



Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to Staying Connected!

Staying Connected warmly welcomes you as a volunteer. Your contributions as a volunteer are an essential part of our success. The time and service you contribute are greatly appreciated, and we believe that the service you provide will enrich your life as well as the lives of our members.

We have a variety of volunteer opportunities to suit different interests, skills, talents and schedules. Whether you have direct contact with those who need our services or assist behind the scenes in some capacity, you are enhancing the work of Staying Connected and therefore strengthening our Sun City Hilton Head community.

The information in this Handbook will familiarize you with Staying Connected and your role as a volunteer. Attending orientation and training will further provide information, and the Volunteer Coordinator is always available to answer questions you may have.

About Us

Staying Connected is an independent non-profit charitable organization located within Sun City with the following mission:

Staying Connected is committed to assist Sun City Hilton Head residents to remain engaged in our active adult community by providing a helping hand with access to information, support, and services which allow them to address life's challenges.

The Values of Staying Connected - Caring, Respect, Excellence and Communication - shape and influence all our decisions and actions. Our policies reflect these values and provide the foundation on how we provide services to our members, and how we view our role in the community.

What We Do

Staying Connected provides information on outside resources as well as range of direct services to assist our members. The services offered are based on what we consider both needed and possible to provide. During training more detail about these services will be provided. These services include:

- Information on resources
- Medical and Grocery Transportation
- Home Visits for Companionship and Care Giver Relief
- Basic Home Maintenance
- Reassuring Calling

What We Do Not Do

As we are resident volunteers, Staying Connected cannot take the place of a health care provider, assisted living or nursing home facilities for those who require medical care or intensive custodial services.

- We do not provide personal care, housekeeping services including cooking, nor distribute medications nor physically lift a Member.
- We do not provide financial nor medical advice.
- We do not pick up a Member who has fallen without professional help. Call 911.
- We do not accept gifts. Sharing coffee, tea, or cookies is acceptable.
- We do not share confidential information or gossip about Members with anyone outside Staying Connected. You may however discuss Members with appropriate Staying Connected staff when seeking guidance or advice.

Introduction to Volunteering

What are the qualifications for being a Staying Connected volunteer?

- A volunteer will be a resident of Sun City Hilton Head.
- A volunteer will have the ability to perform the tasks required to provide the services they have selected.
 - This ability to perform the above tasks includes having access to transportation necessary to provide services, without requiring other volunteer assistance.
 - This ability to perform the above tasks includes having the level of computer proficiency required to participate in the volunteer process.
- A volunteer will complete the volunteer process as required, including orientation, interview and relevant training.
- A volunteer will follow the Staying Connected established rules and procedures.
- A volunteer will maintain Member confidentiality.
- A volunteer will support a positive image of Staying Connected when out in the community.
- A volunteer will agree to accept an assignment shortly after being activated as a volunteer. Support will be provided at every step. If no assignment is accepted by the volunteer within six months, the volunteer may be removed from active status unless extenuating circumstances are approved by the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Code of Conduct: As a representative of Staying Connected, a Volunteer is expected to behave toward both Members and Volunteers with decorum and in a manner respectful and considerate of all parties.

Becoming a volunteer is easy

Step One: fill out an application (available on website & Hub) and return to Hub office.

Step Two: attend an Orientation session and be interviewed.

- At Orientation the applicant received information on the Staying Connected organization, services provided, its policies and procedures.
- Following Orientation, applicant will be interviewed and interests discussed.
- Volunteers are expected to sign the Volunteer Pledge and Agreement of Confidentiality at the interview.
- All volunteers will have a public records background check.
- All volunteers must provide a valid email address that is not blocked to Staying Connected.

Step Three: Volunteers will attend a training session in their area of interest.

- All volunteers receive notification of available training sessions and may attend one or all of them.
- At training volunteers are provided the information needed to participate as a volunteer in their area of interest.
- At training volunteers will learn how to select assignments through the scheduling software (VicNet) and selections will be based upon volunteer availability.
- Volunteers must be trained in their area of service in order to access requests for service in that area.
- Newly trained volunteers will be provided with additional support or mentoring at their request so they are confident in accepting their initial request for services. Questions can be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator or Service Coordinator in the trained area.
- For volunteers interested in providing transportation, an additional background check through Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is included in the procedures.

Step Four: Volunteers accept an assignment to provide a service to a member, work in the Resource Hub, or participate in many activities supporting Staying Connected, such as marketing, fund-raising, and office support.

- As per Staying Connected policy, a volunteer is expected to accept an assignment shortly after being activated as a volunteer, with support and encouragement provided at every step. If no assignment is accepted by the Volunteer within six months, the Volunteer may be removed from active status unless extenuating circumstances are approved by Volunteer Coordinator.
- Support for the Volunteer is always available through the Hub, Volunteer Coordinator, Service and Member Coordinators, and Volunteer Support staff.
- Volunteers are required to post their hours. This information is an important tool used by Staying Connected for program planning.
- Volunteers also are required to post mileage. This information is useful for program planning and can be used by the Volunteer for income tax deductions.
- Volunteers are not permitted to accept any tips or monies or gifts from residents. Coffee, tea or cookies are acceptable.
- Volunteers are not permitted to engage in activities and provide services to members beyond the accepted scope of Staying Connected policies; questions or concerns can be discussed with the Volunteer Coordinator, Direct Services Director or your Service Coordinator.
- Volunteers should report changes or concerns about a Member's situation to the Member Coordinator.
- Volunteers are provided with both Coordinator contact information and Emergency Situation procedures at training and it is recommended this information be kept with Volunteer.

Guidelines on Interacting with Members

Maintain boundaries:

1. Boundaries are what make volunteers different from best friends or family. Volunteers are sympathetic but should have enough distance to be objective and realistic. Volunteers are caring but should not form dependent relationships with Members.
2. When establishing boundaries, we are clear about the fact that once a volunteer has provided a service via Staying Connected, they are a representative of our organization and not acting as a "friend". We protect our volunteers as it relates to liability and risk through liability insurance and extended auto insurance.
3. Any service or interaction between a volunteer and a member which has not been scheduled through our online system is NOT covered by our insurance, so the volunteer is putting themselves and the Member at risk by assisting "off-book".
4. Although we are aware that any volunteer who is helping the same member on a continuing basis may build a closer-than-usual relationship with the Member, our policies and volunteer handbook ensure that volunteers understand the implications of becoming a "friend" and the associated risk and liabilities.

How do I know if I am crossing boundaries?

1. You engage in activities or behavior that you keep secret from Staying Connected because you know they are outside accepted rules.
2. The Member is becoming dependent on you.
3. You may lose objectivity as you become overly attached to a Member.
4. You feel that the Member is your responsibility. You feel the need to "take over" and make decisions you are not being asked to make.
5. After a visit you may feel sad, depressed or anxious. You can't stop thinking about a Member's situation.
6. You feel it is your responsibility to save, cure or rescue a Member.
7. You can't say "no" to a Member's request even though you know it is something you should not do.
8. You are acting as if you were a trained psychotherapist, rather than a volunteer who is compassionate but not a mental health counselor.
9. If you find any of the above apply to you, contact the Volunteer Director, who is *always available to talk with the volunteer about any questions or concerns you have about your role as a volunteer. We are here to help you.*

Be a good listener:

You may be one of very few contacts the Member has with the outside world. Show a positive attitude and a lively interest in whatever Members talk about. If you are truly worried about a Member's status, communicate your concerns to the Member Coordinator.

Some listening guidelines:

- Listen respectfully when Members talk about their religious or political beliefs. Never argue with them, rather show respect for their views. Do not give your political or religious views nor engage in arguments if disagree. Ask questions that indicate you want to understand them.

Some listening guidelines: continued

- Let Members talk, but do not feel you have to come up with solutions to their complaints or problems – unless of course you think there is imminent danger.
- Be prepared to listen and help the Member feel understood. Patiently wait for your turn to express your thoughts. Repeat what you have heard to ensure that each Member feels understood.
- Talk about what interests the Member – it may not be what interests you. If you hear “stories” that sound like wishful thinking, don’t try to challenge the anecdote. Instead say, “Tell me more about that.”

Staying Connected Contact Information

Please contact Volunteer Coordinator for any questions about volunteering through the Resource Hub office number: 843-705-2259

For all other questions, contact Resource Hub at 843-705-2259.

Location and office hours of Resource Hub: Yemessee Craft Center (next to Pinckney Hall); office hours are weekdays 9:00 – 3:00; closed holidays.

Mailing address: PO Box 1281, Bluffton SC 29910

Website: www.stayingconnectedschh.org

Email: ResourceHub@StayingConnectedSCHH.org

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SAMPLES OF WAIVERS (actual forms distributed at Orientation)

Agreement of Confidentiality

As a volunteer for Staying Connected, I agree to hold in strict confidence any name of members and/or any medical, social, referral, personal and financial information of our members in Staying Connected at any time and in any capacity unless needed to provide service . I agree to the above stipulations regarding confidentiality, and further understand that violating this agreement in any way may result in the termination of my association with Staying Connected.

Name _____ (print legibly)

Signature _____ Date _____

Volunteer Pledge

As a volunteer with Staying Connected, I agree to follow the rules and guidelines described in the Volunteer Policy and Handbook and related materials to the best of my ability. If my contact information changes, I will notify Staying Connected as soon as possible.

I understand that the Staying Connected Board and Steering Committee oversee the organization programs and policies that I participate in and that I will follow their directions. I do understand that from time to time the guidelines may change and that Staying Connected will inform me of those changes and provide them in a timely manner.

Name _____ (print legibly)

Signature _____ Date _____