



Adopt a Community Volunteer Program

Mission:

To bring joy to older adults and those living in isolating circumstances and enhance their well-being through creative engagement with the arts.

Overview:

Tidewater Arts Outreach (TAO) serves the community by providing the evidence-based healing power of the arts to enhance connectedness to the community, support relationships, and improve wellness. Artists are recruited, trained, and compensated for producing programs for our community partners such as assisted and independent living communities, nursing homes, hospitals, shelters, and other venues that serve a population prone to isolating circumstances. Sometimes the Artists are consistently in a community and other times they are not. **The purpose of the Adopt a Community Volunteer Program is to offer non-Artistic community members an opportunity to create a long-term social support relationship with older adults and people experiencing isolating circumstance alongside the artists and care providers.** You will culture positive relationships for participants of programs to encourage their participation and advance the values of aging in dignity, authenticity of relationship building, empathy for lived experience, and the ongoing contributions the elderly.

Steps to Adopting a Community:

- 1) **Volunteer application and background check** (required for all volunteers).
- 2) **Shadowing a TAO staff member at an outreach program in the proposed community you would adopt** – this is your chance to see the programs in action and determine if you would enjoy this type of work. The staff member would show you how to place TAO signage, demonstrate a welcome speech to participants, and give you any other community-specific details you would need to know.
- 3) **Introduce you to the staff at the proposed community** – you will be representing TAO regularly to this community and it is important for you to know the appropriate points of contact and special procedures regarding this community (including their health and safety policies).
- 4) **Now the fun part!** You will be sent **monthly emails** from the Program Director with the upcoming dates/times of programs at the community you've adopted. You are by no means required to host all of them, just as many as you'd like! *We encourage you to be at the community at least once every 30 days if possible.*

Once you're regularly attending programs, the Program Director will check in with you for feedback on your experience, the programs, and how they are affecting your adopted community. **You will be a huge asset to our work – our eyes and ears on the ground when we can't be there!**

What we will need from you:

- 1) **You can successfully complete an application and background check.**
- 2) **You have the time** to spend **1-2 hours per month** at the community you adopt.
- 3) **You have access to your own mode of transportation.** However, please tell us if this would present a burden to you and we will seek a solution.
- 4) **You have the ability to dress professionally** (we suggest business casual) when representing TAO at a program.
- 5) **You have a genuine appreciation for the arts.**
- 6) **You have the ability to use electronic communications (with assistance if necessary)** – this is necessary for accepting volunteer opportunities and logging your volunteer hours.
- 7) **You have the ability and willingness** to comply with any health and safety guidelines at your assigned community. Tidewater Arts Outreach never collects health information nor distributes it to any of its community partners.

What you can expect from us:

- 1) **We will promptly and regularly inform you of program opportunities at your community.**
- 2) **We will assist you** with any aspects of your volunteering to the extent we are able to (i.e. transportation, communications, etc.).
- 3) **We will provide you with all the resources and tools** you need to be successful.
- 4) **We will listen to your feedback** – criticisms and concerns included!

What else should you know before volunteering?

You will be included in all volunteer activities and gatherings scheduled by TAO (including Artist and Volunteer Appreciation Brunches held on a roughly quarterly basis). All volunteer hours will be documented and we can present you with an official record of your hours as needed.

Thank you for considering this volunteer position with TAO! For any questions or to start an application, please email Stacy Jones, Program Director, at volunteers@tidewaterartsoutreach.org or call 757-916-7344.