that are personally significant.

People of all ages find reminiscence to be enjoyable and even therapeutic because it reinforces our sense of identity and helps us maintain self-esteem. Many people find that “trips down memory lane” gives them a sense of achievement or status. Others find that looking at both the positive and negative aspects of their lives in perspective allows them to build a bridge between past and present experiences.

Asking the members open ended questions and actively listening to their responses is a good way to enjoy your conversations with our members and to help them as well.

ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES:

① Pay attention.

One goal of active listening is to set a comfortable tone and allow time and opportunity for the other person to think and speak. Pay attention to your frame of mind as well as your body language. Be focused on the moment and operate from a place of respect.

② Withhold judgment.

Active listening requires an open mind. As a listener and a leader, you need to be open to new ideas, new perspectives and new possibilities. Even when good listeners have strong views, they suspend judgment, hold their criticism and avoid arguing or selling their point right away.

③ Reflect.

Learn to mirror the other person's information and emotions by paraphrasing key points. Don't assume that you understand correctly or that the other person knows you've heard him. Reflecting is a way to indicate that you and your counterpart are on the same page.

④ Clarify.

Don't be shy to ask questions about any issue that is ambiguous or unclear. Open-ended, clarifying and probing questions are important tools. They draw people out and encourage them to expand their ideas, while inviting reflection and thoughtful response.

⑤ Summarize.

Restating key themes as the conversation proceeds confirms and solidifies your grasp of the other person's point of view. It also helps both parties to be clear on mutual responsibilities and follow-up. Briefly summarize what you have understood as you listened, and ask the other person to do the same.

⑥ Share.

Active listening is first about understanding the other person, then about being understood. As you gain a clearer understanding of the other person's perspective, you can then introduce your ideas, feelings and suggestions. You might talk about a similar experience you had or share an idea that was triggered by a comment made previously in the conversation.

QUESTIONS TO HELP STIMULATE CONVERSATIONS DURING ASSIGNMENTS:

Older adults with or without cognitive impairments often enjoy discussing stories or facts about their lives. Here are examples of questions that you can ask to help “spark” memories or stimulate conversations.

- ? Where did you live as a child? What do you remember about your childhood? What did you want to be when you grew up?
- ? Did you have siblings? How many? Who were you closest to in your family? What kind of things did you do together?
- ? Did you have hobbies? What were they? Do you still have the same hobbies?
- ? What was your first job?
- ? What has been your life work? How did you get into this work? If you had to do it over again would you choose the same life work? Why or why not?
- ? What is the best or worst trip you ever took?
- ? What is the most exciting thing that ever happened to you?
- ? Who is the most famous person you have ever met or seen?
- ? What is the most valuable lesson you ever learned? What is a lesson you wish you had learned earlier in life?
- ? What are you most proud of accomplishing in your life?



Volunteer Handbook

Contact Information and Office Hours

Georgetown Village (GV) is open Monday through Friday. The office is staffed Monday through Thursdays from 10 am-6 pm. We often have trips and other activities out of the office on Fridays. Since we have a very small staff, please call before coming by the office to be sure we are not in a meeting or visiting another member, and that we are available to meet with you. Our office phone number is 202-999-8988. Please note you can not send texts to this number, it is a landline phone number. You can email lynn@georgetown-village.org if it is not convenient for you to call.

The office is closed on Federal Holidays:

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday	Columbus Day
Presidents' Day	Veteran's Day
Memorial Day	Thanksgiving Day
Independence Day	Christmas Day

Georgetown Village Mission Statement

Georgetown Village Inc., a 501 (c)(3) non-profit membership organization providing services and activities to help residents 55 years and over to live longer and better in their homes in Georgetown, Burleith and nearby neighborhoods.

