



Engage, Educate, Empower

Position Title: Peer Support Volunteer

Reports to: PRO Coordinator of Volunteers

Commitment: Minimum 1 year and attendance at ten 2-hour training sessions.

Hours: Varies depending on volunteer availability and participant goals

Summary of Program

Peers Reaching Out (PRO) is a Seniors Come Share Society pilot program funded by the Peace Arch Hospital Foundation. PRO is designed to address the needs of older adults in the South Surrey/White Rock area, who may for health, financial or other reasons be isolated and withdrawn from their peers and community. PRO is a 6-week referral program that will help older adults overcome barriers blocking them from maintaining their health, independence and connection to the community. A Wellness Plan will be created with program participants, which may include a hospital discharge plan if one exists, focused on the older adult's existing strengths and resources. The program will empower them to re-engage physically and socially with the help of a trained *Peer Support Volunteer* who will help participants accomplish the goals and tasks set-out their Wellness Plan. The result will be that the PRO program participant will become more active, healthier and less isolated.

Summary of Volunteer Role

The Peer Support Volunteer's objective is to build a relationship with an older adult in order empower and encourage them by assisting them in following a wellness plan that will help them achieve independence and build a supportive community. Peer support volunteers are individuals who may have similar life experiences, ideals and values. Peer Support Volunteers will attend ten 2-hour training sessions that will afford them the opportunity to enhance their existing abilities, as well as learn new skills and strategies that will assist participants in reaching personal and program objectives.

Organizational Mission and Vision

Seniors Come Share Society helps seniors maintain independence through Day Programs, support & caregiver respite. Dedicated to being the Centre of Excellence in helping seniors maintain independence.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Support an older adult without regard to their gender, race, religion or ability.
- Relationship building and companionship.
- Assist participants in following a Wellness Plan (developed with the PRO Coordinator and older adult). Tasks may include registering for community programs, meals or social groups, signing up for a Handy Card or Taxi Savers in order to become more mobile, assisting participants in accomplishing a doctor's discharge plan, connecting them with a walking or swimming club, completing forms, advocating for assistance, signing up for telephone reassurance calls, and more.
- Listen, clarify issues, offer support and discuss the best way to solve problems.
- Provide information and assistance in accessing resources.

- Connect the PRO participant with community resources and programs, including those offered by Seniors Come Share Society.
- Advocating for older adults facing barriers to access to services or programs.
- May include helping with transport to activities or programs via public transit, taxi, Handy Dart, personal vehicle, etc. A driver's license and vehicle are an asset, but not required.

Personal Attributes

- Non-judgmental and accepting of others
- Responsible and trustworthy
- Committed to helping others
- Willing to listen and be a healthy role model
- Has a posture of learning
- Committed to the philosophy of the program
- Ability to set healthy boundaries

Skills required

- Empathy
- Active listening
- Communication
- Advocacy

Qualities

- Have accepted their own limitations, mental or physical health challenges
- Positive attitude
- Have own coping skills and strategies for life challenges
- Accepts differences of others
- Good interpersonal skills
- Problem solving skills
- Knowledge of the local community and resources available
- Not required to have a driver's license, but is an asset

Benefits

- Learn new skills
- Acquire new strategies that can be incorporated into your own life
- Share in the successes of others

Requirements

- Complete and submit a Volunteer Application Form, including 2-3 references
- Sign a confidentiality pledge and release of information and declaration of intent
- Perform a Police Information Check and Vulnerable Sector Search (formerly called a Criminal Record Check)
- Participate in an interview, either in person or by phone, to assess suitability for the program
- Attend interactive PRO Training Sessions (ten 2 hours sessions), provided at no cost
- Valid driver's license, appropriate insurance and the completion of a Drivers Abstract (if volunteer will be using personal vehicle for transporting participant).