



## *Hope Arbor Volunteer Tips*

### **APPROACH WITH CARE AND RESPECT**

Approach friends from the front and make eye contact.

Friends may have lost peripheral vision, so it can be disconcerting to be approached from behind.

Get down to eye level rather than standing above or behind someone who is seated.

### **USE INVITING LANGUAGE**

Use warm, welcoming language when introducing activities.

“I could use your help with this art project.”

“I need a partner for volleyball.”

“Let’s help Eliza answer these trivia questions.”

### **ASK OPINION-BASED QUESTIONS**

Ask questions that do not rely on memory.

“What do you think about the beat of this song?”

“Where would you rather go—beach or mountains?”

### **OFFER SIMPLE CHOICES**

Provide clear options to give friends a sense of control.

“What do you prefer, the beach or mountains?”

“Do you like card games or board games?”

“Would you like red or blue for your project?”

### **ALLOW TIME AND USE GESTURES**

Give time for processing and response. Do not be afraid of silence.

Break tasks into simple steps—one or two at a time. Watch for nonverbal communication, as friends may express feelings through gestures or behaviors.

Use eye contact, words, and gestures to support understanding.

### **LIVE IN THEIR REALITY**

Avoid correcting friends.

They may believe they are in a different place or time—meet them where they are and embrace their reality. “Would you rather be right or loved?”



## *Volunteer Tips (continued)*

### **ENCOURAGE AND AFFIRM**

Positively reinforce and set friends up for success.

“You look great in that sunny yellow apron.”

“You did a wonderful job last time we played this game.”

Allow friends to answer questions and experience success.

Express appreciation: “Thanks for coming today—it is always more fun when you are here.”

### **PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE**

Encourage friends to participate in their own way.

There is no “right” way to complete a project or game.

As a volunteer, your role is to guide and support while ensuring safety.

If a friend is enjoying an activity, allow them to continue at their own pace and in their own way.

### **COMMUNICATE WITH RESPECT**

Speak slowly, clearly, and with a respectful adult tone.

Avoid sing-song or childlike speech, and do not use an authoritative tone.

Use short, simple, direct sentences. KISS—Keep It Simple and Slow.

Avoid asking, “Do you remember me?”

### **BE FLEXIBLE AND SUPPORTIVE**

Encourage participation: “Let’s give it a try—it might be fun.”

If a friend chooses not to participate, offer an alternative such as helping set the table or playing a card game. Provide a quiet, safe space if a friend needs a break from the group.

### **HOPE ARBOR IS A SOCIAL CLUB**

We try not to talk about how we “volunteer” but instead we love spending time with friends at Hope Arbor.