Create and Manage a Patient Transportation Program

By Yvette Boysen

The auxiliary of a small-town hospital is doing its part to ease the burden of transportation of patients to and from medical appointments.

Fairchild Medical Center (Yreka, CA) recognized a need for transportation in its community. Yreka, located 30 miles south of the Oregon border, is a small, rural town with limited options for public transportation. After the city’s senior bus program ended its service and turned it over to another nonprofit, that nonprofit asked the auxiliary if it would be interested in developing a program that would provide seniors with transportation to medical appointments. The auxiliary accepted, and the van program was born.

The Fairchild Auxiliary Patient Transport debuted in 2009, operating two days a week with the help of four or five volunteer drivers. It’s now grown to four days of operation, 10 volunteer van drivers, a call center and even a program manager who oversees the entire operation. Approximately 1,400 people were served last year.

According to Robin Watson, the auxiliary’s special projects coordinator, the program’s success has been highlighted at a statewide hospital volunteer conference as representatives were asked to present on the program twice in only three years.

“It has been a source of satisfaction to see Fairchild Medical Center Auxiliary’s Patient Transport Program still going strong as we start our eighth year of operation,” Watson says. “It is not enough to have health-care services available. Those services must also be accessible, and it was our vision to provide that access. The dedication of auxiliary volunteers has made it possible to see that vision in action. I like to think that one is never too small to accomplish big things.”

Here’s how the program works. All patients within a 20-mile radius who are in need of transportation contact the program’s call center, which is staffed by hospital employees. The call center employees then create daily schedules for the van drivers who transport the patients to and from their medical appointments free of charge.

According to Watson, volunteer van drivers are primarily recruited by word of mouth. They are asked to complete a simple application (https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56154ff6e4b059e0ff6040ed/t/56311181e4b0a6bde67537e/1446056321922/Van-Driver-Membership-Application.pdf) and undergo a background check and drug testing. Additionally, drivers must have a valid California driver’s license, have a clear driving record, be in reasonably good health and possess strong people skills.

If your organization is considering a similar program, Watson recommends taking your time and thoroughly thinking through the entire process. She says it’s easy to get caught up in the excitement but crucial to think about all aspects of the program from the kind of vehicle you will have to maintenance and insurance costs to scheduling patients and volunteers, as well as who is ultimately responsible for the program’s operation.

Source: Robin Watson, Special Projects Coordinator, Fairchild Medical Center Auxiliary, Yreka, CA. Phone (530) 842-4121. Website: www.fairchildmed.org
Keep Your Auxiliary Volunteers Energized

What specific actions do you take to keep your auxiliary volunteers motivated?

“We consistently review each job (service) and revise it accordingly, so that we are able to provide our volunteers with meaningful work. Even with the best intentions, this isn’t always easy to do. There are many factors involved in volunteer retention and providing interesting and fulfilling jobs is just the tip of the iceberg.”

— Linda Heider, President, El Camino Hospital Auxiliary, Mountain View, CA. Phone (650) 940-7215. E-mail: linda_heider@elcaminohospital.org. Website: www.elcaminohospital.org

“I am blessed to have a wonderful team of mostly women and a few men, who love being here. I send personal, homemade birthday cards, handwritten. I periodically e-mail updates to auxilians who have e-mail, including pictures of something they may have been working on, or I just capture moments. My door is always open. I say, ‘Thank you for being here,’ lots and lots and lots of times. We have an annual Auxilary Day Appreciation Luncheon. I bake fun desserts and surprise them at our general membership meetings. I give prizes to those who attend the meetings, sometimes by ticket drawing. And I use humor and get smiles from them and capture that in pictures and put the pictures in a collage in the auxiliary booklet that I have created.”

Susan McNeil, Director of Volunteer Services, Nathan Littauer Hospital and Nursing Home, Gloversville, NY. Phone (518) 773-5408. E-mail: semcneil@nlh.org. Website: www.nlh.org

Tips and Guidelines for Working With Teens

Teens can be difficult without adequate supervision, says Allison Smith, coordinator, volunteer services at Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital (Memphis, TN). But they can also be great volunteers who go on to become regular volunteers and maybe even employees.

The teen program runs for 3 to 4 weeks in the summer, with a new group of eight teens each week. Smith shares her practical tips for working with teen volunteers:

• Provide supervision. It’s a challenge if you don’t have staff or senior volunteers to be with the teens, but it’s necessary.

• Keep a tight schedule. Smith uses 1.5-hour increments. With a loose schedule, you’ll find teens get bored or goof around. Give them specific tasks for specific blocks of time.

• Make and keep strict rules. Smith requires all teens to wear uniforms, not chew gum, etc. And if they show up late, they get sent home (and won’t get a certificate of completion unless it was an excused absence). Set rules, communicate them clearly and stick to them.

• Require teens to take responsibility. Smith doesn’t take calls from parents unless it’s an emergency. The teen is responsible for returning forms, scheduling sessions and communicating timelines.

• Work ahead when possible. Talk to staff supervisors even months ahead of time to confirm participation and dates. Order shirts, send orientation dates and set the post-program party date before the summer even starts.

• Do an orientation tailored to teens (e.g., no one-on-ones with patients). Cover rules, dos and don’ts, behaviors, expectations, etc.

• Limit distractions. Smith blocks off her calendar and recruits extra office support during the teen weeks so she can focus.

• Make it easy on staff. Tell staff exactly what to do with teens, what activities to lead, what’s expected, etc. Smith uses SignUpGenius so hospital staff can sign up for teen shadowing times. She then puts the shift on the calendar as an Outlook appointment.

Source: Allison Smith, Coordinator, Volunteer Services, Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital, Memphis, TN. Phone (901) 287-5225. E-mail: lbvolunteers@lebonheur.org. Website: www.lebonheur.org
Confirm Volunteer Assignments in Writing

What tools do you provide your volunteers to help them succeed?

As you work with multiple volunteers on projects requiring their individualized follow-up, your odds of having them complete assigned tasks will improve significantly if you provide each volunteer with written confirmation of what it is he/she is supposed to do (and by when).

Whenever you conduct a meeting in which volunteers leave with agreed-to tasks, immediately send them a personalized memo — as opposed to a standardized group memo — confirming their duties. Spell out exactly what is expected of them, and be sure to include a deadline for the project (or multiple deadlines for portions of the project).

In addition to delineating each task, clearly state how to report back or turn in completed work. This helps bring closure to the task.

Here are two techniques you may want to include in your memo:

1. Offer an incentive for completing tasks on time.
2. Add a final sentence to your memo indicating that all persons who have not completed their tasks by the stated deadline will be contacted by you (or the appropriate person) to determine what needs to happen in order to finish the project. Adding a closing statement such as this motivates volunteers to avoid the embarrassment of being contacted while, at the same time, provides you with a justifiable reason for following up with them.

Here is an example of a memo confirming a volunteer’s duties:

July 3, 2017

TO: Tom Peterson, Sponsorship Committee
FROM: Brenda M. Hawley, Sponsorship Chairperson
RE: Calls to be completed by August 15
CC: Debra M. Brown, Director of Alumni

Thank you, Tom, for attending the June 13 Sponsorship Committee meeting and agreeing to call on the businesses listed below to serve as sponsors for our upcoming event.

As you know, it’s imperative that we have commitments from these businesses by August 15 if we are to remain on schedule with our event timeline. For that reason, I am suggesting you schedule appointments for this week and next so business owners and managers have sufficient time to make a decision.

Please turn in (or fax) your completed calls to the Office of Alumni as you complete them. The fax number is 465-9097. As was mentioned at our meeting, those who turn in all calls on time will receive two 50 percent off coupons for dinner at Winchester’s.

I encourage you to call me or Debra Brown if you have any questions, need any assistance or experience any difficulty that would impede your ability to complete these calls on schedule.

I will plan to contact any persons who have not turned in their calls to the Office of Alumni by August 15.

Thank you for your valuable assistance with this portion of our 2017 Celebrity Speaker Event.

Sponsorship calls to be completed by Tom Peterson by August 15:

- Benders Office Supply & Equipment
- Castrole Travel
- Determan Pepsi Distributors
- Klein Brokers
- MasterCuts
- Osborne Trucking, Inc.
- Osborne Trucking, Inc.
- Peterson Trucking, Inc.
- Winston Raceway

Offer Your Volunteers Symbols of Gratitude

Make your volunteers feel appreciated with these symbols of your appreciation:

- **Group Photo:** Frame a group photo of all current volunteers with the front row holding a poster, complete with the organization’s logo, displaying the year. Take this photo each year at the same time and distribute to your current volunteer base. Don’t forget to display a large copy of the photo in your lobby or reception area.

- **Another Group Photo:** Organize a group photo of willing clients of your organization holding a large thank-you poster. Give a copy to each volunteer. This added touch will mean a lot to your steadfast volunteers.

- **Thank-you card:** Each year, have all staff and management sign thank-you cards for each volunteer (or volunteer group/team). Request that each person add a personal, heartfelt note specific to that volunteer/volunteer group.

- **Invitation:** Invite individual volunteers to join in on a coffee break or casual continental breakfast with the head of the organization. If possible, create small group opportunities for volunteers to attend a coffee with the head of the organization monthly or quarterly on a rotating basis.

**Time Management Tips**

- Maintain a supply of various cards — sympathy, anniversary, birthday and others — that you can use as needed. Keep postage stamps close by, too.

**Small Town Recruitment**

- If your nonprofit is based in a small community or rural area, try collaborating with other nonprofits to formulate joint recruiting strategies. You may find that individuals are willing to divide their time between multiple organizations.
Avoid Letting Work Get the Best of You

Managing volunteers can take its toll. The reward and punishment system is much more challenging than those who manage paid staff only. When a volunteer makes mistakes, it requires great tact on your part.

Because of the unique (and often stressful) set of circumstances surrounding those who manage volunteers, it’s important to recognize ways in which you can minimize the tension surrounding your job. Try these stress-reduction methods:

• Schedule at least one private time period each day for non-crisis work.
• Share a regular written update with all volunteers that summarizes everything you’re doing and helps them realize the fullness of your platter.
• Take a walk before, after or during your work day to exercise and dream.
• Designate your best volunteers as assistants and delegate high-profile projects to them.
• At the end of each day, write down top priority tasks for the following day, recognizing that other projects must wait their turn.
• Maintain proper perspective by remembering how your work benefits others.
• Put a smile on your face when every instinct tells you to frown.

Volunteer Tasks

• Start an Adopt-a-Day program for those who might want to devote one day to a specific project. It’s a good way for those with limited time to help your cause.

Create Dog Trading Cards for Your Pet Therapy Program

By Amber Erickson Gabbey

At Huntington Hospital (Pasadena, CA), some of the most popular volunteers have a face full of fur (and four legs). The pet-assisted therapy program relies on volunteers and their dogs to bring comfort to everyone at the hospital — both patients and staff.

Because of this popularity, Stacy Miller, director of volunteer services at Huntington, decided to create trading cards for each volunteer dog. Volunteers (a designer and a photographer) ran with the project, creating a card for each pet therapy volunteer.

The idea was volunteers would give out their cards to staff and patients while out wandering the hospital. But what Miller didn’t anticipate was the internal excitement. Staff wanted one of each card, so a new rule had to be instituted: Volunteers have to hand out their own cards. This means staff have to actually see that volunteer (and dog) to get the card. “It’s fun to see the variety of cards hanging around the hospital,” says Miller. It’s become a competition within departments, and Miller considers the project an amazing, low-cost morale booster.

For anyone considering doing something similar, Miller offers the following lessons-learned:

• Consider monetizing. At Huntington, the communications team turned the cards into calendars to sell in the gift shop. Money from calendar sales goes toward medications for low-income patients.
• Make sure you plan out questions to ask for bios (on the back of the cards). Standardize as much as you can and be sure to proofread for consistency and brand style.
• Research printers and paper choice to keep costs low. Take advantage of in-house printing where possible, but don’t skimp on quality.
• Set guidelines on who can hand out cards, where they can hand them out and how to reorder cards. If you let the volunteer hand them out outside of the hospital, you’ll spend a lot on reprinting. It’s not unfair to set parameters for the program.
• Encourage volunteers and staff to have fun with the cards.
• Figure out how to make the program ongoing and sustainable. When new volunteer pairs start in the pet therapy program, they are quickly photographed so they can get their own card. Ignoring this step may create tension between existing and new volunteers.

Source: Stacy Miller, Director of Volunteer Services, Huntington Memorial Hospital, Pasadena, CA. Phone (626) 397-5212. E-mail: stacy.miller@huntingtonhospital.com. Website: www.huntingtonhospital.com
Help Volunteers Hone Listening Skills

If listening skills is not a topic included in your volunteer training program, you may want to consider adding it.

“The biggest mistake volunteers make with regard to listening is not being present in the moment,” explains Chris Gage, director of guest, retail and volunteer services at WakeMed Health and Hospitals (Raleigh, NC). “We have 1,000 other things running through our mind from what time we agreed to cover a shift to what is for dinner tonight. The bad habit of interrupting comes in a close second as we find it so difficult to let others complete their thought before moving forward with our own comment, question or interjection.”

Gage offers some dos and don’ts for helping volunteers improve their listening skills:

Dos:

• Be mindful. According to Gage, mindfulness is an “approach to unentangle thoughts and be present in the moment.” She recommends the exercises and techniques featured in the YouTube video, “Slow Down,” by Paul Collier (www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGpDK6bB0&feature=related), as well as the information on The Guided Meditation Site (www.the-guided-meditation-site.com/mindfulness-exercises.html). Gage suggests encouraging volunteers to incorporate these practices into their routines and good listening habits will develop.

• Learn important listening skills. Gage shares five tips from Peter Garber’s book, “50 Communications Activities, Icebreakers and Exercises.”
  1. To make sure you understand, paraphrase the speaker’s message.
  2. Repeat the speaker’s message.
  3. Ask questions. You may find missing information.
  4. Clarify points that you do not understand completely.
  5. Remember the message’s pertinent points for use in the future.

Don’ts:

• Do not interrupt or jump to conclusions.
• Do not be “overly parental” when it comes to advice.
• Do not form a conclusion until you have gathered all of the information.
• Do not change the subject so that it relates to your experiences.
• Do not think more about your reply than on what the speaker is saying.
• Do not give a “silent message.” Gage says, “Not communicating sometimes sends a stronger message than if you did say something.”

For additional information on building strong listening skills, Gage recommends a TED Talk by sound expert Julian Treasure (www.ted.com/talks/julian_treasure_5_ways_to_listen_better).

Source: Chris Gage, Director of Guest, Retail and Volunteer Services, WakeMed Health and Hospitals, Raleigh, NC. Phone (919) 350-8005. E-mail: cgage@wakemed.org. Website: www.wakemed.org

Help Prospective Volunteers Know What to Expect

Prospective volunteers at Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford (Palo Alto, CA) know exactly what to expect when it comes to the process of becoming a volunteer, thanks to seven detailed steps.

The process, outlined on the hospital’s website (www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/volunteer?), begins with registering for and participating in an online orientation. The online orientation is specific to volunteer services, its programs and the onboarding process.

The process continues with a group interview. Groups of three to five individuals meet to learn about the “program, requirements, expectations and roles.” Additionally, volunteer staff members have the opportunity to learn about the prospective volunteers.

“At Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital, volunteers are considered a part of the team,” Brady says. “In addition, the hospital compliance department puts together guidelines based on state and federal regulations, and these guidelines include volunteers. Anyone in the hospital — employee, physician, contracted employee, intern or volunteer — must abide by these regulatory guidelines.”

At this point, prospective volunteers move on to steps six and seven: background check and health screening. Volunteer Services pays for the background check and Occupational Health covers the cost of any vaccinations needed.

Brady says the entire process typically takes between two and three weeks. She says there are more than 700 active volunteers at the hospital with approximately 50 volunteers onboarded each month.

Source: Maryellen Brady, Director of Volunteer Services, Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford, Palo Alto, CA. Phone (650) 497-8549. E-mail: mabrady@stanfordchildrens.org. Website: www.stanfordchildrens.org

DOI: 10.1002/VMR VIEW THIS NEWSLETTER ONLINE AT WILEYONLINELIBRARY.COM THE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT REPORT © 2017 5
Insight Into Measuring Alumni Volunteerism

Measurement is a challenge and has been for some time. But it’s getting easier with measurement models, frameworks and formulas. Carrie Collins, chief advancement officer at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (Philadelphia, PA), developed a simple model to quantify engagement of alumni.

Most people aren’t doing this, says Collins, so don’t feel bad if you aren’t. This model is easy to implement; you just have to start somewhere.

Collins’ model works like this:

1. **Create categories of volunteerism, such as attending an event, serving on a board, etc.** Aim for 10 or fewer categories — too many may feel overwhelming — but be sure you’ve covered all activities volunteers help with at your organization. In this prep phase, also take a moment to jot down some goals for your volunteer program, such as bringing in more volunteers or increasing donations from volunteers.

2. **Gather data.** Every time a volunteer participates in one of the categories, count it as one. Do this regularly during the year. At the end of the year, tally the results using a spreadsheet or whatever data collection tool with which you’re comfortable.

3. **Create formulas to standardize activities and calculate hours.** For example, being a board member includes three hours per month, equaling twelve hours a year. While some board members will do more (and some less), formulas create an average. This allows you to take those tallies and put numbers behind them. For example, board service equals twelve hours per year. If 45 people volunteered in this category last year, that’s 540 total category hours.

4. **Analyze the data to see how you did compared to prior years.** For example, look at your total pool of volunteers (or alumni, in this case), then see the percentage and number that engaged. Also, look at the total number of instances of volunteers (those tallies from step two), number of hours, total donated by volunteers, etc.

5. **Present the information.** Collins uses an integrated promotion strategy including a printed report, social media promotion, press release and celebratory event. For you, this may just be an annual presentation to staff and board members.

6. **Assess the results to go beyond specific numbers and comparisons to ask the tough questions.** Did you meet expectations? Where did you come up short? Where did you excel? What do other leaders in the organization think about your program? Use these answers to set the groundwork for next year’s efforts.

Source: Carrie Collins, Chief Advancement Officer, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Philadelphia, PA. Phone (215) 871-6676. E-mail: carrieco@pcom.edu. Website: www.pcom.edu

Have a Procedure in Place
For Your Youth Program

At University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center (Cleveland, OH), youth have long been engaged as summer-only volunteers. But this summer, the program changed.

According to Barb Nalette, director of volunteer services, Cleveland Medical Center formed a partnership with Effective Leadership Academy to morph their traditional youth volunteer program into an eight-week leadership training.

“We’re really excited about the leadership component,” says Nalette. “It’s a great experience for participants to gain new experiences.”

As part of the program, participants volunteer for regular, weekly shifts (three to four hours) and also attend two leadership training sessions. At the end of the program, participants receive a certification of completion of professional leadership training.

Here’s how the program works:

1. All interested youth (and their parents) must first attend the two-hour information session and bring their completed application and references. Marge Galla, coordinator of volunteer services, says parents are crucial because the program is a commitment. Parents must be supportive and comfortable with their child spending time at the hospital.

2. During the information session, attendees break into small groups (without their parents) for interviews. Youth are asked some questions, like what do you want to take away from the experience, and then give their first and second choice for placement.

3. Participants receive formal acceptance notifications (including their placements) after the information sessions. Those accepted are then required to attend a two-hour general orientation. According to Nalette, most students are accepted because if they went through the initial steps, they are generally interested enough to be accepted. The only time students are turned away is if the program is full or if they have summer plans that would make it hard to complete the requirements of the program.

4. After completing orientation, participants register for their two leadership training sessions.

5. Once the school year ends, participants start the program. At the end of the summer, they hold an appreciation event.

To learn more about this program and the procedure, visit www.uhhospitals.org/cleveland/about/volunteer-services/summer-youth-volunteer-program.

Sources: Marge Galla, Coordinator, Volunteer Services, UH Cleveland Medical Center, Cleveland, OH. Phone (216) 844-1504. E-mail: Margaret.Galla@uhhospitals.org. Website: www.uhhospitals.org/cleveland

Barbara Nalette, Director of Volunteer Services, UH Cleveland Medical Center, Cleveland, OH. Phone (216) 844-1504. E-mail: Barbara.Nalette@uhhospitals.org. Website: www.uhhospitals.org/cleveland
Inspire Volunteers to Provide Quality Service

For nearly 20 years, Dee Dee Raap, speaker and author of “JourneyWords: 52 Strategies to Achieve Great Service” (Sioux Falls, SD), has trained volunteers on how to provide exceptional customer service.

She shares these methods for inspiring volunteers to provide great service:

1. “Inspiration plus skills training. Inspire them to be and do their best. Ensure they know the difference your nonprofit makes, and provide them real skills. Instead of the Golden Rule, use the Platinum Rule: Treat others the way ‘they’ want to be treated.

   Provide tools and strategies that will deliver your Service Brand Promise (a level of service you have defined as what your clients have the right to expect) to every customer, every day. Create a process they can use that will deliver your SBP, such as the Service MAP™:

   • **Mindset:** The positive attitude of great service. Find a silver lining in every cloud. Be grateful for blessings and challenges. Love what you do, those you work with and those you serve.
   
   • **Action:** Use words, actions and body language to convey support with kindness and a smile.
   
   • **People:** Interaction and engagement with staff and other volunteers helps build the teamwork that is the foundation of all service.

2. “Meaningful service. Tap into what volunteers want and you have increased ownership that can lead to great service.

3. “Authentic appreciation. As they are appreciated, they can be and do their best and in turn, show appreciation for others.

4. “Tap into both their heart and their brain cells. Ask them to share their ‘why’ of service and help them find examples where great service made a difference in their life or for someone they love. And ask them to be always on the lookout for ways to make service better.

5. “Reinforce their decision to serve with health and social benefits of volunteering.

6. “Make it fun. Volunteers deserve to experience the kind of culture that easily smiles and laughs as it provides a safe place to connect and serve.”

Source: Dee Dee Raap, Speaker and Author, “JourneyWords: 52 Strategies to Achieve Great Service,” Sioux Falls, SD. Phone (605) 371-2299. E-mail: deedee@deedeeraap.com. Website: www.deedeeraap.com

Educate Top Management on Volunteers’ Value

Here are two methods to get top management to fully support your volunteer programs:

- Share a list of volunteer accomplishments over the past months and estimate the associated cost if paid staff were to perform those duties.
- Get those who benefit from volunteer efforts to share their appreciation through notes to your CEO.

Customer Service Matters

Providing quality customer service isn’t just for the world of for profits.

“Today’s nonprofits realize they compete for volunteers and donors, and both care deeply about how they are treated,” explains Dee Dee Raap, speaker and author of “JourneyWords: 52 Strategies to Achieve Great Service” (Sioux Falls, SD).

“How volunteers are treated sets the stage for how they, in turn, can treat clients, their family and friends.”

According to Raap, customer service is important for three main reasons:

1. **Marketing and public relations.** Word-of-mouth advertising cannot be beat. It’s free and effective.

2. **Attracting and retaining top-notch volunteers.** Loyalty cannot be bought. It must be earned through an experience unique to your organization.

3. **People.** Despite all the technology available, people still need people. They need to feel cared for.

   But outstanding customer service extends far beyond the treatment of your volunteers. They, too, must practice the same high-quality service they are experiencing.

   Nonprofits have what Raap calls a “Service Brand Promise, a level of service you have defined as what your clients have the right to expect.” To ensure this promise is met, everyone who is affiliated with your nonprofit, volunteer or not, must provide quality service.

   Now, how do you get your volunteers on board?

   “Investing in volunteers as if they are staff says they’re very important, that you’ll help them succeed,” Raap explains.

   “Training should focus on the values of great service, like gratitude, quality, compassion and patience. Training should also focus on positive mindset, communication and interactions.”

   Additionally, she stresses the importance of positioning.

   “Service needs to be positioned as not another thing anyone has to do, but the way everyone does what they do.”

Icebreakers for Volunteers

- Pass around a roll of toilet paper to your new committee, board or training group. Invite participants to tear off as many squares as they wish. After they have done so, inform them that they are to tell the group one fact about themselves for each square of toilet paper they took.

   Renew your subscription at cs-journals@wiley.com.
Community Steps Up to Feed 375 Homeless Women, Children

An army of volunteers recently provided more than 6,000 meals for homeless women and children while The Salvation Army Center of Hope’s (Charlotte, NC) kitchen underwent a renovation.

“We are fortunate here in Charlotte to have an army behind the Army. That is, our dedicated volunteers,” explains Brent Rinehart, director of communications. “We worked with some of our regular civic groups and churches to provide meals in addition to connecting with local restaurants, catering companies and food trucks.”

The Center of Hope offers programs to “step clients from the point of crisis to the point of resolution” by providing emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing and shelter diversion. Each night, it sleeps an average of 375 women and children. These individuals not only rely on the Center for shelter, but meals as well.

With three meals a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, the kitchen, which was more than 25 years old, had seen better days. A group of volunteers who has served monthly meals at the Center for more than 13 years stepped in and raised the $150,000 needed for the renovation.

Although absolutely necessary, the renovation presented a challenge. How would the Center feed its clients?

While prepared to offer its clients sandwiches and packaged food, supporters from the community wouldn’t have it. After local media reported an opportunity to help the nonprofit, individual donors as well as 10 to 15 groups stepped forward to sponsor and provide meals.

One of the supporters was Stomp, Chomp and Roll, a local franchise that includes five restaurants within three brands and recently introduced its first food truck, The Oinker.

“Our vision is to intentionally spread the love through everything we do,” explains Christopher Soto, marketing manager. “Our owner, Will Bigham, read an article in the local paper informing the community of the Center of Hope’s need of food due to their upcoming kitchen construction. He jumped at the opportunity to connect with our community more while spreading the love through our food.”

“The community welcomed us with open arms,” Soto says. “The women and children expressed so much gratitude and love to us. They asked for hugs and high fives as we took their orders.”

TRUE Crafted Pizza was another local restaurant that came forward, serving pizza out of its catering truck, Big Red.

“We are thankful for the support from the community,” Rinehart says. “We can’t do it alone. No one can. But when we work together, amazing things can happen.”

Sources: Rose Daigle, Catering Sales Coordinator, TRUE Crafted Pizza, Charlotte, NC. Phone (704) 543-8783. E-mail: rose@truepizza.com. Website: www.truepizza.com

Brent Rinehart, Director of Communications, The Salvation Army of Greater Charlotte, Charlotte, NC. Phone (704) 714-4727. E-mail: brent.rinehart@uss.salvationarmy.org. Website: www.salvationarmy-carolinas.org/charlotte

Christopher Soto, Marketing Manager, Stomp, Chomp and Roll, Charlotte, NC. Phone (704) 376-0975. E-mail: stompchomproll1@gmail.com. Website: www.stompchomproll.com

Have a Pleasant Phone Personality

If your volunteer responsibilities include telephone conversations, know that you will make the best impression by sounding pleasing and warm.

To create a pleasant calling style:
• Put a smile on your face.
• Create a pleasant and courteous image.
• Sound relaxed, but be alert.
• Use simple, everyday language, avoiding slang.
• Avoid speaking too fast.
• Show genuine interest in the person you’re calling.
• Be professional but friendly.
• Be considerate of others’ time.

Be Mindful of Your Words

As you work with volunteer colleagues, remember to avoid making any demeaning comments or jokes about another group of people. Sometimes our comments can be hurtful, even when casually conveyed.