

VHA Membership / Volunteer Recruitment Strategy

STATUS of INITIATIVES / RECOMMENDATIONS

Date 10/12/22

BLUE - CPLT Completed or **DEL** Deleted

RED - ACTV Active - Currently being worked on

GREEN - PLAN or NEW - in Plan but no activity. New initiatives identified in 2022

OBJECTIVE /GOAL:

- Create a Permanent Membership Program with a Strategy Leader and cross-functional leaders of The VHA
- Understand the needs of our residents especially the “Next Generation” Villagers (particularly in the “Far South”)
- Build and promote a business case for joining the VHA including WIIFM - “What’s In It For Me” and implement those benefits.
- Increase membership to over 20,000 members by end of 2023.

BACKGROUND / CURRENT STATE from 2021

- While The Villages has grown in population by more than 10,000 over the past 3 years, the number of members in the VHA has remained virtually flat.
- There is a working but labor-intensive process for recording new members, sending out necessary notices and reporting.
- This somewhat cumbersome system is currently being upgraded to an internet “Cloud” based Back Office system that should improve efficiency, provide automated notifications and self-service for VHA Leaders and Members.
- Membership has been the major income producer to sustain the Fiscal operations of the VHA. This is no longer possible
- There is no overall Membership Recruitment Strategy led by a Strategy Leader.

SCOPE - GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS DESCRIPTIONS (October 28, 2021 BoD)

- Identify individual to be overall Executive Strategy Leader for Membership Recruitment **ACTV - No specific direction to identify individual – VHA Exec VP Peter Russell volunteered to work with a committee approach moving VHA into future**
- Create a Permanent Membership Program and Leadership Team with three distinct objectives. **PLAN no activity on over-arching program and Strategy Leader but also ACTV - some initiatives being pursued**
 - A. Recruiting---Which refers to the overall process of attracting individuals from our community to become involved and members in the VHA.
 - B. Retention---Which refers to, in this case, the process of finding out what means would work best to get members in good standing to continue to be members.
 - C. Metrics---Which refers to quantifiable measures to assess our membership success. This would include leaders at all levels, VHA Executive Committee, Area Leadership and Reps.
 - Create membership goal for 2023 and monitor progress towards it **PLAN but no formal goals set “Like the idea of having a membership goal/objective. Consider having both a new member goal and a renewed membership goal.”**
- Understand the needs of our residents especially the “Next Generation” Villagers (particularly in the “Far South”) **ACTV – VP Far South arranging 10 programs a year to educate new residents**

- Develop innovative incentives to join. **ACTV** some being created. **DEL** - One idea investigated was partnering with a Village/Villa Neighborhood and Public Safety for VHA to provide AED equipment to that Neighborhood in return for commensurate membership commitments. Leave this solely to Villages Public Safety Dept who do an excellent job. **DEL** - Free "Trial" membership for short period of time.
- Build and promote a business case for joining the VHA including WIIFM - "What's In It For Me." Promote who we are, accomplishments, charitable donations we make, annual appeal letter. **PLAN**
- Add "Benefits Fair" to Newcomer's night with booth for VHA Programs / Committees to generate interest and recruit members / volunteers. **CPLT** - Extra table set up with Officers promoting VHA.
- Provide Membership "Recruiters" with necessary information and training to build confidence to approach potential members. **PLAN** Training VPs to educate and direct NRs
- Make the VHA more like a Villages Lifestyle Club with mostly "Membership Only" events & programs. **Many current programs educating all residents. Only few Members Only events - need more.**
 - A. Have regular monthly meetings with Reps there to "work the room." **monthly DEL – ACTV - quarterly is fine as long as regular/frequent email updates/contact to avoid meeting overload.**
 - B. Have Social Events with snacks and speakers, meet & greets for new and potential members. **ACTV - some social events occurring. More planned. Bingo almost monthly. BYO works best to avoid overload work for volunteers.**
 - C. Have grassroots meetings in rec centers to get to know neighborhood Reps. Eventually, Lunch & Learns led by membership. This proved successful at Fenney. **ACTV - Small group with north NR and VP north met with neighbors. This is being encouraged in the north for other NRs to promote the VHA with VP attending "coffee time."**
 - D. Provide speakers to clubs, highlighting programs such as Helping Hands. **PLAN?**
- We need business card handouts for our VHA leaders that have important contact information on the back and place for name, numbers, websites, etc. to give out to potential members. **ACTV – Currently have for Executive Board, Option made available for Neighborhood Reps to get business cards.**
- Turn membership cards into badges that can be put into plastic holders and worn to each meeting and event. They could have our Village or home state on them to stimulate conversations at meetings. **DEL - Not feasible**

WORKSHOP (Nov 17, 2021) and INDIVIDUAL (2022) RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a list of projects the workshop committee members or subsequently individuals believe need to be addressed to help promote the VHA and increase membership.

- Handouts for: VHA New Resident Night (NRN), VHA Golf Cart Safety, VHA Programs and Events, VHA officers and Neighborhood Representatives (NR)
- Half page / vertical – including points from Fred Brigg's Daily Sun Article **CPLT** half page version available. Also have new version of tri-fold **PLAN** - Should be reviewed for updating, i.e., every 6 months
- Update New Resident Packet to include: **CPLT** - all materials available
 - Updated tri-fold membership application **CPLT**
 - New resident fact sheet **CPLT**
 - VHA Golf Cart Safety flyer
 - Hurricane Preparedness Flyer
 - Roundabout brochure
 - Voice – Possibly black and white copy to reduce cost **DEL**
- Offer an Associate Membership for Renters that will roll over into regular membership when becoming a homeowner. **DEL - not feasible and not within our guidelines**

- VHA Website default feature - when members and residents want to locate their NR and there is none default message is: Area Vice President's (AVP) name and contact information. **CPLT? ACTV?**
- Update the tri-fold membership application **CPLT**
- Increase educational and social programs with perks for members with a current membership card:
 - Free board at Bingo **CPLT**
 - Cost reduction for social events **PLAN**
 - Front row seating at Open Meetings **DEL**
 - **PLAN** Wonder why we do not have a recruitment table at Bingo with it well-staffed and announced prior to play. Perhaps we could offer another free board, 25% off admission, a free last game sheet or something similar to encourage becoming a member.
- **NEW Need to Evaluate** Would be very beneficial to provide more of an incentive to join The VHA. For instance, provide a service like a free oil change, one free session with an attorney when you join to discuss a specific topic such as estate planning etc.
- Focus on Member Only Events **NEW Need to Evaluate**
 - To get a decent size audience at members-only events, emphasize that the members will be getting information first, best, from the horse's mouth, etc. that non-members won't have access to.
 - Get special speakers for members-only events from inside The Villages and outside on a **monthly** basis.
 - To get a decent size audience at members-only events, emphasize that the members will be getting information first, best, from the horse's mouth, etc. that non-members won't have access to.
 - **All VHA volunteers** should be encouraged to attend all members-only meetings to make sure we have a decent size audience; if the audience is sparse, it makes our event look unimportant. In addition, it's important that our volunteers be
 - Joining the VHA should be like joining an exclusive club ... If only we could give people a reason why
- Considerations for RECRUITMENT OF VHA LEADERS, i.e. NRs, Asst. VPs, Committee Chairs, etc. – This area is weak in part due to initial plan not including, or considering, the concept of “emotional intelligence”. **NEW Need to Evaluate**
 - Some personalities are perceived as rude and/or demanding
 - Creating “busy work” is off putting
 - Competition with the POA is not received well. Not outwardly competing with the POA will serve the VHA better. We can do this by staying in our non-profit lane and serving the people in the way we have been with education.
 - Gossip and reputation should be carefully controlled particularly when focused on an individual. The good of the whole needs to come first. Put on a happy face and use self-control.
 - Set up table for recruitment of leadership positions at our General Meetings by creating signage, sign-up sheets, and personally manning the table. This is an excellent place for us to be visible and active.
- RECRUIT NEIGHBORHOOD REPRESENTATIVES **ACTV High priority**
 - Define and increase Neighborhood Representatives responsibilities **ACTV High Priority Add recruiting/retention to main duties for VPs/Neighborhood reps PLAN** One new idea is add “Facebook VHA Updates” to duties for neighborhood reps for their individual village Facebook pages

- **NEW Need to Evaluate** Identify and display where we have reps and where we need reps. A chart should be made and displayed at our leadership meetings to “fill in the blanks”.
 - **NEW Need to Evaluate** Suggestion that rather than using the title “Neighborhood Representatives” we rename them “Village or Villa Ambassadors”.
 - **NEW Need to Evaluate** Point of clarification: why do we treat villas, that are within a village, as separate? Possibly we only need a rep for each Villages and Villas would be included; a villa resident could be the rep for the entire village.
- Volunteers are donating time that is worth thousands of dollars. They need to be appreciated, respected, not overburdened because we want something for nothing. Also, if we need to pay for some services we should. **PLAN**
 - Plan an annual NR Appreciation - this could be as part of the December General meetings where ice cream or dessert is offered to show appreciation for NRs. A featured speaker could still be scheduled to speak after acknowledgement of NRs as part of the program **CPLT**

BENEFITS

- Increase in membership provides a greater voice and impact for the VHA in the community
- Provides member only benefits to improve lives of members and residents
- Help restore VHA Reputation and Prominence to the Champion Advocates for Villagers
- Increased membership provides more opportunities to recruit volunteers and future VHA Leaders.
- Provides substantial funding for the VHA