

# Volunteer Engagement

Things I've *kind of* learned...

Look to *SELF* first: after all you are a good example of a volunteer.

- Be the best role model for the volunteers you want.
- Be Positive. Nothing deters a promising volunteer faster than hearing complaints or whining about the role or the program. If there are issues, go to the person who can make the change needed.
- Share your passion (what interested you in the role of volunteer? For some it is learning about dystonia... or maybe looking to be part of an organization ...or looking for meaningful experiences) What was it that drew you to your volunteer role? Use that knowledge to engage others.
- Make the effort worth it to be a volunteer. Don't waste their or your time.
- Be flexible, accommodating, and available.
- Value volunteers (Appreciate all levels of volunteers) Acknowledge the work/time invested and expertise that volunteers bring. T-shirts, hats, or some tangible identification of their role is welcome.

Who are the volunteers?

- Know the people that you serve. Knowing someone even a little goes a long way in helping to identify potential volunteers.
- Ask for help personally. Go directly to people to ask them to fill a particular role. I find this works better than a general call out for help.
- Welcome them.
- Be open to what might be motivating and limiting to the volunteers.

Understand the role that you need the volunteer to fill.

- What is the purpose of the particular volunteer role.
- Know the specific job descriptions as well as requirements and let any potential volunteers know as best you can. Difference between leadership role and physical help needed to set up tables or deliver pamphlets.
- Try to match the roles with people who can meet the roles' needs.
- Do not overwhelm the volunteers.
- Keep all the volunteers in the loop of what is going on.
- Communicate, train and support.
- Thank them and thank them again.

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