

To: Ms. Darla Lee, Volunteer Coordinator

From: Joanne Ho, Volunteer

Date: June 30, 2016

Subject: *Proposal for Determining the Feasibility of Increasing Volunteer Recruitment into the Rehabilitation Recreation Program at Minoru Residence*

Introduction

Recreational activities are a form of therapy for many residents at senior residential care facilities. According to the Nova Scotia Health Authority and many health professionals, recreation therapy benefits people of all ages (Capital Health, 2016) by elevating one's emotional wellbeing and confidence, while reducing one's feeling of isolation. Such benefits are especially valuable to the dependent elderly who are adapting to a new living environment. Disengagement from recreation activities and social relationships may be linked to the development of depression and anxiety (Hutchinson, 2011).

As many recreational activities in the program require a large staff for smooth operation, Minoru Residence relies heavily on volunteer help to run a number of activities. However, for the past few months, the recreation staff often found themselves struggling to carry out certain activities due to the declining number of volunteers in the program. Several reasons account for this situation, with the main one being the facility's general decline in the total number of volunteers.



Figure 1: A resident from Minoru Residence having photo sessions with Hawaiian Hula Dance performers, organized by the Rehabilitation Recreation program.

Source: From Waialele Wai Wai Hawaiian Hula Dance in Vancouver,

<http://waialelewaiwai.com/2014/05/19/minoru-residence/>

Statement of Problem

With the decreased number of volunteers, the recreation staff can no longer conduct certain activities for the senior residents as well as before. Such activities may involve a large group of individuals (such as in bowling competitions), or may be based on one-on-one visits between a volunteer and a resident (such as in personal outings). Because the operations of certain activities are negatively affected, the quality of life of certain residents has also deteriorated. Without their favourite activities to look forward to, seniors may begin to develop mental health problems, such as depression. They may even lose their sense of connection to the community as they become socially excluded. Even in a younger population, those with poor social connectedness are 2-3 times more likely to experience depressive symptoms compared to those who report stronger social networks (Hutchinson, 2011).

Proposed Solution

One of the more reliable solutions is to increase the number of general volunteers at Minoru Residence. With more volunteers, the recreation staff can ask for extra help whenever they need. As a result, a larger variety of recreational activities can be provided to the seniors. To promote the recruitment of volunteers at this facility, the volunteer resources department can consider reaching out to certain post secondary schools in an attempt to evoke interest in students curious about a career in health care facilities.

Scope

To assess the feasibility of recruitment of volunteers through post secondary schools, I plan to pursue the following areas of inquiry:

1. What proportion of post-secondary students are curious about a career in health care?
2. What is the best way to attract volunteers interested in residential care?
3. What proportion of such students have trouble seeking volunteer positions at a residential care facility even though they are interested?
4. Which sector (i.e. recreation rehabilitation, physical rehabilitation, one-on-one visits) of the senior resident care facility are such students most interested in volunteering for?
5. For what reason do current volunteers resign their positions?

Methods

My primary data sources will include interviews with the current staff members and volunteers at Minoru Residence regarding the areas of inquiry. In addition to people currently involved with the facility, I will also gather information from potential volunteers from post-secondary schools by implementing online surveys. The collected information is cost-free and simple to obtain. The data can be compiled and analyzed to identify the possible problems in the current volunteer recruitment system, which may be the cause of the declining number of interested participants.

Secondary sources will include statistics provided by the Canadian government, which gives reliable numbers regarding the demographics of the volunteering population. This will help us determine the best place to seek for potential volunteer candidates.

My Qualifications

Being a volunteer at Minoru Residence for the past two years has allowed me to familiarize myself with the recruitment process. Because I understand how the volunteer team operates, I am able to answer many questions that my respondents may have. As a fourth year science student with a full-time research assistant position, I am aware of the research process and the proper interaction required with study participants. My experiences will allow me to carry out this feasibility study smoothly and effortlessly.

Conclusion

We should take action on this situation before the residents' quality of life declines any further. By taking steps to learn about the root of the problem through the areas of inquiry addressed in this proposal, we will be able to determine the feasibility of the recruitment of volunteers from post-secondary schools. With more volunteers in the residential care facility, the recreation program will finally have enough help to operate larger activities to improve the wellbeing of the seniors. With your approval, I will begin research at once.

Source:

Baird, Robert. "Recreation Therapy – Mental Health." *Capital Health*. n.d. Web. 29 Jun. 2016. Capital health, 2016. <<http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/recreation-therapy-mental-health>>

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Turcotte, M. *Volunteering and charitable giving in Canada*. Minister of Industry. 30 Jan. 2015. Web. 11 Jul. 2016. <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2015001-eng.pdf>>

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