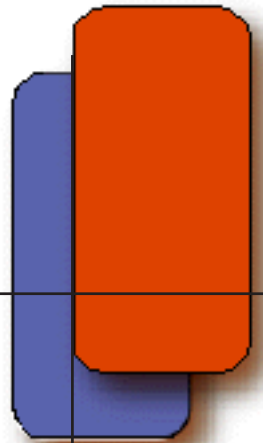


DIRECTOR'S MANUAL



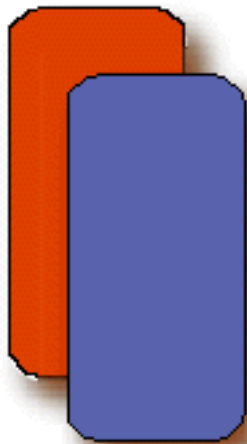
Dear prospective local program founder,

Thank you for your interest in United Students for Veterans' Health. This Director's guide has been assembled to assist you in the process of forming a volunteer service organization. As you embark upon this project by contacting a Veterans' Hospital in your area and rallying excitement in your campus community, allow us to aid you in your endeavors. This manual will serve as a basic guide for establishing a successful chapter, but it cannot suffice completely. Each program will be uniquely shaped by both your character and your environment. We are eager for you to join our family and would like to help you in whatever way possible. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns that you may have in this process.

USVH is a program I really believe in. At a local level, the Stanford USVH chapter has been successful with over fifty volunteers visiting the hospital each week. We strive to aid in the therapeutic rehabilitation work of the hospital staff and to improve the lives of the veterans we serve. We also work on mental health/veterans' issues advocacy work in the Stanford community. Many great strides have been made in this area with a yearly conference on mental health, a student-initiated course with a hospital service component, and an alternative spring break trip in San Francisco. At a national level, our work is only beginning. I am confident that your involvement with USVH will make a significant difference in the quality of life for the veterans at your local hospital. Though the creation of a USVH chapter demands time and hard work, the experience is completely rewarding; the people you meet on your campus and at the hospital will make it worthwhile. Countless program directors have stated that one of their best experiences in college was with USVH. USVH has been an unparalleled opportunity in my own life to meet veterans and other students from whom I have learned enormously. Volunteering in a veterans' hospital is a mutually enriching and fulfilling experience, as I am sure you will soon discover. As you begin your program, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you the best of luck. Please keep us updated on every aspect of your experience.

Sincerely,

Brian Inouye
USVH National Director
2006-2007



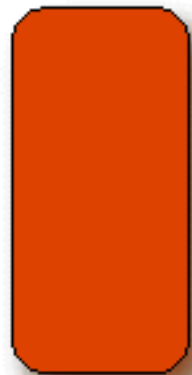
A Word from our Founder...

Welcome to United Students for Veterans' Health (USVH). The mission of our organization is simple: to aid in the care and enrich the lives of veterans around the nation. We live in an age where the elderly veterans of our nation are increasingly ignored and forgotten. As memories fade away, the past generations of veterans whom have contributed to our welfare suffer from society's indifference. The responsibilities that you are undertaking as a Director will reverse this tide. Your efforts to gather caring students and citizens around you will immeasurably enrich the lives of both the veterans you serve and the volunteers you lead. The example of your actions, and the deeds of your volunteers will re-forged the bond between the young and old.

To help you in your efforts, we have prepared this guide that reflects our experience over the years. This guide exists to give you the benefits of the knowledge we have accumulated in developing this program. One of the most rewarding aspects of being a Director is the opportunity to stamp your own brand of creativity and initiative on the program you launch. Both this guide and the current USVH board will always be available to you as a resource. In turn, we hope that your ideas and experiences in this process will contribute to and strengthen the programs of other directors across the country. Thank you and welcome to our family.

Sincerely,

Vance Vanier
USVH Founder



INTRODUCTION

The volunteer programs of USVH are engineered to help long-term care patients in the VA medical system. Typically, these patients are elderly and in many cases suffer from some sort of cognitive impairment, such as Alzheimer's disease or dementia. However, opportunities to help may exist in any ward in which patients stay for extended periods of time and do not get optimal levels of social stimulation.

Most USVH programs follow a proven formula. Students go in groups once a week (or more if they are very motivated) for two or three hours and socialize with the patients. These interactions may include talking, playing games, or going on walks. In some cases, interested students can also participate in the clinical care of the patients, depending on the willingness and need of the hospital. Primarily, however, the goal of USVH is to make these patients feel appreciated and special.

Your role as a Director is to organize and make such a program happen. Your responsibilities can be categorized into two major areas: **Hospital and Campus responsibilities**. This guide describes each of the components of these responsibilities to aid and assist you in your efforts.

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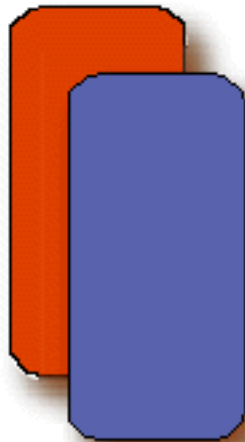
KNOW YOUR VA CONTACT (CONTINUED)

Your contact will also be the person volunteers need to contact if they will be absent on particular days and making up these absences on others. An absence protocol should be clearly established because both patients and hospital staff will come to rely on the presence of volunteers. Both your program contact and the nurses in the ward will be crucial resources for your volunteers when they have questions regarding patient care. Volunteers might have questions regarding what activities they should do, which patients they should see, and what they should do in emergency situations. In summary, if you have a quality relationship with the hospital staff, you can expect to have a strong program.

Purpose of the Program:
To enrich the lives of our patients.

GAIN HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE

In addition to knowing the staff, you should expose yourself to the workings of the ward and the patients. USVH requires that Directors volunteer in the ward each week so that they can understand the concerns of their own volunteers and the ward.



When beginning the program, it is crucial that you visit the hospital beforehand, so that when you recruit volunteers you have a practical understanding of what they will do. Furthermore, by experiencing the work yourself, you can more effectively choose others whom you feel will make good volunteers. As a Director, it is very easy to be absorbed by your management responsibilities and lose touch with the patients. Volunteering in the ward keeps you focused on the purpose of the program: to enrich the lives of our patients.

Once you are familiar with the hospital ward, patients, and staff, it's time to start recruiting.

ADVERTISING

In some ways advertising is the most important of your campus responsibilities. Good advertising can yield a tremendous number of interested volunteers for your program. Obviously, there are many ways to go about this. The method we have used to the greatest effect at Stanford has been a simple flyer campaign. The more flyers you can post, the more students you can recruit. Stanford is a midsize campus with 13,000 students. We have found that posting 400 flyers throughout the campus can be extremely successful. We post flyers in all of the dormitories, student meeting areas, community service buildings, and classrooms. Spreading your message through campus activities fairs also yields excellent results. Campaigning via email to different distribution lists is effective too. Clearly, your needs and opportunities will differ depending on your campus. In the Appendix of this guide is an example of a successful flyer.

You will want to include information in your campaign about the kind of activities volunteers will do, the kinds of people you are looking for, and, most importantly, a contact email address for interview appointments. A deadline for requesting these appointments should also be included. Scheduling interviews a week from when you post the flyers is a good period of time since it is long enough for students to notice your campaign, and short enough to get things moving.

Your advertisements should tell students to contact you and schedule specific times for their interviews. When students do contact you, utilize this opportunity to familiarize them more with your USVH chapter. Your goal is to find students that are a good match for the volunteer opportunity you are offering. Use this as an opportunity to stress the duration of the volunteering commitment (typically one semester/quarter). Also, include information on the patient population you will be serving and what times your hospital needs volunteers. A sample letter used by the Stanford Chapter is included in the Appendix of this guide. Ask prospective volunteers to bring a list of the times they are available to volunteer if they are accepted. For example, if your hospital needs students from 3:30 to 5:30 Monday through Thursday, and 6:00 to 8:00 Wednesday through Friday, then you would tell the volun-

In some ways advertising is the most important of your campus responsibilities.

teers to prepare a list of preferences from those times.

A note about times: often hospitals will be very broad about when they need volunteers. As a Director, you will want to narrow down this scope based on when you think students will be most available. A big factor in this decision is when classes are offered throughout the day. It is highly advisable that you give volunteers a concrete list of times to choose from instead of offering them any time of the week. It will be significantly easier to schedule students into carpools who have all picked from a specific list of choices.

The more time preferences the volunteers bring to the interview, the easier your job will be when it comes to scheduling. Typically, three preferences are sufficient.

INTERVIEWING

The interview is as valuable for the applicant as it is for you. Basic social psychology indicates that the more effort an applicant puts into trying to join a program, the more they will value volunteering. As your program becomes successful and expands, the hospital staff and patients will come to depend on you and your volunteers. It is crucial that you obtain volunteers who will be dedicated to attending and giving all their energy each and every week.

Admittedly, this sounds like a challenging task to keep volunteers so motivated. However, if they are motivated to schedule an interview from the outset, your chances of obtaining quality volunteers rise dramatically. Furthermore, the interview often gives the candidates a chance to learn more about the program.

Clearly, the interviews are also extremely valuable to you. They give you the chance to meet each and every one of your prospective volunteers. As your program is launched, you will have fewer chances to see everyone. It is also very interesting to understand your volunteers' various backgrounds and motivations for joining the program. You will find that

some of your candidates' backgrounds will lend nicely to your cause. For instance, those candidates who can play a musical instrument or direct arts and crafts activities are always very valuable and enriching to the patients.

The interviewing process also brings you, as a director, to terms with a fun-

The philosophy of USVH is that any candidate who honestly wants to participate and contribute to the well-being of the patients is welcome. Experience is not as necessary as willingness and enthusiasm.



damental question: how selective should you be? The philosophy of USVH is that any candidate who honestly wants to participate and contribute to the well-being of the patients is welcome. Experience is not as necessary as willingness and enthusiasm. The VA hospitals, in general, are always very appreciative of any volunteers you can provide them. As a Director you must use your best judgment to supply the ward with as many quality volunteers as you can. Obviously, you may see candidates who are hopelessly unsuited or whose motivations are totally askew. For the most part, however, we feel that if they are motivated and interested enough to go through your admissions process, they will make good volunteers. You will also have to judge whether or not you tell the volunteers how many of them will be accepted. Once again, from a social psychological point of view, if the candidates feel that they are selected for in some sort of competitive process, this will motivate them even more. In the past, when candidates have asked us how many of them will be accepted, we have answered that we are simply searching for quality volunteers and that numbers are secondary to this concern. A sample interview is included in the Appendix of this guide.

At the time of the interview, obtain the candidate's list of preferences for when they would like to work. If the hospital is more than a convenient walking distance from campus, you will want to ask the volunteers if they have cars and would be willing to drive a group of volunteers if accepted into the program. This information is extremely important, as it is crucial to your scheduling. We strongly recommend that you schedule your volunteers in groups for each time slot.

This way of scheduling confers many benefits:

1. Volunteers who go in the same group each week become friends and have a social support system. There will be some days when the ward is a difficult place to work. The benefit of having friends to share this with and de-brief afterwards is invaluable. It is also fun to share stories and occurrences with others who have experienced similar people and places.
2. Volunteers who go in groups have a greater social accountability to each other and will be less inclined to be absent for their scheduled hours.
3. If the distance of your VA is too far to walk, carpooling is crucial. You want to make it as easy as you can for your volunteers to attend the ward on their selected days. Groups that drive together will be more inclined to go regularly. This is why you should find out during the interview whether your candidates have cars, and get them to commit to driving others if they are accepted.



At the end of the interview, tell the candidates when you will inform them of your decision. Usually a couple of days is ideal; long enough to give you time to think, and short enough to get your program moving.

NOTIFICATION AND SCHEDULING

During the next few days you'll want to select your new volunteers and inform them of their acceptance. A sample email that the Stanford chapter of USVH uses is included in the Appendix of this guide. At Stanford, we include a brief survey to get a feel for the volunteer's interests. We utilize this data in our meetings with the hospital staff to place students in comfortable volunteering situations. You can use your discretion to determine if this would be an effective strategy for your chapter. Also please note that the Stanford chapter, because of our large numbers, opts to get scheduling information after the actual interview. You can decide how you want to do this in your chapter.

Regardless of when you choose to get the scheduling information from your new volunteers, you'll eventually need to schedule them into weekly slots. It is useful to first schedule drivers, making sure there is at least one driver for each time slot, and then schedule everyone else. Make sure that you know how many people each driver's car will accommodate. If you are lucky enough to have a surplus of drivers, then you can either expand the size of the group or put extra drivers in groups as back-ups. The number in each group will depend on your hospital's needs and the total number of people in your program. In the Appendix of your Director's Guide is a sample of one of the schedules created in the past for Stanford Volunteers.

Scheduling can be a very complex process that carries lasting implications. In addition to making sure everyone has a driver, you will want to make sure that people get their preferred time slot as often as possible. People who get their last choice may not be as motivated to volunteer. Once again, this will be up to your good judgment.



ORIENTATION

You will want to arrange an orientation for your volunteers. If you make these arrangements and know the orientation date before your interviews, then you will be in an excellent position to move your program forward. Typically, we have had our orientation a few days after the volunteers are informed of their acceptance. The orientation at the hospital is very important. It gives your volunteers their first exposure to the ward, along with its staff and patients. It also shows drivers how to get to the hospital (be sure to distribute clear instructions!).

If possible, a VA staff member should speak to your volunteers about their opportunities and responsibilities. The more positive the presentation is, the more motivated your volunteers will be. USVH recommends that you give everyone until midnight of the orientation to decline his or her acceptance. This way, you can make sure that the volunteers are committed to the program. It will be very helpful if both you and the nursing staff impress on your volunteers the significance of what they are doing and the importance that they attend the hospital each and every week. Eventually, as your knowledge about the hospital increases, you may want to give printed literature to your volunteers describing activities that they can do with the patients. In the Appendix of our Director's Guide is a sample of the literature given to Stanford volunteers about patient activities.

The orientation at the hospital is very important. It gives your volunteers their first exposure to the ward, along with its staff and patients.

Finally, let the volunteers start their shifts!

MAINTENANCE

Once all of this initial organization is completed, you will find that your workload will drop dramatically. If everything goes smoothly, you can expect to have your program running within two weeks. Once your program is launched, your responsibilities as Director will simply be to be sure that your volunteers are attending their shifts, as well as dealing with any scheduling crises that may arise. You should talk to your volunteers frequently to keep them motivated and evaluate how things are progressing. Distributing formal evaluations, both midway and at the end of the program, is useful in gauging what could be improved and what worked well.

Some of our best ideas have come from volunteers who have thoroughly evaluated their experiences and shared them with us. If you have the resources, it is also rewarding to hold an end of the program celebration thanking the volunteers for their service and recruiting them to volunteer again. This can be done through the hospital, community service center, or whatever resource is available to you. Also, try to get an idea of how many volunteers would like to continue working. Typically, we have simply contacted them in the beginning of the new calendar period and received the times they can work. There is no need to put returning, experienced volunteers through the admissions process again.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Please keep our recruiting directors abreast of your progress in establishing a USVH chapter at your school. In the Appendix of this guide there is a list of the current National Board of Directors and our contact info. Please do not hesitate to ask us questions or share your progress.

As you and your volunteers gain experience and form relationships with the patients and the hospital staff, you will find this to be an incredible opportunity for personal growth. If you organize well in the beginning, the rest of the program should be truly enjoyable, as it will allow you to focus on your patients and form friendships with the other volunteers. We recommend that you run the program quarter-by-quarter or semester-by-semester. More people will be inclined to volunteer if they do not have to commit for an entire year. Furthermore, class schedules change between each academic calendar period. Also, there is no need for you to organize the program alone. Appointing officers to help you is beneficial. The more help you can get in advertising, evaluation, etc..., the more effective your program will be. The Stanford Chapter currently has a board of 10 students. The board functions to address the myriad different aspects of USVH at Stanford. Through weekly meetings, we steer USVH in ever-advancing, exciting directions. The existence of a board of directors also provides us with a sustainable model of service. New board applications are reviewed every May and great care is given in selecting the new board. Positions are dynamic to meet the changing needs of our student body and patient population. Similarly, you should endeavor to find others to replace you once you graduate. Be on the lookout for people who have helped you in your early organizational processes, or exceptionally reliable, committed volunteers. Choosing a quality replacement is crucial in creating a lasting legacy of your efforts.

We wish you the best of luck and re-emphasize that we are always available to help you. Once again, thank you for your caring motivation and welcome to the USVH family.

Please keep our recruiting directors abreast of your progress in establishing a USVH chapter at your school.

APPENDIX

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1) USVH SAMPLE FLYER

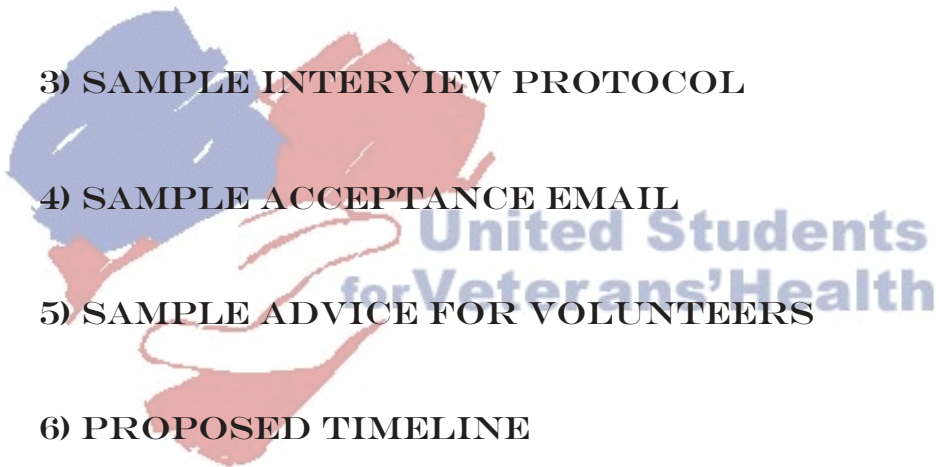
2) SAMPLE RECRUITMENT LETTER

3) SAMPLE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

4) SAMPLE ACCEPTANCE EMAIL

5) SAMPLE ADVICE FOR VOLUNTEERS

6) PROPOSED TIMELINE





APPENDIX

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR VETERANS' ALZHEIMERS WARD

Caring, dedicated, and compassionate Stanford students are needed to volunteer their time in the Alzheimer's and geriatric/psychiatric ward of the Menlo Park Veterans Administration Hospital. This is a fantastic opportunity to interact in a meaningful way with an underserved population that needs attention. Responsibilities include talking with patients and participating in social activities.

Time commitment is 2 hours a week for Fall quarter.

**To arrange an interview appointment,
Please e-mail Larisa Speetzen
speetzen@stanford.edu by Tuesday 10/1**

Dear Prospective Volunteer,

First, allow me to commend you for your interest in United Students for Veterans' Health. You have taken the first step in becoming involved with an exciting, vibrant student group. Service through USVH is an opportunity to create direct change in peoples' lives. It is an experience that is incredibly challenging and will leave an indelible mark upon you. I understand that many of you wrote after seeing a USVH flyer in your dorm. As a result, the intent of this email is to tell you more about USVH, inform you about the logistics of volunteering and to help you determine if you would like to proceed to the interview process.

To begin, a bit of history. An intrepid medical student founded United Students for Veterans' Health ten years ago. His purpose in creating a new student group was to promote outreach to the aging United States veteran population. Too often, today's men and women of service spend the last decades of their lives in isolation, lonely, and without friends or family to comfort them in times of illness, loss or fear. Many live in Veterans' Association hospitals which, despite offering high-quality medical care, cannot provide the solace and comfort that comes only with regular interaction with compassionate individuals from the outside world. We at USVH aim to provide that interaction by coordinating student efforts with the expertise and guidance of VA Hospital staff. For ten years, we have given dedicated volunteers the opportunity to consistently and reliably visit VA patients in need of human kindness. In addition, we have promoted a variety of mental health and veteran-related issues on college campuses across the United States. We have instructed new volunteers, taught classes, held conferences and organized special events like parties and baseball games. We are expansion-oriented, and at one time 16 different USVH chapters operated at universities across the nation. Currently, we are in the process of establishing chapters at West Point, Columbia, the Air Force Academy, and the UC schools.

On the organizational level, we are constantly in search of new volunteers, new ideas and new insight on the USVH experience. We publish a quarterly newsletter featuring organizational updates, relevant current events and statistics, student reflections, veteran art and poetry and guest columns by related organizations. We also maintain our own website and have plans to publish a book chronicling nearly a decade of USVH service.

Logistically, the volunteer process is elegantly simple. Upon

USVH SAMPLE INTERVIEW

Start by introducing USVH:

Tell them what we do, what our values and goals are, and what we expect in terms of time commitment, as well as heart commitment and attitude. Talk about your personal experiences, and what USVH has meant to you. Then, explain the logistics: carpooling, quarter-long commitment, weekly schedule, and the necessity of being consistent and sticking with their set schedule.

Next, ask them questions such as:

1. What brings you to the interview? (Why are you interested in USVH?)
2. What are you looking to get out of being a part of USVH?
3. What will you bring to USVH? (Personality traits, ideas, web design skills etc...)
4. How comfortable are you with the elderly? How comfortable are you with people who are sick and/or terminally ill?
5. How will you show the veterans that you genuinely care about them?
6. What kind of experience have you had with veterans? With the elderly? With those with neurological disease?
7. Are you considering staying on with USVH for the whole year- or more?

Let them ask you any questions they have.

If you can't answer a question, jot it down and let them know you'll get back to them.

End by asking them for contact information and scheduling preferences. Ask the prospective volunteer if he or she has a car and would be willing to drive a group of volunteers if accepted into the program. Afterwards, tell them when you will notify prospective volunteers of their status.

Thank them for taking the time to interview with USVH.

Please note that carpool groups will meet 15 minutes before these start times and will return to campus 15 minutes after the end times.

My time preferences are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Do you have a car on campus, and would you be willing to make a strong commitment to drive a carpool group every week for the entire quarter?

If yes, how many will your car accommodate?

What are your interests (academic, recreational, etc...)?

Do you especially enjoy any of the following: art projects, card games, playing catch, old cars, old movies, board games, music (do you play an instrument?), Stanford sports events, watching television?

What three adjectives would characterize your personality?

Are you more introspective or extroverted?

Are you interested in learning hand massage techniques?

Are you interested in learning how to use WebTV?

Where are you from?

Are you comfortable with one-sided conversations?

Do you have a gender preference for the veterans you will visit?

On a scale of 0(very uncomfortable) to 10 (very comfortable) how at ease are you in unfamiliar situations?

Are you especially interested in learning more about any particular cultures (please specify)?

Do you especially identify with any particular cultural groups (please specify)?

What languages do you speak?

Are you familiar or experienced with the following conditions:

PROSPECTIVE TIMELINE

DAY 1

Contact VA hospital

DAY 2

Contact VA hospital

DAY 3

Visit the VA hospital to become familiar with the ward.

DAY 4-DAY13

Flyer/Recruit on Campus. Usually, 7-10 days is a good time to wait for replies.

DAY 14

Application Deadline

DAY 15-DAY 16

Interviews (this will depend on the number of interested parties)

DAY 17

Interviews completed.

DAY 18

Create schedule and notify admitted volunteers

DAY 19 AND DAY 20

Orientation.

DAY 21

Begin Volunteering!



United Students
for Veterans' Health