



Volunteer Handbook

*Stay Independent * Stay Active * Stay Connected*

545 Tompkins Ave.
Mamaroneck, NY 10543
(914) 899-3150
Website: Athomeonthesound.org
Email: director@athomeonthesound.org

*Volunteer Handbook
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Message from the Executive Director

Early in 2008, a group of residents began meeting to explore how they might help each other age successfully. They learned about Beacon Hill Village, the first among what is now a network of more than 65 villages nationwide (with more than 100 in development). A Steering Committee was created and met for nearly two years. At Home on the Sound was incorporated, received not for profit, 501 © (3) status and opened its doors for service in May 2010.

With the first wave of baby-boomers now turning sixty-five, retirement is much in the news, and the concept of aging in place has received a good deal of attention. An AARP poll revealed that most seniors today would rather stay in their own homes than move to retirement homes or communities. But family members may live in different parts of the country, and children and other extended-family members may not be close enough to help aging seniors realize that goal. Even when adult children live nearby they are often too busy to help much; and seniors are reluctant to become a burden to their own children or relatives.

At Home on the Sound volunteer coordinator, Pat Hachey will work with you to find and ensure matches between your interests and abilities and the needs of our members from the Larchmont & Mamaroneck Community. Many members are also volunteers. *At Home* maintains liability insurance that offers some protection to our volunteers, but volunteer drivers must carry their own automobile insurance.

We are deeply grateful to you for the time and talent that you provide to help our members get where they need to go, participate in social activities, make new friends, gain access to local resources and merchants, and feel safe and confident in their community as they grow older.

Elaine Weingarten
Executive Director
September, 2014

INTRODUCTION TO THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

GOALS OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

1. To support the mission of At Home on the Sound by providing quality services to members and the organization.
2. To employ a “volunteer-first” policy, seeking a qualified volunteer to fulfill a member’s request before contacting a service provider.
3. To nurture and build community by developing connections among members and volunteers of all ages.
4. To provide opportunities for new friendships to develop among volunteers and members as they participate in social programs, share experiences, and discover mutual interests.
5. To ensure volunteers have a pleasant and rewarding service experience.

At Home on the Sound Mission Statement

To improve the quality of life for adults age sixty and older who choose to live in the Larchmont-Mamaroneck area, by providing an array of individualized services and group activities designed to enhance their comfort, safety and connection to the community.

Organization Structure

At Home on the Sound is a non-profit membership organization serving the residents of Mamaroneck/Larchmont & Rye Neck. We are dedicated to helping our members’ age successfully, on their own terms, and are building a community of like-minded adults of all ages in the process. Volunteering is crucial to building this age-friendly community, and one of the main ways to become involved. Our organization and the programs and services we provide evolve with our members’ needs and our volunteers’ abilities.

At Home on the Sound is managed by a part time Executive Director & a part time Communications Administrator and is overseen by the Board of Directors, who serve without pay. Several committees support different aspects of the organization, such as Programs, Services, Membership and Development. These committees report their recommendations to the Board and work with staff to implement programs and activities. The majority of Board members are also *At Home* members, all of whom actively guide the direction of the

organization. The Executive Director oversees the organization and manages all operations and program development. Our volunteer program is managed by our volunteer coordinator, who reports to the Executive Director.

The Role of Volunteers

At Home on the Sound would not be able to function without volunteers. Volunteers support the mission by providing direct member services, participating on committees, and providing office assistance. We continually work with volunteers to match their unique skills with the evolving needs of the organization and its members.

Program Design

The Volunteer Program is designed to support the members and the organization as a whole. Most volunteers provide direct services to members, although volunteers also serve on committees and provide office support.

Volunteers who provide direct member services, transportation in particular are “on call”—meaning that there is no set schedule for volunteering. The office staff may contact volunteers directly when last-minute service requests arise that aligns with the volunteer’s stated interests. All member service requests come through the office. Our volunteer coordinator or a representative will contact volunteers who have signed up to provide that type of service.

Volunteer drivers receive an email once a week with a list of transportation requests to choose from; you may also be contacted via telephone or email to arrange service requests. For transportation requests, our # 1 request, we use an on-line program, Assisted Rides. Once a match is made, and email confirmation is sent, and we ask you to contact the member the day before the service to confirm time and any special requests. After the request has been fulfilled, members and volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback.

As a result, there is a certain ebb and flow that comes with being a volunteer. Some months, a volunteer may be called upon six times. Other months, a volunteer may not be contacted directly at all. Volunteers may need to be flexible and understand that there may not be consistent service opportunities.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Transportation *1

Volunteer drivers provide door-to-door transportation, and often door *through* door transportation. Drivers are needed for regularly scheduled trips, and periodic trips. When appropriate, the volunteer driver will assist the member to and from the front door of his or her home, and help carry packages. Trip destinations typically include:

- ❖ medical appointments
- ❖ grocery stores
- ❖ social and educational events

*1 Specific information for drivers is provided at the end of the handbook

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 such as those listed below. Our office/Resource Center is happy to provide information, and help the member negotiate with professional service providers. Services provided by volunteers may include:

- ❖ changing light bulbs
- ❖ replacing smoke detector batteries
- ❖ moving trash cans
- ❖ helping with seasonal decorations
- ❖ providing technical support for computers, cell phones, and TVs
- ❖ making simple repairs

Professional Services

There are many services that require a professional service provider, from plumbers to electricians, and At Home on the Sound has a list of pre-screened professional service providers that we can refer to our members.

Other Helpful Services

Sometimes Volunteers are needed to help with the following;

- ❖ mailing packages
- ❖ running errands
- ❖ friendly calls & visits
- ❖ picking up library books
- ❖ gardening

Advocacy

We provide volunteer trained Health Advocates to accompany members to doctor appointments upon request.

At Home has staff and volunteers who can help individual members or conduct workshops on important issues.

We offer speakers on the following topics:

- ❖ preparing for a hospital visit
- ❖ discussing end of life issues, advanced medical directives, and hospice care
- ❖ information on wills and estate planning
- ❖ Medicare Rights
- ❖ educating members about preventing identity theft
- ❖ reviewing and completing applications and government-required documents

- ❖ exercise, nutrition, and fitness programs

Social and Cultural Programming

To live their lives to the fullest, members need opportunities to participate in a variety of social, cultural, and educational activities. We sponsor and recommend many programs, lectures, and other events each month. Volunteers help to arrange trips to museums, movie outings, lectures and workshops, visits to restaurants, and small affinity groups based on members' shared interests. We need volunteers who want to:

- ❖ serve on planning committees
- ❖ research new programs and activities
- ❖ organize and staff large events
- ❖ identify potential speakers for educational programs
- ❖ host activities and events in your home
- ❖ contact local museums and other organizations to plan a tour

Office 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 this has been your experience, we need your help. We also need friendly, helpful volunteers to talk to members by phone regarding services and activities. The office is staffed by the Executive Director, Communications Director, and Volunteer Coordinator and volunteers. Hours are generally Monday through Thursday, from 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. and Friday from 10:00 to 2:00. Office volunteers will be trained for their particular assignments, which may include:

- ❖ contacting members and volunteers to schedule appointments
- ❖ bookkeeping and filing
- ❖ processing forms and papers
- ❖ data entry
- ❖ special projects
- ❖ writing for the Newsletter

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM POLICIES

Volunteer-First Policy

At Home on the Sound supports a volunteer-first policy when providing members with services. About 85 percent of member services are provided by volunteers. We will determine whether a requested service can be handled by a volunteer or whether it requires the expertise of a professional service provider.

General Expectations

Volunteers should adhere to the policies of the volunteer handbook. Working closely with the staff, volunteers are expected to:

- ❖ attend orientation and training sessions
- ❖ consult with us before assuming new responsibilities
- ❖ be prompt and reliable
- ❖ notify the office as soon as possible when unable to report for a scheduled assignment
- ❖ protect confidential information
- ❖ exercise good judgment
- ❖ treat members and other volunteers with courtesy and respect

Important Reminders about Boundaries

Volunteers often come into personal contact with members as they provide transportation, help with minor in-home repairs, work in yards, and offer technical expertise. However, volunteers should not be asked to perform services that require personal care, and such requests should be reported to staff. (Staff will then work with the member to discuss alternate support options.) *Volunteers should not offer advice about a member's health or safety.*

Finally, while we encourage friendships to develop among members and volunteers, service requests should come through the office. Volunteers should not feel obligated to fulfill every service request, even if the requesting member has become a friend. Volunteers should notify us if they feel a boundary has been crossed, and staff will work with the parties involved to resolve the situation.

A member may not ask a volunteer directly for a service instead of requesting help through the office. If this occurs, please notify the office.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a member or another volunteer. Never refer to or discuss a member's identity, personal information, services they request or receive, and any information you may acquire through your time as a volunteer with anyone other than the Executive Director. Such information should not be shared outside the organization.

Representation of the Organization

Volunteers should not act on behalf of or make statements representing the official position of the organization, 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. And no volunteer is authorized to sign any agreement involving contractual or financial obligations.

BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

Eligibility

We believe that everyone has something to give, and strives to create opportunities for people to share their talents and make a positive difference. We welcome community members of all ages who believe in the mission of the organization to serve as volunteers. Interested persons are encouraged to call the office to discuss how their interests might fit with the program.

Applicants must complete an application and go through a screening process before volunteering.

Interview

Our volunteer coordinator will interview applicants to determine their qualifications, interests, and availability, and answer any questions applicants may have about the program. This interview may also function as an orientation session if the volunteer is unable to attend a group orientation.

Driver -DMV Checks

Drivers must provide copies of their License, Vehicle Registration & Auto Insurance. We ask your permission to run a DMV check. All volunteer records are securely stored.

Orientation Sessions

All volunteers are required to attend an orientation session (either group or individual). Group orientations are scheduled several times throughout the year, and volunteers will be notified of these sessions in advance. These orientations are designed to give volunteers an opportunity to meet one another, learn about the program, and ask questions. One-on-one orientations can also be arranged, or may occur as part of the initial interview. Volunteers receive a copy of this handbook at volunteer orientations or during initial interviews.

Placement

Volunteers will be asked to fulfill member services and assignments that match their particular interests and abilities. Volunteers are free to discuss a change in assignment at any time.

Volunteer Drivers

Volunteer drivers use their own insurance coverage when driving their own automobiles. *A copy of the driver's license and auto insurance card must be on file in the office.* Gas and mileage are deductible charitable contributions for income tax purposes. Any parking fees that may be incurred during a transportation service should be paid by the member.

At Home on the Sound does carry Liability Insurance. Coverage is also provided by Volunteer New York. You are registered as a volunteer with Volunteer NY once you have completed all of your paperwork with us. They will cover once a member is in your car and only while the

member is in your car.

Once a volunteer driver has completed the screening process, they are presented with an official car decal to be placed in the front window for identification purposes.

Special-Case Volunteers

As deemed appropriate by the Executive Director, At Home on the Sound may accept volunteers participating in student community-service programs, student intern projects, and volunteer programs for special projects and activities. In these cases, an agreement, which may be oral, must be made with the organization, school, or program that identifies responsibility for the care and management of the volunteers.

Records of Volunteer Service

Accurate records of service are important to both our organization and our volunteers. Records of volunteer service are used for program development, volunteer recognition, insurance coverage, budgets, and seeking foundation support. Volunteer time is tracked monthly, may be used, if verified, as proof for tax deductions for gas and mileage to and from an assignment (provided to volunteers upon request). We ask that volunteers assist staff in keeping accurate volunteer records by informing the office when a service request takes an unexpected amount of time.

Resignation

We understand that volunteer assignments are not permanent. A volunteer may decide to stop volunteering at any time. We ask that you give as much notice as possible if you decide to resign or take a leave of absence from the program. To help the organization grow and learn from its experiences, volunteers are asked to participate in an informal exit interview when leaving the volunteer program.

Termination

At Home on the Sound may dismiss a volunteer for failing to fulfill the duties of their position and/or meet the basic standards set by the organization. Grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, misconduct or insubordination; being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while volunteering; theft of property or misuse of the organization's property; verbal or physical abuse of members; failure to fulfill volunteer obligations; and breach of confidentiality.