ACE Neighbours

Active, Connected, Engaged

St Monica Trust

Volunteer Role Description

What is ACE Neighbours?

The ACE Neighbours project aims to support isolated older adults to get 'out and about' more, improve their confidence and engage more with their community. In doing so, volunteers make a positive contribution to older people's health and well-being.

What is the role of an ACE Neighbours Volunteer?

An ACE Neighbours Volunteer (known as an Activator) provides peer support on a one-to-one basis over six months for an isolated older adult who is physically inactive and would like some support to help them get out and about a bit more. This could be due to lacking in confidence, not having the motivation or simply not having someone to go with.

The volunteer helps build the person's confidence on the first few visits, lets them know what is happening locally and will then accompany them to an activity the person has chosen. Gradually, support is withdrawn so that by the end of the six months the person is independently active.

Volunteers must be aged 60 or over. The person they will be supporting will be aged 65 or over.

Volunteers are asked to:

- Meet regularly (up to 12 meetings over 6 months, once a week at first, reducing over time) with one older person. The days, times and places are agreed between you both.
- Telephone the person you are supporting (your ACE Neighbour) to confirm each meeting.
- Encourage your ACE Neighbour to get out and about and get involved in their local community.
- Accompany your ACE Neighbour out into their community and to local activities.

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- Meet other volunteers (ACE Activators) and their ACE Neighbour to create small social groups – meet for a cup of tea!
- Take part in induction, training and support sessions as required.
- Inform the ACE Neighbours Project Officer of any issues or problems you may have.
- Represent St Monica Trust in a positive manner.
- Work to St Monica Trust policies and procedures at all times.
- Give St Monica Trust at least a month's notice if you decide to stop being an ACE Neighbours volunteer (although we realise that this is not always possible).

Qualities and skills required for this role:

- Good communication skills, especially listening skills.
- A sociable and caring nature.
- Patience and kindness.
- You may sometimes need to be gentle but firm, and be able to set limits.
- An understanding of the importance of emotional well-being and social contact for older people.
- An understanding of the need to work within agreed boundaries
- An understanding of the need for confidentiality within the role.
- An awareness of health and safety considerations when carrying out the role.
- A commitment to valuing equality and diversity.

In this role you are not being asked to provide things like personal care, transportation or counselling. Neither are you expected to help organise things for your ACE Neighbour such as appointments or get involved in their financial matters.

How much time will I need to give?

Just a few hours per week, lessening over time, for six months. After the initial training session, you will be matched with your ACE Neighbour and together you will choose a time and date that is convenient for you to visit them at home. You will visit for approximately two hours per week for the first few weeks and then you will accompany your Neighbour to local activities for a further few weeks or months. Support can be provided by telephone and further occasional visits but gradually your support lessens over the six months.

In return for your commitment ACE Neighbours will provide you with:

- Induction training.
- A manual of help and advice.
- On-going support through the ACE Neighbours Project Officer.
- A list of all activities and events in the area.
- Opportunities for social interaction within the ACE Activators Network.
- The opportunity to make a difference to someone's life.

Location:

Various locations within Keynsham and Saltford or Hartcliffe and Withywood. Meetings may also be held at the St Monica Trust sites in Bedminster or Keynsham.

Expenses:

Volunteers will be paid out of pocket expenses upon the submission of receipts against legitimate costs incurred while volunteering, including travel and agreed purchases.

Evidencing the difference you'll be making:

ACE Neighbours is a project which has been funded by LinkAge and we are working with the University of Birmingham to evidence the difference that is made to the health and well-being of older adults. Therefore we are asking our volunteers to take part in the same measurements as our participants. This means wearing a small activity monitor on your wrist and completing a questionnaire. Please see further details on the volunteer information sheet.

Previous ACE Volunteer feedback:

"I'm sitting here with a big grin on my face and a lovely warm feeling of achievement!"