

Community Spirit & Involvement

Providence Point provides many opportunities for residents to become involved in self-governance and quality of life. Volunteers are needed for 9 Boards of Directors: Umbrella, Communiversy and 7 Villages as well as numerous Umbrella and Village Committees and social events. However, there is a perennial need for more volunteers and finding enough can be challenging. This is due in part to the aging of our population. Those who were very active initially may feel, rightly so, that they have made their contributions or may be unable to help. Also younger residents tend to be working. As we seek to attract a younger population, it is essential to place greater emphasis on a strong, vibrant community interest and spirit. This is tied very closely with effective marketing as an “active” community. *Rather than emphasize volunteerism, we need to make our needs and activities well known and attractive. A positive and fulfilling environment will naturally support our various governance and activity needs.*

We are all aware that our beautiful environment draws people to Providence Point. Perhaps we have overlooked the fact that our greatest asset is our residents who have a broad range of experience and talents. Their volunteer contributions have built this premier community.

Promote community involvement and connect this with marketing strategies:

- The Long Range Planning Committee has requested that the Umbrella Board appoint an ad-hoc committee to review all welcome and orientation procedures and materials---including assessment of individual welcome in each Village---and make recommendations for change.

Some ideas to consider:

- Review should include such questions as: Do the programs promote enthusiasm and interest? How is welcome being handled at the individual level in every Village? Should there be a generic script for individual welcome (to which Villages can add Village specifics)? Have we measured the programs for effectiveness? What changes need to be made? How will we measure effectiveness in the future?
- Link new residents with enthusiastic current residents on the “buddy system”.
- Develop a training workshop community-wide for residents who volunteer on Boards and Committees. Have experienced board members give the workshop and explain what is involved in the different jobs, responsibilities, positive aspects, etc.
- Have “Traveling Ambassadors,” residents who love Providence Point and are willing and able to spread their enthusiasm throughout the different Villages, in the global community and outside the community. The Ambassadors should be creative in promoting Providence Point in an informative but fun and engaging way.
- Build reserves for the expansion of Collin Hall in the future and/or raise these funds through endowment. Having a place on campus for community-wide meetings and functions is important for development of community spirit.

- Use information from resident-completed skills, interest and experience forms. Review when and how this data can best be collected for the best response.
- Have President of Umbrella Board (or his/her designee) speak at Town Hall meetings and other community gatherings such as the 4th of July celebration for inspiration and community building.
- Hold periodic Town Hall Meetings to inspire community spirit and bring people together. At these meetings, have lists/sign-ups ready for volunteers.

Improve community-wide communication

- Make it a priority to have a community calendar on line ongoing, not just once per month. Be sure to include ALL activities/board meetings and days and times clubhouse or other rooms are rented. Currently some activities are never listed, such as the pool players group. Activity staff would be responsible to update the calendar ongoing and to use it in scheduling rooms eliminating the need for handwritten calendars that are only available in Activities office. Community Manager to make sure this happens ASAP.
- Make it a priority to develop a professional looking booklet that lists ALL organizations and groups in the community with their purpose, meeting times, member composition, etc. Revise annually or as necessary. Have these available for all residents, not just newcomers.
- Use separate documents for Activity calendar/sign ups and community/Village news. Or if one document is used include news columns with updates from Umbrella, administration, maintenance and every Village in the Newsletter. Some Villages have newsletters, but centralization will bring Village news to all, be more efficient and help with a global view. For news, use a model such as newsletters from Meadow and Forest.
- Encourage use of the website for information. Bring the information from Channel 8 onto the website. Note: It's highly likely that younger prospective residents will not use Channel 8 as an information source, but only for broadcasts of meetings or classes. Even those at some point should be "streamed" on the website.
- Have more Town Hall meetings. Due to the large amount of information given during orientation it makes sense to repeat some of this at a later date. Even residents who have been here a while could use a refresher. Some of these meetings could be on subjects suggested by residents. Since Town Hall has limited capacity, consider two sessions.

Increase community involvement

- By various communication means, post an ongoing list of the need for volunteers for Umbrella Committees, Village committees, etc. Update monthly. During Board recruiting season, include Board vacancies. At social gatherings give a plug for specific volunteers that are needed. Have sign-ups available.
- Recognize volunteers who serve on Boards, Committee, etc. at least once a year. This should be a significant reward that can serve as an incentive for other volunteers.

- Highlight volunteers ongoing in the Newsletter. Recognize a Volunteer of the month and Year.
- Publish articles at least twice each year in To the Point highlighting community spirit and volunteering. Discuss the benefits of getting connected and meeting new and interesting people.
- Encourage residents with a particular interest to start a club or group if none exists and provide guidelines for how to do this. Traditionally residents have done this but it isn't emphasized and new groups of this nature are sometimes not known or advertised.