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EASTER SEALS

Moderator: Lisa Tucker
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2:00 p.m. ET

Operator: Good afternoon, welcome to the National Center on Senior Transportation Webinar, Where do I go from Here? Engage Volunteers in New Ways. All participants will be in a listen only mode.

There will be an opportunity to ask questions at the end of today's presentation. At that time, an operator will give instructions on how to ask your questions. If you should need any assistance during the conference, please press star, then zero and an operator will come back online to assist you.

This conference is being recorded. I would now like to turn the conference over to Lisa Tucker.

Lisa Tucker: Thanks very much (Stephanie). Welcome everybody. Before we begin, I would like to let you know that the PowerPoint and audio for today's session will be posted in the e-Learning section of the NCST Website, seniortransportation.net in the coming days. Now, I would like to introduce to you to our speaker for today's session. NCST is excited to welcome Jennifer Bennett, senior manager, education and training with VolunteerMatch.

Jennifer has more than 15 years of nonprofit management experience. Most of those years has been directly managing volunteers. With her breadth of experience, she is well qualified to help volunteer matches community of nonprofit, better recruit and engage volunteers. She shares her knowledge with volunteer managers through the Webinars found on the learning center, in newsletters and blog entries and in-person at conferences around the

country. She is a strong believer in the importance of engaging volunteers in meaningful work and was certified in Volunteer Administration in 2009 and joined the board of the council for certification in Volunteer Administration in 2012.

NCST is delighted to have Jennifer and VolunteerMatch with us today. We would like to follow the presentation with questions from the audience. So after Jennifer's presentation, we will receive instructions from our operator, (Stephanie), on how you can ask a question. It gives me great pleasure to turn the session over to Jennifer Bennett, Jennifer?

Jennifer Bennett: Thank you Lisa. Good morning everyone. I want to just talk a little about who I am in VolunteerMatch before we jump into the content. Some of you maybe familiar with our Website, volunteermatch.org. We are a nonprofit. We can post all your open volunteer opportunities. People can come and search through them and with just a click of a button, send their contact information to you and received your contact information in return.

So, we are nationwide. Our basic accounts of post volunteer opportunities are always free. So if you want more information about how to get out there and put your opportunities up on VolunteerMatch, start recruiting online and please feel free to contact me. My contact information will be out at the end. I would be happy to help you get started.

We are also working with over 160 corporations around the world to help them engage their employees and volunteer activities in their communities. So, that might be something that brings you to VolunteerMatch as well, those connections with those corporations. So again I have information and more resources available at the end, so please do feel free to contact me if you have questions about VolunteerMatch or about any of the things that we're talking about this morning.

So what are we going to be talking about this morning? Oh, I'm on the left coast, so it's still morning for me, maybe afternoon where you are. We are going to be talking about what your program looks like or feels like to the volunteers that are engaged with you now? So, we're going to take a look at

how we may be inviting volunteers into our programs and how we might be able to start to evolve that, to think a little bit differently about engaging volunteers, about creating some of those opportunities that has involvement, flexibility and creating that connection between your volunteers and your organization and your mission and the work that you're doing in the community.

So afterward we're going to talk about that, we're going to take some steps to think about what you might be able to do. What are some of those schools, what are some of those steps that you can start thinking about or start implementing to change what it means to be a volunteer in your organization?

We're going to end with some things to think about, some ideas or first – first steps or ideas to start talking to others in your organization about how you might be able to engage a volunteer in – in a different type of work or specific work in your organization.

And then of course questions and either today if you have question or again, please feel free to reach out for me afterwards, if you have some things that comes up afterwards or later. You know, sometimes when we start thinking differently or big picture ideas like we're going to cover today, you have to sit with it for a little bit, think on it for a couple of days before those questions are coming.

All right. So what does your program look like as a – to a volunteer when they come to you now and they know, you guys are all about transportation, so I have this firm analogy involving roads today.

So, we all think of a cul-de-sac, I don't want to say dead end but that's sort of what it feels like sometimes to a volunteer. You maybe have one opportunity or two different job descriptions for a volunteer. This might be a task list kind of volunteer opportunity. There's just nothing to do once you get there. There's nowhere to go. There's no turns or – or – other roads that connect to it.

Sometimes we think about volunteers that come with an expiration date. Volunteer comes to you for a little bit, a couple of months and then they wander off because it's not engaging with them. They don't know what else to do. They don't – they don't – they want to continue to learn, they want to continue to grow to – to take on more responsibilities or get more involve in your organization but they can't.

I also – some think of this as a silo volunteer program where just put volunteers into a silo and we hope that they don't get of their silo and we hope that no one or no information get's in there. So that's – some of these programs can feel like that, particularly really traditional model volunteer program. For volunteers, again, task list-based, longevity-based. Some of you maybe struggling with that.

It can be hard to start to think outside of – of this kind of model, usually from an organization perspective. Volunteers are only allowed to do certain work or volunteers are only reliable or dependable for certain kinds of activities.

The next model I'm going to talk about today is that country road model. And this is, you know, if you think about country road, it maybe very pretty and people maybe very happy on it but it doesn't necessarily get you to where you want to go. There are no signs. You don't know how long it's going to take to get to where you are going. If you hang in there, eventually, maybe you'll get to do something interesting or learn something new or – or find a new way to engage with – with the organization.

So if we think about that, you know it's not necessarily bad, it's not necessarily as good as it could be when we're talking about impact and engagement.

So if we think about highway, right, there's a lot of signs, if we have – if we want to get on. It's clearly labeled. We know how to get on. There are signs all the time telling us how long it's going to take to get somewhere, where we're going. So that's that impact, right. What are we doing? Why is it important? Is there some place that you have to take it off? Do you want to go on vacation? Do you want to go visit a grandchild?

You have to take care of – of someone who's ill or, you know, something in your life changes. There are signs to help you get off that highway and then there is a sign to help you get back on. So, we're going to talk about that today because flexibility is a big program component when we talk about engaging volunteers in meaningful work and engaging volunteers in front of this new model of volunteer engagement.

All right. So what are some of those keys to evolving your program? This first one here I'd like to think of it as a scale. If you look at here, sort of a balancing scale. We wanted to develop work that on one side is meaningful to the volunteer and on the other side it's important to the organization. So, we want to keep those in balance as much as possible. Sometimes we have volunteers that come to our organization and maybe the work that we're asking them to do is really important to us.

It's helping us really meet core program requirement or really an integral to the – to the work that we do on a daily basis. One of the examples I like to use here is data entry. So important that you can get clean data into your database and we can't get clean information out of it, can bring your organization to a standstill but oftentimes we sort of use that as a throwaway activity for volunteer, oh just put this into the database. We haven't done a good job of explaining why that work is meaningful to the organization, so that a volunteer can – can take some ownership or some interest in it.

There are volunteers for whom that work is meaningful. They really understand the importance of clean data and – and pulling information back out. So, we want to make sure that we're not just assigning those really important activities or the really important work until you've done a good job of explaining how it can be meaningful to the volunteer. So, we definitely see it get out of whack that way. We don't do a good job of explaining why the work is important and – and so the volunteer doesn't understand why they should invest in it.

We also see this get out balance the other way. Sometimes, particularly if we have volunteers and they had been with us for a while, they have work that's

very meaningful to them, maybe something that they have, a lot of ownership over, a lot of control over or have a sort of carved out as their niche in – in our organization but if it's not moving our mission forward, if it's not directly contributing to the work of the organization, it's really taking time and energy, and sometimes money away from the work that we should be doing, a work that does move our mission forward, the work that does impact them, our clients and our communities.

So, we wanted to make sure that we're trying to keep that in balance from both sides and as you start thinking about ways that volunteer might be able to engage or invited into your organization now. We want to keep this in mind. I need someone who can do X, Y, Z and then I want to think about who's going to be that right person. So again, I like to think of – one of my favorite examples here is may be a greeter or front desk or an information desk and I know who I want at that front desk.

Right? Someone who is outgoing and comfortable talking into a wide range of people. Good at solving problems, good at doing multiple things at the same time. So if I have a volunteer who comes in and I asked some questions and – and she says, well you know I just really like to focus on one project at a time. I don't want to be interrupted. You know, I don't like people bothering me when I'm focusing on my work. I'm not going to say, oh great, I have a front desk position for you because that's the wrong person. That person is not going to be a good fit for that opportunity.

We want to make sure that we are also building connections between our volunteers, our clients, and the mission that we do in the community, and sometimes we talked about this at orientation. We, you know, we do a little spiel, this is our mission and this what we do and then we never talk about that again and our volunteer can go years, sometimes decades and – and not ever have a conversation back about what's the mission of our organization is.

So, we want to make sure that we're creating that connection. We're talking about impact, we're talking about why, what we do is important, not just what you need done and that's where sometimes as volunteer program managers, we drop about or don't share all the information. We talked about what we

need then. We need someone who can come in and do this. But data into our database, come on Tuesdays and answer the phones, whatever those things might be but we don't think about how that impacts our clients and how that directly relates to our mission and we don't share that back with the volunteers.

We need someone who can come in and work in our front desk and meet – meet our clients as they come in, so important that the first interaction of the client has with our organization is – is a smiling face and a friendly, helpful person because this helps us, you know, meet our mission, solve this problem, answer this question that we're trying to answer in the community. The more we can do that, the more that volunteer starts to feel like an important part of our organization because we know they are, we just sometimes don't do a great job of talking about it or telling those stories.

On the other side of that, we're going to talk about this with some – with regards to flexibility and innovation is this idea that we want to establish that foundation first. So, we need to have policies in place. We need to have position descriptions in place, so that we can build create flexibility on top of that. And what we don't want is every volunteer setting up their own boundaries, their own rules, their own code of conduct, their own policies. That's not flexibility so much as that's just chaos, right. So, we want to make sure that we are creating that strong foundation, so that we can build a diverse program on top of it, build some flexibility on top of a strong foundation.

I talked a little bit about how important it is to understand – how that – the work of the volunteer meets the needs of your client and move your missions forward. We also want to make sure that we're sharing that but not just to our volunteers but to our organization and outside our organization to our community as well. That we're not just – and we had 25 volunteers came last month and they gave us this many hours and that equals to this in equal time equivalent employees or with – with this much dollar value.

We want to talk about the – where the rubber hits the road. Right? Where those volunteers are making a difference in our client's life not just that quantitative but the qualitative too? What do the clients feel when those –

those volunteers come and interact with them? How do the volunteers really make a difference and what does that mean for your organization?

All right, so those are some of those big pictures thing. We're going to start to dig in and talk about how we can start to create first some more involvement in our organization. Again, thinking about that cul-de-sac and an idea of a silo, we don't want volunteers to just be stuck in one place. We want them to be able to look around our organization and see how they might be able to help with their time and their talent or help them understand what else might need to be done in our organization.

First we want to think about training or experience. Remember we were talking about who is the right volunteer for each opportunity, that volunteer who comes in and – and we know who we want in our front desk or who we want interacting with our clients and going out and – and visiting but we want to make sure we're bringing that right person. So do volunteers need to know what they need to be able to do or be or know to be able to fill each role in your programs, so we want think about experiences. Right?

It would be great if you have some experiences, working with seniors coming in or – or asking some questions, have you worked with seniors in the past. Because you know sometimes that can be a little bit scary. I know even if volunteer coming in as an older adult looking at even older, older adults, sometimes they can feel a little bit like, I don't want that to happen to me, what happens when I'm in that position. So, we want to make sure that we're having some conversations about that, what they need to experience is, what do they need to know or be able to do to fill those roles.

And don't forget about the characteristics, sort of those innate things that – that each person brings with them. Clearly, defining what a successful volunteer will look like, so we go back to that front desk model again. The idea that someone might be able to learn how to use the phone system or learn how to find resources in your binder or learn where files are kept but you're not going to be able to teach someone to be people person or to be outgoing, become with those intrinsic characteristics. I want to think about what – who those right volunteers are.

When we look at those goals in our organization or how we might be able to engage volunteer, is it clear how people get to become leaders or take on more responsibilities or that mysterious like that country road model. You never know when that turn is going to come up. You never know when you might have to go over a hill or – or around the corner or is it base on longevity and sometimes we see this particularly in programs where volunteers do stick with us and have that – that you know sort of working towards the 10-year pin or the 20-year pin.

We want to make sure that longevity isn't necessarily a good qualification for a leadership role or for a – a position in our organizations. We want to make sure we're clear about who we're working for in these – in these positions or – or in these opportunities. And then if you are asking volunteers to take on more responsibility or to take on new roles, if you have classes or experienced checklist or an opportunity for volunteers to gain those skills. Right?

Since managing people can be hard, managing volunteer can be even more difficult. So if you are asking volunteers to step in leadership role or thinking about that, we want to make sure that we're including that information. Sometimes we see – I've seen organizations where volunteers come in and joined a shift or a team or – that's already in place and so much of – what's important on that team being successful is team building but we don't think about inviting that person in and offering those other volunteers or those existing volunteers to schools and resources to help them better integrate that – that new volunteer into the team.

So sometimes we – I think about what if I was to hire someone and put them unto a team of (inaudible) people and we're just bringing somebody in, you know, bright and early Monday morning and say here's your new co-worker, we would talk about who's coming in, who's the right person, what does this team need, what resources or time or talent are missing, so that we can match up. We want to think about that as well, bringing in for volunteers.

All right. We also want to think about creating more involvement around our volunteer leadership program. I talked a little bit about this already and

sometimes we have volunteers doing this kind of work and that we don't necessarily consider it a leadership opportunity. But do you have leadership roles for volunteers in your volunteer engagement program? I was talking about shift leaders or team leaders, or committee leaders. That's some leadership role where you ask a volunteer to step up and take on more responsibility.

Do you have volunteers in leadership roles in your organization? So if you have volunteers, may be working with blended team of paid staff and volunteer staff, taking on subject matter, expert roles. Right?

Sometimes we think about – we have volunteer who knows how to do this or has a lot of experience with this. Sometimes we talked about this with regards to skill-based volunteering. When somebody has some expertise or a lot of experience around something, so we bring in a volunteer or elevated volunteers to a subject matter expert role or position.

Pro bono consultant and sometimes this can be – I'm just doing a training yesterday in Columbus and we were talking about skill-based volunteers and pro bono consultants and how – it's this idea that we're all talking about but we haven't quite figure out how to put pieces together successfully as we would like. So, it's still a working progress for our field as – as volunteer program managers or – or leaders of volunteer engagement, we're still trying to figure this out. But most often, we can look to our board here sometimes to see examples of leadership, consultant level or actually hands on work on some very skilled professionals.

All right. The next piece that we're going to talk about is flexibility and you know just because a volunteer needs flexibility in their work, it doesn't necessary mean that they're not reliable and dependable. More and more, particularly even if we are engaging older adults as volunteers, volunteers want flexibility. I'd like to use my mom as an example here, you know, she's a great model, silent generation, never work outside the home, has had a career of volunteering but they still want to travel.

She had grandchildren she wants to visit. She wants to, you know, she has a life where to 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday does not always work for her. So, we want to make sure that we are, particularly as we start to look at engaging more diverse kinds of people in our organization that we're thinking about this idea that one size doesn't fit all, and it goes both ways. Again if we think back to that cul-de-sac, it doesn't allow for volunteers to get out.

You know, there's only one role or one type of work available. A volunteer if that doesn't fit for them or they can't make that or they don't want to work in that capacity in our organizations, there's no opportunity to invite them in. There's no opportunity for them to get involved. There's no opportunity for them to become passionate about your mission and help you meet your mission in the community.

Also, it doesn't allow for a retraction and just because a volunteer can't come at 2 p.m. on Tuesdays for the rest of their life, it doesn't mean that they can't be a great volunteer. So when we think about growth, we want to think about it – we obviously think about that as a positive, a volunteer investing more in our organization. But when we think about retraction, we don't want to think about that as a negative, right, saying, I have to step back or I'm going on vacation or I need to take a couple of months off, isn't a bad thing.

If we think back to that highway model, you have to get off and get to the rest stop or get to McDonald's for some French fries or get some more gas, so you can get back on and sometimes that's what we're talking about. Taking a little break and coming back on in a new capacity or in the same capacity but more enthusiastic or – or more invigorated.

So, we want to make sure that we're thinking about that. Do you also think about offering project-based opportunities? Things that maybe you check in with a volunteer. They work from home on their own time, virtual opportunities where they're – they're out there in the world, doing their own thing and never coming to your organization.

For example, somebody says to you, I know you guys – many of you around the East Coast and you had a really rough winter, volunteer says, you know,

we can't handle this anymore. We're going to go to Florida for a couple of months because if I see one more snow storm, I'm going to lose it, saying oh, yes, how great for you. You know, can I come with you but also you know, (Mary), you'd been working so well on – on training volunteers as they come in to our organization, you think you will have some time while you're down there relaxing and – and sitting on the beach to maybe start to outline a training program you know.

So, that's something that -- that volunteer can do completely on her own time, on her own schedule while she's doing whatever she's doing and come back to you and – and when she's back in town, you can talk in and say, hey, how did it go, or communicate by e-mail. All of us are so connected now, even our older adults that, you know, that kind of work is something that can be – can be delegated or – or can – can start to offer some of that flexibility, so that a volunteer leaving doesn't mean that they have to disappear.

All right. This is where I start to get up on my soapbox and talk a little bit about bringing volunteers into volunteer engagement program because we are just oftentimes – we are the only people in our organization task with or responsible for a volunteer engagement but that doesn't mean that we have to be limited to just the amount of time that we have to do to work. Oftentimes, one of the most powerful things we can do to inspire other departments, other paid-staff people to start thinking differently about volunteer engagement is to model that behavior in our volunteer engagement program.

So, invite volunteers into the work that you do. I sometimes called this the hamster wheel. You're just running as fast as you can and you're getting nowhere because you're so busy screening applications, reviewing applications and interviewing volunteers and – and placing them and – and getting them trained and then you just keep doing that over and over and over again and you never get to think strategically. You never get to look more than a couple of days in the future.

This sometimes – this is when seasonal things pick up on you or you get to the end of a project or a program or an event and you think, I have all these great ideas for next year and then you put them in a drawer or you, you know, type

them up and put them on your computer and then you come back to them a week before you need to start recruiting volunteers the next time, and you haven't had a chance to implement any of those changes.

So, I oftentimes say that there are experts on being a volunteer in your organization already and they are your volunteers. Volunteers know the work that they do, that other volunteers do and – and we want to think about empowering them to create some of that foundation, create or document what's going on now and then to start thinking about the flexibility. Right?

Sometimes we say things or put pieces or policies into place because at the time they seem like a good idea. We were trying to regulate behavior that we wanted to see, rather than engaging volunteers who already met that criteria. Right?

So again, if we want to think about what volunteers – what the right volunteer looks like for opportunities or for the work in our organization, the more we bring in the wrong volunteers and while we put those volunteers who aren't very good at details on database programs, the more we put those people who just want to be left alone to do their work in quiet on the front desk, the more we're going to have to create that rigidity. Right?

Because we are trying to manage people into being different than who they are already. Right? There's characteristic, so if we – search – look who our superstar volunteers are, who those volunteers are that come in and we say, oh (Sally) is going to be here tomorrow. I just know everything it's going to go really smoothly. It's going to just – there aren't going to be any problems, maybe I will have a couple of hours just to get some – some real work done. I won't have to run around, putting out fires or dealing with modality conflicts.

Look at (Sally), what did she do differently than some of the other volunteers do? Ask her, you know, what do you think makes you such a great volunteer in this role or great volunteer for our – our organization and ask her to maybe put together what she thinks about perfect volunteer would be, can't clone her yet and sometimes we look at volunteers that are on program and we think, oh I just wish I could clone you and then my life would be so easy.

But you can start to figure out what makes her that right volunteer, makes him that right volunteer and start to find more people that have the same kind of experience or the same kind of characteristics.

So, ask volunteer to put (stake) in that kind of work. It can take the load off. You do not have to do everything yourself and the more you can invite those volunteers into your volunteer engagement program, the more likely you are to be able to be that leader in volunteer engagement. To think strategically, to – to start to put some of these new pieces or ideas into place and that's what we're going to talk about in just a full minutes, actually doing some of it.

All right. The last sort of component that I have here as far as creating some – some new ways to engagement volunteers or – or invite the volunteers to make sure the organization in new ways is this idea of creating understanding.

At the very beginning, I talked about how sometimes we just mentioned our mission at orientation and then we never talk about it again. And I'm not saying that we should make our volunteers memorize our mission and be able to recite it back to us when we ask them but more the idea that volunteers understand what our mission means in regard to the work that we do in the community.

So how are we keeping them informed? Remember that idea that cul-de-sac or that silo and I said we hope the volunteers don't get out and we hope information doesn't get in and sometimes we try to keep our volunteers more separate from our organization but that's really – it's not going to help them become enthusiastic or inspired or have that meaningful experience with our organization and that's what we want.

That keeps the retention, that's what keeps volunteers coming back to us because they understand what their role is and they understand why it's important.

Sometimes I get questions about recognition and – and what's the best way to recognize volunteers and what's that one thing that I can buy or give them or

say to them, so that they know that they're appreciated. I'm creating these communication channels, sharing information with them is one of the best ways to recognize your volunteers. If you think about ongoing training, professional development for your volunteer, that's the biggest kind of thank you there is. You should say you are so important to us.

You mean so much to the work that we do. I want to make sure that you're involve in these conversations or you're getting this information on a new idea or policies, or theories that's happening in – in your community or in the work that you're doing that can impact the – the work the volunteers are doing or that it's going to impact your organization, both positive and negative. You know again, sometimes we don't want to share the negative with volunteers for whatever reason and it feels scary to us.

But to say, hey, you know what, we've got a new policy or we're going to lose funding from our – our state government this year. You know, what – what does that mean to the work that we're doing now? Is there anything we can do to change that and really starting to invite those volunteers into the conversation and sharing that information with them that isn't keeping them in a silo.

Certainly as we talk about implementing new programs or new ideas, if you're working for somebody to help you interview volunteers or create that training manual or figure out who the right volunteer is for each role. Invite volunteers into that, share with them what's going on and how they can help.

And then sometimes, you know, we just get together with our volunteers at our annual appreciation lunch or brunch and we say, these are all the great things that have happened over the last year. What about sharing them on a more ongoing basis, not how many hours did you give last year but what did you do last week, who did something amazing or inspiring or impactful in the last couple of days and – and creating some of those channels to share that information out more regularly.

Sometimes when I do this presentation in person I can start to see people in the back of the room or – or you know at a different table, start to feel a little

bit overwhelmed, like I'm already doing so much stuff already, how am I going to have time to communicate out once a week or – or every other week on – on some of these activities or – or milestones in – in my program or any organizations.

And the great answer is, is that we just talked about that, invite volunteers into this, create a team of volunteers, you go around and figure out what's going on or run (with) that information, fix your database, so that information is more easy to – to get, to pull out, to send that information out.

You don't have to do this all by yourself. This is really an idea. We're talking big picture today of switching from you being the one who has to do all the this and keeping volunteers in a really limited capacity to opening it up and thinking about what could we do, how could we engage volunteer, what would help us better, serve our organizations through our clients and meet our mission in the community.

So we past a little bit about this part as well, making sure that we understand why – what volunteers do is important not just what they did and how many hours it is but to start incorporate that impact into the recognition. I mentioned recognition, professional development or sharing information as an example of recognition but the more that we can share what a volunteer has done and why it's important goes hand in hand. Right?

It's not just, thanks for coming and for your four hours today. We really appreciate it. It's thank you for getting through this project or accomplishing this because that means tomorrow this can happen or now I'm able to do this or I know that (Mary Ann) was so thankful that you were able to be here today. It made such a difference – difference to her and they know she's been struggling. Remember those piece about that you're connecting those pieces of the work that the volunteers just did with what's going to happen next in – in the impact.

Include your clients in that thank you too. It can mean so much. I put some – some of you maybe on Twitter and participating in Thoughtful Thursdays for volunteer program managers. And we had one of – one topic a couple of

weeks ago on volunteer recognition and one woman has said, you know that she likes to just shoot a quick e-mail to a volunteer when they've done something awesome and just say, you know thank you so much. It was one above and beyond today and I said, I go to that next step and I actually mail people letters.

It doesn't take that much more time to quickly handwrite a little note than does to send an e-mail and in this day and age, it means so much more. When was the last time you got something fun in the mail? Hardly ever in this day and age. So you know, I had volunteers actually call me up and say, I just got your note and it means so much to me.

So the more you can start to include clients or staff members, so say you know, this is great project for our development director and she is so thankful. Ask her to write, you know, stand over her desk and say can you just write three lines of how much you appreciate it. When you mail it off, it gets there the next day or the day after that and it's so – so much more impactful than just saying thankful – thank you at the end of a shift or – or waiting for that annual brunch to recognize that great work that volunteers are doing.

And then it becomes even more powerful, if you decide to share that thank you, spread that thank you outside of our volunteer program. Share it with our organization and share with our community and this is where social media makes this so easy. Put it up on Facebook. We have often volunteers today do all this great work or – and whatever it is. It can be really powerful and then not just internal. Right? We talked about sharing it with inside our organization but external. What channels do you have to go out into the community to say thank you.

First of all, it can be really inspiring to that volunteer for you to say, you know, this great work was done by this team or you know, we've done all this great work here but it also is a great recruitment channels here. The volunteer can – can come in and – and get this idea of – of what else volunteers can do or how volunteers are engaged, maybe even get the idea that they want to volunteer.

All right, so we're going to talk a little bit about this next step and sometimes depending upon, what the word advocate means to you, this can sound a little bit funny but one of the things that's really powerful that we know at VolunteerMatch, we do a survey every other year to ask volunteers and nonprofits to give us some feedback and we ask our nonprofits to use our site. What their number one recruitment channel is and overwhelmingly they tell us about 80 to 82 percent of the last 10 years have told us that word of mouth is their primary recruitment method.

So what we want is to give volunteers such as an amazing experience to have them feel so invested in our organization that went apart of - of us meeting our mission that they go out and tell their friends and their family members and they become advocates of the work that we're doing that they say "Hey, you know what I've just learned that we're going to be doing this next month and I think you'll be a great volunteer for that" or "I just have such an amazing experience" or "did you know that we're going to have a budget shortfall this year and we're going to start trying to figure out how we can raise some money and I know that, you know, you have some ideas or some experience on this, can you help or can you write a letter."

We want our volunteers to go out into the community and talk about the great works that we're doing. So, we want to make sure that our volunteers know what our mission is, know what our major accomplishments are, know who provides funding to us or - or where funding comes from because you never know who's connected to someone else to help make those pieces come together.

Again, we talked about those silos or those cul-de-sacs and sometimes in our organizations, we have a series of cul-de-sac that's like a new housing development, right? Everyone is on their own little cul-de-sac and none of that information gets across. There's no cross street that runs through all of them. There's no information that - that get shared.

So, make sure that if you have volunteers working in other areas or project or programs that are going on, you share that across the work that's being done because you never know, they may not have a volunteer. At times, you'll be a

good volunteer for the program in their end, but maybe they have somebody who got some expertise or has some knowledge that will be a good fit somewhere else.

We want to make sure that there's a holistic view of our organization and the works that we're doing and then making sure that we are giving them that information and that we're saying to them "we would love for you to share that" or you know, hear information from Facebook, you know, share to your friend or let people know, spread the word. Sometimes people feel like they have to wait for permission so we're extremely giving them that permission to - to talk to people in the community or make some of those connections and then at VolunteerMatch again, we sad it's just a unique place in the - in the nonprofit world, in the volunteer engagement world.

One of the things that we think about is when you communicate out to your volunteers, when you ask for donations from people in your community, do you know where those would overlap and some organizations do and some don't and we had a former board member at VolunteerMatch. She was - She still is at the Stanford Center for Social Innovation.

She has turned off of our board, but she does a lot of work on motivations, why do people volunteer, what brings them to this idea and she did a really interesting study where she asked people.

She had two models. One, she just asked if they were going - if a volunteer would, excuse me, she just asked if someone would donate to her pretend organization and then on the other model, she first asked if someone could donate their time or - or talent to the organization and then asked if they were - if they can donate - they can donate funds.

And what she learned was that if you asked someone to volunteer first or if there are any volunteering, they are more like - not only more likely to give, but they are more likely to give more so on about the order of about 10 percent more or 10 times as much so that's the connection.

So, if you do have volunteers who are also donors, make sure that you are working with whoever that is, the development director or - or whoever is

working with the donation part to make sure that you're incorporating the work that those volunteers are doing into that donation ask as well so they've already given you their time, which is their most valuable asset. Some of them may also want to give you financial support as well.

All right. So, we're going to just switch gears from thinking big to talking about what are some of these tools, what can we start to do to - to make some of these changes and the first one is really starting to think about what is your program going to look like in three years or five years, thinking strategically.

Sometimes, I get to go out and do a lot of presentations, Webinars as well as in person and that few years, two summers ago, I was speaking at the Meals on Wheels Conference and talking about volunteers aging in place and I had everybody sort of raise their hands and said who has an average age of their volunteer core of under 45 and a few hands went down and we went up and up and up and finally there's just one gentleman in the front who has his hand up still and I said "OK, I'm sort of running out of numbers here. What's the average age of your volunteer core?" and he said "I think it's somewhere around 78" so the average age of his volunteer work 78.

And when you start to look forward three years or five years, what is your volunteer program going to look like if you haven't started putting some of these changes into place, if you haven't started to think about engaging a more diverse pool of volunteers so we want to look forward. What does that look like? What's changing either in your volunteer - existing volunteer core, in your program, in your organization, in your community?

If you're providing access and support for seniors in your community, we know that there are a whole lot more people getting older everyday right so that population is getting bigger and bigger of older adults in the United States.

So, what happens in five years? Do you need to have a new plan in place to be able to meet the needs of - of the clients that - that you can expect to have in five years? And then before this idea of a hamster, we know that you are

trying to do everything yourself and so you're running as fast as you can and you're getting nowhere. You're just maintaining.

So, we need to think about how much time in your week do you need to think strategically. Is that, you know, one afternoon week where I know that volunteers are responsible for answering my phone or volunteer - I delegated the work of initial where we're reviewing applications to a team of volunteers so that I have some hours in my week to be able to think strategically.

Going back to thinking about those models, the - the street analogy or just thinking about what your program looks like now. What kind of programs do you want to have? Where are you missing some of those pieces when we talked about, you know, creating that connection, creating - creating flexibility, inviting - creating involvement, where are we - where are you able to think about "oh yes, I've always wanted to be able to do this. I've always have this idea, but I didn't have the time. I didn't have the resources. I didn't have the expertise."

So start thinking about what you want your program to look like and where you are now because depending on where you are, where you want to get to, it could be really far or it could just be a few strategic decisions to get to where you want to be.

Sometimes, it can be really scary to ask volunteers what they think about your program because sometimes we don't want to know like we're afraid of what they're going to say. It might be negative. They might want things that we can't provide or things that we can't change, but the best way to figure out what you need to change or why volunteers are staying with your organization is to ask them.

Survey, it doesn't have to be fancy formal online survey. It can be if you feel that (inaudible). Anonymity is a good and would be important here.

I like to just sit down with volunteers and find out what they like, what's - what's good, what's working, what are they proud of, what's the thing that brings them back right. Remember we talked about finding more volunteers that are the right volunteers and this is where we can figure that out.

You can sit down with - with (Sally) and find out why everything runs so smoothly when she is here. What does she like about it? What's her motivation?

Ask them what they don't understand too. Sometimes, we again put our volunteers in their silo. We don't share with them all the information.

We assume or we expect that they're going to get up to speed on their own or live with and breathe our program that it's obvious to us we feel like we shouldn't have to explain it, but volunteers have a long learning curve. They're not with us 40 hours a week every week. They don't necessarily get up to speed or know who to ask or understand all the ins and outs of what we do in our organization or in our launch engagement program so ask them what they think works and what they don't think works.

I would like to ask what you wished you'd know on the first day that you know now and to try to - may try to start to incorporate that in my orientation or in my training.

When I started at VolunteerMatch, I had come from two very different volunteer engagement programs, one with a - a Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation Center in Northern California where we were deploying volunteers out into the field to, you know, rescue injured and orphaned animals and providing supportive care to them and - and then releasing them back into the wild and then had moved to the Bar Association at San Francisco where I was working with highly skilled volunteers coming in and really using their professional, you know, legal expertise to solve problems in the community or to support clients that weren't able to pay for lawyers.

When I came to VolunteerMatch, our volunteer engagement program is really different. We have about a dozen volunteers at any given time doing really specialized work right out all across our organization and I was recruiting all these volunteers and I was bringing them in and after a couple of weeks they were saying to me "This isn't what I expected it to be. This isn't what I wanted it to be" and I asked them and I said "you know, what - what was the

disconnect or what were you expecting it to be like” and I realized that I was bringing all of the language and all of the information that I was using to recruit volunteers for hands on delivery of services to clients whether those were people or animals and I had incorporated it into my recruitment messages at VolunteerMatch where in fact I was bringing volunteers in to do really high Web of - 10,000-foot view kinds of - of volunteer work.

They - We never really - Our clients at VolunteerMatch are all of you so we don't necessarily see the impact that you would see if you saved a bird covered in oil or help a family not be evicted from their apartment so I needed to change. I knew something was wrong. I knew I was bringing in the wrong per - the wrong people so I needed to sit down and ask hem and talked to them and I knew that it might reflect badly on me, right? I wasn't doing a good job. I wasn't doing the best job that I could, but I needed to figure out where I was doing wrong.

And with just a couple of very simple conversations that weren't accusatory, that weren't, you know, just trying to guilt trip in – anyone into staying at VolunteerMatch. I just wanted to figure out what they wanted it to be like or what they were expecting it to be like.

And when I was able to do that, I was able to say “oh, I actually need somebody who is much more detail oriented, much more comfortable working independently, capable of understanding the idea that what their doing on the behind the scenes end of our Website actually makes a big difference” and I can do a better job of sharing why it's important and creating that impact.

All right. We also talked about not doing this alone right. This is not - You're not, as much as we want to be super woman or wonder woman, we are just one human person so this can be hard to start to pick on all this responsibility all by ourselves.

To go back to thinking strategically, where are some of those pieces or those components that you might be able to delegate, who are those volunteers, what are they doing (often jobbing) your organization and can you turn to

them or tap them for a leadership role or are there people from outside your organization that you want to bring in.

Again, I was doing a similar presentation to - for Idaho State Library Association and one of the women said “you know, I, I hate doing orientations. I hate talking in front of groups. I have to pretend that I’m a totally - I’m a different person to be able to stand up and do the orientation” and I said “why don’t you find a volunteer to help with this. There are people probably in your organization already who can help you do this. You don’t have to do this alone.”

So, look at where those sticking points are or look at where you have a task or a - a discrete project that might be able to be delegated to a volunteer or a team of volunteers.

All right. Starting with the easier stuff, you know, there’s not necessarily anything that’s going to be easy and I don’t want to trick you into thinking that getting inspired and feeling energized means that you’re not going to hit those barriers either attitudes in your organization or lack of resources to be able to make some of these changes, but we have to figure out where we’re going to be able to start and sometimes we can start with the things that are easier, the places where there are less barriers.

Looking at what we have in place now so document that structure, put those position descriptions in place, start to figure out where there might be opportunities for - for volunteers to get involved. Sometimes, we have one position description and maybe we have volunteers who’s been doing that work for a couple of weeks and we have volunteers who’ve been doing that or dealing on a decade or two. Those are probably not actually the same volunteer right.

On paper maybe it feels like that would work, but look at maybe creating some of those levels or the leadership opportunities or ways to identify volunteers that have different skill or different expertise or may become subject matter experts on something.

We always get together and again who is the right volunteer to do each of those jobs and if you have a job that a volunteer can do with certain characteristics and you have that same job that can be done by a volunteer with other characteristics. Those are that two different positions. You want to think about who is going to be the right volunteer.

When someone comes to us and said “I had these skills or I like to work like this or I’m hoping to do this in your organization,” you have those opportunities - those position assistants ready to sit together. Be a really great place to start just taking a survey of where you are now or taking only these (inaudible) things strategically. There’s nothing wrong with the small step as long as you take another step after it.

Go back and look at that survey that we’ve done, talk to those volunteers, find out where they’re lacking that flexibility. Sometimes, they tell us “oh, I thought I was going to be able to do this, but I couldn’t or I didn’t or it didn’t seem like on that country road model that I would - I’ll be going to be able to do some things fun.”

I mentioned the Wildlife Center. For me, that was a real country road model when I came in. Depending upon your shift, depending upon who your supervisor was, you could spend the next six months washing dishes or on your third day, you could be restraining an angry raccoon so there was no consistency and there was no communication about what that role was going to be like.

We also want to make sure that as we create flexibility with that, building in that date and switch model right. We don’t want to tell a volunteer that they’re going to be able to do all this great exciting work or have all these opportunities and then not ever give that to them.

We really want to think about how we can figure out. For every job in our organization, there is a right volunteer. There’s somebody who wants to wash dishes. There’s somebody who wants to do data entry. There’s somebody who wants to answer the phone.

We have to find them and bring them in and - and orient them and - and train them to do the specifics that will rely on their characteristics so the - the more that we put the right volunteer in the right opportunity, the more we can create that flexibility.

When you think about your program and you think about that rigidity, where does that come from? Is that coming from you and that's OK right, the first step is to be honest with ourselves about what our limitations are.

I fight everyday to not be a control freak, to not be a micromanager because I want things done a certain way. That's who I am. But I have to as a good volunteer program manager, as the leader of volunteer engagement at VolunteerMatch, I need to focus on the outcomes and not the process just because I have to let go of some of my staff and it's OK to say, you know, I'm the person holding me back right now. That's absolutely valid.

So what's your first step? Where is that rigidity coming from? What are you afraid of? For me, I feel like I let go of all those little details what if it doesn't work out right, what if it's bad or wrong, but I have to really focus on what my expectations are, not necessarily how I want them in to do something.

Sometimes in this organizational leadership, you could have all the greatest ideas in the world that you keep hearing now or being push down by organizational leadership and that's absolutely a valid place to be so we want to think about where that's coming from, what can we share with others in our organization about what volunteers are capable of or what ideas we have happening again about that three-year, five-year strategic plan, where do we need to be in five years, we still - still need to meet our mission, we were mission forward and serve our clients.

In the past, sometimes, we had one or two bad volunteers or something happened, somebody got hurt or somebody crashed the van and - and then because of that - because of one bad apple, one wrong volunteer, now we have all these rules and regulations, again, or if we've been placing the wrong volunteer into a position, we had to create all these rules, all these (structures) to try to advantage them into being a different person instead of having that

open it on - on a conversation and saying “Hey, you know, (Mary), I don’t think this is the right role for you. Let’s talk about what you would like to do here. Let’s talk about how else we can put your specific talents to good use at our organization.”

And so there’s those perceived ideas about volunteers that we’re (fighting from) or that we’ve tried to work around especially around working with clients (life) liability issues, rift issues, volunteers can’t do that because they are volunteer. Volunteers aren’t capable or reliable or dependable and cannot access the confidential information and to that, I oftentimes say sometimes I’ll leave a little bit of that, you know, what about our board, they’re volunteers. They have access to our financial records or this or that so it’s - it’s about this idea of what the word “volunteer” means and - and what people believe or see in their minds when we say volunteers.

So, we can start to identify some of those issues or those ideas and start to work against them, start to - to provide information or persuasive language to help others believe something different about volunteers.

And I mentioned that at sometimes our best first step or a good first step is to start to model the - the behavior we like to see around volunteer engagement in our own department, in our volunteer engagement department.

So, if people are telling you “Oh volunteers are not reliable and dependable. We can’t give them any real work because they might not show up.” start to look for some of those great volunteers to bring in to your volunteer engagement department. Start to think about elevating volunteers to leadership roles and then let them help you. They are the experts of being a volunteer in your organization because they’re doing it already.

And then think about that communication plan. What can you put into place? What stories can you start to tell? What impacts do you need to identify to be able to turn volunteers into advocates so that they feel inspired and empowered to go out and talk about all the great works that they’re doing in your organization and how others can help and how others can get involved?

All right. So what are some of the things to think about? Again, I know that a lot of this can be very overwhelming and sometimes it takes a couple of days to let it all sink in, you know, wherever you do your thinking whether that's the drive home or in the morning if you're starting to get things together to go to work, what are some of those ideas circulating in your head and see what you can start to come up with. You don't have to change everything right now and in fact you shouldn't.

You really should think about those first steps and figure out where you're going. There's that saying that if you don't know where you're going any path is the right path so we want to make sure that we know where we're going so we can start on the path that's going to bring us to that goal or that vision or that idea of what volunteer engagement can look like.

There may also be some situations that are happening now that you can identify as priorities or critical positions. Sometimes, it makes sense to focus on one program or one pathway or one volunteer role and - and then use that as a model for you to sort of change across the board of what it means to be a volunteer in your organization.

Absolutely invite volunteers into this – into this work, into this opportunity, into your program and into leadership roles. If you go in to your office and close the door and come out with a new policies and procedures manual or a set of position descriptions or strategic plans, you're already doing it wrong. You need to invite others in.

They need to have (buy in). They need to have support. They need to have input. Otherwise, you're going to be trying to pull them along and you want them to take the lead and to - to help you clear those barriers. You don't want volunteers or other staff people in your organization to be those barriers.

They want to tell you what they like and, you know, of course, what they don't like about your program and that's all good information for you to start to think about who are the - who's the right person, how can volunteers really, you know, make a difference and again, don't do this alone, invite those new

superstar volunteers or identify who has the skills or characteristics or the talent to be able to - to help you with some of these pieces.

As we go through, you want to make sure that you are sharing these milestones, successes not just internally, of course, your manager or organization leadership, right? We talked about that persuasive language or sharing that - that information as certainly with other paid staff or your coworkers, don't forget the volunteers. The people who are most invested in the way your volunteer program is now are your volunteers so you really want to make sure that you are inviting them in and letting them take the lead as direct with their work right, not turning them lose.

I mentioned before, you know, I am not micromanager person. I'm very much want to be in control of things, but I need to again focus on those outcomes, focus on the outcomes and let the volunteers figure out what the process is, what those steps are.

All right. So, I'm coming to the end of my content. I know there may be some questions so I'm going to put my contact information up and you're welcomed to reach out to me on Twitter or by e-mail. You're welcomed to call me too.

I'm not always in the office. I'm on the road a lot so I would recommend e-mail as the best channel to reach me.

Do we have any questions?

Female: Wow, Jennifer, thank you so much for all of this.

Jennifer Bennett: You're welcome.

Female: I - I have pages of notes here that I've been writing frantically since you've been talking. My goodness lots of fantastic information for everyone. We are going to open it up for questions if you guys would like to talk to Jennifer directly.

(Stephanie), could you provide the instructions on how people can ask questions.

Operator: At this time, if you would like to ask a question, please press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. Again, that is star then the number one to ask your question.

Lisa Tucker: OK. We'll give that a minute for the queue...

Jennifer Bennett: Yes.

Lisa Tucker: ... for anybody who has questions, but I just wanted to ask something while we're waiting for people to dial in. You had mentioned strategic planning and thinking three years, five years even more out about your program and - and given the age that we talked about with your average volunteers for the volunteer core for most organizations and certainly far as the thing of transportation.

How would you recommend programs go about diversifying their volunteer recruitment efforts to reach seniors, millennials, everybody in between, does that make sense? I know we're just... OK, yes, go ahead.

Jennifer Bennett: Yes, absolutely, yes. And it can be tough right because sometimes when we - with the way we inherit programs or sometimes things have been working well for a while and we don't want to, you know, it's like running towards the quest, we don't want to look ahead because then it's going to be a panic.

We want to start to think about what some of those organizational realities are and be really honest with ourselves, with organization leadership, with volunteers and a lot of this goes hand in hand with volunteers aging in place, you know, that we start to get ideas that something isn't going to necessarily be able to be sustainable in the long run.

What we also need to think about as we go forward is if our volunteers are holding the culture of our organization hostage. I talked a little bit about team building and when we invite volunteers and bring new volunteers, the teams

or shift or to the committees that we are talking about the importance of, you know, and sharing resources and training on how to be a good team.

Sometimes, we invite new volunteers in and the old volunteers (as well) or have misunderstanding and sort of drive the volunteers out because they're different or new and so we want to make sure that we're really talking about, thinking about and talking about the importance of - of team building and if we are creating intergenerational team or inviting different generations of volunteers into our organization or hoping to bring in more volunteers of some other generations, we need to make sure that we're creating these clear communication paths and expectations.

A lot of times particularly we have older volunteers who have invested in a certain model or certain idea of what being a volunteer is. Having a volunteer come in is not going to be there every Tuesday at 2 o'clock for the rest of their life because they are 25 or, you know, 40 and have three kids at home.

We want to make sure that we're talking about that impact is important, that contribution is important even if it doesn't look like the contribution is along those that are doing it now.

So, this and, you know, and a different volunteer, a volunteer who does not like the existing volunteers, they - the volunteer might say "well, how come she doesn't have to do this?" or "Where is she this week?" or "You know, why she has come to this program."

We wanted to make sure here about what our ideas are and what that new volunteer (average) community looks like - who those right volunteers are - and really start to share that because there's going to be a pushback and you want to get volunteers involved in this conversation.

Again, we don't want to keep us in that silo. We want to invite them in and be honest about organization realities and - a lot of times, they know, you know, they see. You know, they start to feel older themselves, right? They know it's because that's added to the question coming, so they want to make sure that - you know, but it - is that the tough one?

I'll be happy later to talk to you about – we're going to do some (kind of aging in place) at some point in the future, because we want to balance that with risk facts, as well as risk management and all of that, but starting those conversations, inviting people in talking about what engaging different kinds of volunteers might mean for your volunteer engagement program now and what a volunteer looks like, right? We all have ideas and I had of when I say volunteer, who that is? So, we have to start changing what that means.

Lisa Tucker: Yes, great point. So, it's all about the engagement...

Jennifer Bennett: Yes.

Lisa Tucker: ... the communication – yes, that's great.

(Stephanie), do we have anyone on the line in the queue with questions?

Operator: Again, if you would like to ask a question, please press star then the number one.

We have a question from (Michelle) in Wisconsin.

Lisa Tucker: Go ahead, (Michelle).

(Michelle): Hi – well, hi there. And I really want to thank you and appreciate all of these knowledge, so helpful to me right now. I actually joined (ITN) in January and we're going through a restructuring phase in our organization including recruiting new board members and also looking for volunteers that have grant writing experience.

I want to put out there – and my role is corporate and community development director, I guess like I said it just began in January – walking into the type of environment, I am so passionate about the work that we're doing for our seniors that I do not want to create a – I want to share the information for our volunteers about our budget shortcoming, being realistic about the recruitment and being, you know, new board members, and wanting to get the relief of recruiting new volunteers.

I'll actually be doing a fundraiser and wanting to incorporate them in the fundraiser. I've also chosen to take some members of the (ITN) community, the people that are members and donate their artwork and so forth for this fundraiser.

My question to you is how do we engage these volunteers with the information in a realistic form without scaring member?

Because as I have learned in all my career that I cannot control what people say, but I can control my reaction to it, and my concern is for a volunteer just being in a ride with a member and that member being scared of, being afraid, saying, "We're shutting down. We're going to close. Life is doom and gloom." And I do not want that sent up of fear to come across to those volunteers that have put so much into our organization.

Jennifer Bennett: That's a – that's a good question and that's a tough situation, and I don't know that there's, you know, there – as you said, there's no way to actually guarantee that someone is not going to send something or say something that's going to at someone else. I think having that opportunity for you to explain to the volunteers what's going on and ask them to be part of that conversation without letting it for the thin out, right?.

So, these are the expectations for this conversation or these are – these are the rules that we have in the room and one of those rules to that conversation can be that right now this stays, you know, with us, not without our – not without our members, and there's going to be a time that we can share this with everyone, and we can talk about it, but this is the sort of brainstorming or figuring out phase.

And so, I do sometimes do workshops of peers or colleagues in the room, while we're talking about organizational challenges and we want to set up those rules, so, you know, this is a safe place for a conversation. What happens here, stays here, you know, until we're to a place. So, it's setting up that timeline.

At this point, this information will be shared, but we want to fill you in – we want to get your ideas – we want to think about how we might be able to address some of the shortcomings or mitigate some of these impacts. And also the inquiry, we know it will be open, and so, you know, at this point, there's no – this isn't (to close) and I'm sorry as I was always being honest as much as possible, but to also put that expectation on volunteers that this information is stays here.

(Michelle): And thank you for that...

Jennifer Bennett: Does that help?

(Michelle): ... because I do give a newsletter and we do send our newsletter, our director sends the newsletter, but I also think it's more important to not just do an e-mail blast to volunteers and say, "You have a situation, what's going on?" But more importantly engage them in a way that is, you know, just between the volunteers in our organization and get them involve. So, thank you for that.

Jennifer Bennett: Yes. A town call or a workshop or, you know, conversation, because your volunteers are invested in what you're doing and they are really good resources for solutions or for ideas, and to make sure that you're framing up that conversation as an opportunity to find solutions as opposed to an opportunity to just complain. So, if you have something that isn't working, I would like to say you have to have to come with a solution to that. I don't want to just hear what the problem is. I want to hear how you'd like to fix that.

(Michelle): Absolute – awesome. Thank you so much.

Jennifer Bennett: Yes, you're welcome.

Operator: Again, if you would like to ask a question – star, then the number one.

Lisa Tucker: This is (Lisa) again. I just wanted to jump in. That was really interesting dialogue between you and (Michelle), so, good to know. I'm sure a lot of people face a similar situation to that and that was kind of the question that I

had in mind was I know a lot of people on this call would have volunteer drivers as the core of their volunteer program.

Jennifer Bennett: Yes.

Lisa Tucker: And so, they're kind of out in the field if you will, you know, they're not really volunteering in the office. They're out there, driving older adults to appointments, social engagements, that sort of thing. And so, my question was related to you'd mentioned creating the connection several times.

Jennifer Bennett: Yes.

Lisa Tucker: And I think that's a little more challenging when we have our volunteers that are literally out in the field providing services. So, I think your response to (Michelle) really goes to that too. Again, it's back to that engagement, communication, a town hall meeting like you mentioned, and then also setting those parameters of what stays within the organization – what stays within the volunteer core – and what is shared with clients or members on the outside. I don't know if you have anything you wanted to add related to that. It was just – it was really a good thought.

Jennifer Bennett: Yes, I would – I would just say that particularly as we start to look at what's working and what's not working, if you do have those volunteers that are out there working independently or, you know, driving people around and don't necessarily interact with each other, it's clearly really valuable to start maybe once a month or every other month, bringing those volunteers in and having them. You know, it's optional, not everyone is going to show up. They're going to talk about flexibility, but to invite people in...

Lisa Tucker: Right.

Jennifer Bennett: ... and say, "Hey, I want to get some feedback on this part of the program," or "Who's struggling with this?" or "You know, we put in some new policies or requirements around reporting in as we think that, you know, something might be happening with one of our clients or members? What is the responsibility of the volunteer?" So that they, you know, again that we're inviting them in, maybe providing cookies or taking turns providing cookies

and having people come in and talk to us and that – and open supported and yet structured kind of environment.

Lisa Tucker: Yes, great advice. At any time, you can bring cookies. I think that's definitely a good stuff too. Good idea – good idea.

(Stephanie), do we have anyone else in the queue?

Operator: Not at this time.

Lisa Tucker: OK. Well, the timing has worked out wonderfully. I would like to thank Jennifer, so, so much today for joining us and lending her time and expertise, and thank you to everyone on the call for joining us as well.

Your feedback is definitely important to us and following today's event, we will be e-mailing a link to a very brief evaluation. If you could just take a few moments and give us your feedback concerning the effectiveness of today's session by completing that evaluation, we would be very grateful.

Thanks again to Jennifer and to Volunteer Match for a great informative session, and thanks to everyone for joining us, and also of course to (Stephanie), our operator.

Please keep an eye on our Website seniortransportation.net and also watch your e-mail for future NCST training event. Most importantly, thank you everyone for your commitment to increasing and improving senior transportation in your community. Have a great day.

Operator: Thank you. This concludes today's conference call. You may now disconnect.

Presenters, please hold the line.

END