



**VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION:
Respite and Companionship Services**

Organization: Volunteers of America of Minnesota
Location: 3333 N 4th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55412
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Position Summary

Volunteers provide companionship and supportive presence for individuals living with dementia and offer meaningful respite for family caregivers through the Caregiver Support and Dementia Services (CSDS) program. Under the guidance of the caregiver and with support from CSDS staff, volunteers engage individuals living with dementia in conversation and activities that promote connection, comfort, and dignity. When desired, volunteers may also offer companionship and support to caregivers, helping create moments of rest and relief.

This role plays an important part in supporting caregivers' well-being while helping individuals living with dementia feel safe, engaged, and valued.

Key Activities

- Visit with individuals living with dementia in their home or in community locations identified by the caregiver.
- Provide companionship and general supervision to ensure safety and emotional support.
- Engage individuals in meaningful, person-centered activities that support mental, emotional, and social stimulation.
- Provide respite and companionship during caregiver appointments, events, or activities, including occasional group or community-based settings.
- Build familiarity and trust over time so the care recipient feels comfortable and the caregiver can confidently step away.
- When appropriate, assist with light housekeeping or meal serving related to the visit.

Consistency is essential to this role, and longer-term volunteer commitments are strongly encouraged, as ongoing relationships offer the greatest benefit to both caregivers and individuals living with dementia.

Benefits of Volunteer Role

- Be part of a compassionate, mission-driven team making a real impact.
- Gain deeper understanding of dementia and caregiving.
- Make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and families affected by dementia.
- Build connections with like-minded volunteers and community members.
- Use your interests, creativity, and strengths to support others.
- Participate in volunteer recognition and appreciation events.
- Attend social gatherings and opportunities to connect with fellow volunteers and staff.
- Access ongoing education related to dementia, caregiving, and healthy aging.

Desired Qualifications and Requirements

- Strong listening skills and a caring, respectful presence.
- Empathy, openness, and comfort supporting people living with dementia or other disabilities.
- Creativity and flexibility when responding to changing needs or challenging behaviors.
- Clear and respectful communication skills.
- Willingness to complete and pass a background check.

Time Commitment

- Volunteers work with caregivers to develop a schedule that fits both caregiver needs and volunteer availability.
- A consistent, recurring schedule is preferred whenever possible.
- Volunteers with flexible availability may also provide support during appointments, outings, or special events, including accompanying caregivers and care recipients in the community.

Training/Orientation

All volunteers receive comprehensive training and ongoing support, including:

- Volunteers of America organizational overview and mission.
- Dementia-specific education and training.
- Basic health, safety, and prevention training.
- REST (Respite Education and Support Tools) training for respite providers.
- Review of relevant policies and procedures.
- Matching and onboarding support from CSDS staff, including accompaniment on initial visits.
- Tools, resources, and ongoing staff support for questions or concerns.
- Opportunities to connect with other respite and companionship volunteers through meetings and shared learning.
- Access to additional educational and support resources as available.