Virginia Tech Adult Day Services

Senior Companion

Volunteer Job Description

Qualifications: Minimum qualifications include enrollment in a college level degree program in a Human Services field

Position Summary: Assists the Activity Director and other ADS staff in providing individualized companionship for designated ADS participants

Commitment Requirement: To maintain consistency and professionalism throughout the semester for our participants, individuals commit to volunteering a minimum of 3 hours per week for at least 10 weeks of the semester. Service Learning Students are also required to participate in at least one of three ADS in-services over the course of the semester (provided there is no class conflict).

Experience/Knowledge:
• Knowledge of Alzheimer’s Disease and other dementias

Primary Responsibilities:
• Complete the center orientation
• Learn operating procedures
• Shadow ADS director, RN, Activities Director, and 1 C.N.A for 1 hour each
• Seek out the Activities Director on a regular basis for feedback and ideas
• Develop professional rapport with participants and staff
• Socially and recreationally engage specified ADS participants by working with them 1:1 (ADS Activity Director will assist in helping volunteer to coordinate how time is spent with participants)
• Complete a mid-semester reflection

Skills and Abilities:
• Ability to work well with others
• Work in collaboration with ADS employees and other volunteers/students
• Effective oral and written communication skills
• Must be able to speak the English language in an understandable manner
• Ability to work with persons of various ability levels
• Ability to tactfully deal with interruptions during activities
• Ability to deal tactfully with personnel, participants, family members, visitors, and government agencies/personnel and the general public

Physical Requirements:
• Must be able to move intermittently throughout the day
• Must be able to cope with stress of working with persons who need care
• Must meet the general health requirements set forth by policies of this facility
• Must be able to relate to work with elderly who maybe ill or disabled and respond to emotionally upset participants

Working Conditions:
• Works in activity space as well as patio
• Moves intermittently throughout day
• Is subject to frequent interruptions
Volunteers maybe subject to the following situations although staff are responsible for responding and the occurrences are very rare
• Hostile and emotionally upset participants and caregivers
• Exposure to infectious waste, disease, conditions, etc. including TB, AIDS, and Hepatitis B viruses

Customer Service:
• Demonstrate an understanding that the primary focus must be with the ADS participants
• Respect participants by recognizing their presence and individuality, and not speaking over or around them
• Treat participants with dignity and respect
• Be courteous and patient when dealing with participants and caregivers
• Conduct self in professional manner
• Respect confidentiality and conduct conversations in appropriate locations
• Provide quality customer service to participants, visitors, general public, media and fellow volunteers