



# Adopt – A – Grandparent Program



Presented by: Erin Mueller

## Introduction

The need for companionship does not deteriorate with age. It is important for everyone, regardless of age, to continue to make connections with others. Volunteerism can enhance the emotional, social and physical well-being of older adults. The objectives of this initiative were to work with UW-Madison students to create an Adopt-A-Grandparent program that matched 7 long-term residents with 7 students to foster relationships, bridge generational gaps and give residents more one-on-one care.

### Goals:

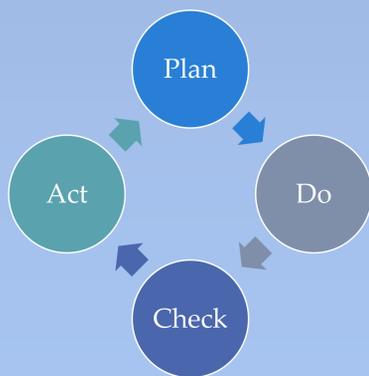
- Coordinate volunteers to come in one time per week for 6 months
- All residents involved have positive interactions with volunteers

## Current Knowledge

Current programming allowed for the implementation of a structured volunteer program for the long-term residents at Capitol Lakes. With the help of the Nursing Department, the diverse needs of residents were identified which could be addressed through the services of a volunteer.

Likewise, volunteers often look for unique opportunities to serve the community. Studies have shown participation in social activities can help with role loss.

## Continuous Improvement



Continue to assess the viability of the program by planning different activities for volunteers and residents to attend; doing independent assessments of each relationship to ensure residents are benefitting from the interactions; checking whether the student actually sees the resident and does meaningful activities; and acting when necessary to change the activities or pairing of resident and volunteer.



## Actual Testimony

“Before my stroke I would do lots of things – knit, go for walks, have lunch with friends. But now I can’t. When (she) helps me knit I can do it by myself. She works wonders with me and I don’t know how she does it.” – Capitol Lakes resident

“It’s nice to have friends who don’t care that you have a disability. When she comes in I know it is going to be a great time because we always have something new to share with each other. I especially enjoy sharing my art work. It’s fun.” – Capitol Lakes resident

“I usually spend a couple hours at a time listening her tell fascinating stories, her knowledge and wisdom she has gained throughout the years., and the many difficult experiences in the past that she is unable to share with anyone else. We always find something to laugh and joke about. Not only have I have been able to provide her a social service, but she seems to always reminds me to take life lightly, and to appreciate the small things.” – Abbey Schneider, student

“I’m 101 years old and I have a lot of stories to tell. Everyone is amazed by how much I remember. It is nice to have someone who will laugh at the old days with me and who respects what I have to say.” – Capitol Lakes resident

“Involving myself in the Adopt-A-Grandparent organization was easily one of the best decisions I have ever made. Adopt a Grandparent has confirmed all of my previously conceived thoughts of being able to give a beneficial, caring, and pure relationship to someone who might need a little extra “something” in their life.

Adopt a Grandparent has shown me that the relationships formed with the Grandparents are highly reciprocal, and well worth the time spent alongside our new friends” - Emily Garton, student

## Results

### Residents

- High satisfaction determined through testimonies
  - Creation of a bond that will continue
- Prior use of resident complaint log is no longer needed

### Students

- A feeling of purpose and knowing they are adding to the quality of life of the resident
- They benefit from the relationship just as much as the resident does

### Staff

- New volunteers for the Activity Department to utilize during structured activities.

## Sustainability

Since the inception of this program, the volunteers have been in contact with the Activity Department.

A spreadsheet listing the volunteer’s name, the resident they are matched up with, and contact information is available for staff. After each visit, an Activity Assistant documents the activity that took place during the visit in order to open up dialogue between the volunteers and staff. As students graduate, information has been provided to the Activity Department for new students to enter the program.



## Special Acknowledgements

Abbey Schneider – UW-Madison Nursing student/co-founder of Adopt-A-Grandparent  
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