

Call-An-Elder Toolkit and Best Practices

Thank you for volunteering to help your neighbors through this time. This information sheet will provide you with important details about how Call-an-Elder will work to connect NYC Elders with creative engagement during a time of social distancing. All volunteers are organizationally affiliated with Call-An-Elder, which began as Laura Nova's [Su Casa](#) artist residency at Phipps Plaza N.O.R.C. (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community).

Project Goals / Outcome

- Provide uplifting, creative social engagement that centers the experience of the Elder.
- Cultivate a meaningful relationship between Elder and volunteer **through conversation and storytelling** and the guiding question: **What's worth knowing?**
- Each week, Volunteers will receive a question of the week, which they will use to start a conversation with the elder and deeply listen.
- Calls continue through the end of May or as long as artist and elder continue to be interested in participating.
- If seniors approve, final recordings will be transcribed and shared for a listening party.
- Once social distancing has ended, our hope is that these stories can be collected, shared, and used to create a listening party at Phipps Plaza NORC for all participants to gather in the form of a radio show entitled "Hear Here."

Expectations of Volunteers:

Commitment:

- Volunteers will commit to calling their assigned elder minimum of 1 time per week. Frequency of conversations will be mutually decided on by both Volunteer and Elder.
- Formal time commitment is expected to last until the end of May 2020.
- Calls are framed around creative engagement and conversation with elders during a time of social distancing. These are meant to be uplifting opportunities to connect and lift spirits.
- A series of open ended questions is provided to help you get started.
- All artists will have an opportunity to sing, read, act, tell a story, play a game during one of the biweekly 30 minute conference call in programs "Tune in Tuesday" and "Finally Friday"
- Volunteers will be given a stipend of \$50 for their commitment.

Health and Wellbeing:

- Artists should not offer therapy, psychological, or crisis counseling support.
- Artists should not offer medical advice. Volunteers should ask Elder to contact their primary care providers with any medical questions.

- Should any needs (groceries, medication, supplies) or health questions arise, alert Laura via email.
- Artists should maintain social distancing while participating in Call-An-Elder.
- Artists should follow [CDC prevention steps](#) to limit the spread of the Coronavirus.

The Basic Steps for Volunteers:

Initial Call: MUST CALL ELDER BEFORE TUESDAY EVENT

- Laura will match Artists with Elders (names and phone numbers will be provided by email)
- Introduce yourself and explain that you are calling from the Phipps Plaza NORC Office as part of the Su Casa art program.
- Invite the elders to participate in the weekly arts programming and provide calling code:
- “Tune in Tuesday” at 4 and “Finally Friday” at noon call-in Directions by telephone:
 1. Using a telephone dial: **+1 (929) 205 - 6099**
 2. After prompted enter the meeting ID: **893 452 0253 #**
 3. Join Zoom Meeting from the computer or smartphone: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8934520253>
- All volunteers who also identify as artists will have a chance to sing, read, act during one of these biweekly programs
- Describe what kind of art/work you do and where you live and identify their interest
- Ask and confirm best time to speak (once or twice weekly)
- If the elder decides they no longer want to participate in the weekly call that’s ok. Please let Laura know by email so a new match can be made.

Post - Introduction / Continuity of conversation:

- Volunteers will continue to call Elder on the agreed-upon schedule.
- Each call begins with a general check-in on their well-being.
- If there are any issues (health, food, other) let Laura know via email.
- ***QUESTION OF THE DAY:** Record topic / conversation and arrange a time and date for the next call.
- Use telephone voice recording app such as “TapeACall.”
- Tips for recording:
 - Find a quiet room
 - Re-introduce yourself by first name and prompt the caller to say their first name
 - Practice deep listening and don’t interrupt or speak over the other person while talking.
 - It’s always helpful in editing if the subject repeats a question before answering it.
- If seniors approve at the end of the project, final recordings will be transcribed and shared.
- Trust needs to be built and the elder must be made to feel that they are part of something bigger.

Reporting:

- After each conversation, we ask that Volunteers update the call log spreadsheet.
- Deposit the recordings of the phone calls and the audio text docs in the Hear, Here Google Drive Folder.
- Audio file name format will be as follows: VOLUNTEER LAST NAME_ELDER NAME_mm.dd.yyyy
- Please note the time of call, duration and a short summary of the conversation in a text document.
- Audio text doc name format will be as follows:
- VOLUNTEER LAST NAME_ELDER NAME_mm.dd.yyyy

***QUESTION OF THE DAY: Conversation prompts and story sharing ideas (Only one topic per phone session)**

1. **#1 Question: What's worth knowing?** What advice can they share? What was the best lesson you learned? Undoubtedly the elder is the expert in social isolation and has endured a lifetime of experiences (wars, polio epidemic, 9/11 and Super Storm Sandy).
2. **What should we carry into the future? Share objects + Create Ingredients**
What object in your home would you take to the future and explain why
3. **I Heart NYC:** Is there a place that has closed that you wish were still open? If you could go anywhere in the city where would you go?
4. **On the Topic of Learning:** What is something you could teach another person? What is a new skill you would like to learn?
5. **On the Topic of Music:** If you could sing one song and have that song heard what would it be? (maybe sing together)
6. **On the Topic of Food:** What is your favorite food? What is the first recipe you learned to cook? What is the last home made dish you made? [What's in your fridge? What did you stock up on for the quarantine?
7. **On the topic of Sleeping:** Do you have any advice on how to get a good sleep? What did you dream about last night?
8. **On the topic of staying entertained:** What's the last movie/tv/musical/theater show you watched at home? What is your favorite type of show/movie/music? What's was the last book you read at home?

9. **On the Topic of Exercise:** Are you able to take a walk? What's your favorite physical movement/dance/exercise move?

10. **On the topic of Happiness:** What is something that made you happy this week? What's your perfect day? What do you like to do for fun? What are some of the happiest moments of your life? What are you grateful for?

Ideas for Creative Engagement: Tune in Tuesday and Finally Friday

- Sing a song
- Tell a story / jokes
- Play an instrument
- Read poetry
- Read passages from a book
- Read something you've written
- Perform from a play/script
- Conversation and story sharing
- Mediation practice
- Games: trivia, call and repeat, yes and, etc.

FAQ

1. I'm okay with the waiver - am I supposed to sign something?

Just an email confirming your participation in the project is enough. If you decide you no longer want to participate, please let me know today.

2. I don't see a release form for the elders to agree to - do you have one?

One-party consent is permitted in the state of NY to record phone calls. We will not be using any recordings without the permission of the Elder. The call you are making today is an introductory call and should not be recorded. It is important to make the elder feel like they are part of something bigger and hopefully, by the end of May, many of them will be comfortable sharing their stories with the community. If they don't want to share their stories with the public that's ok. Consent requires a lot of sensitivity, and frequent check ins along the way in each of your conversations. Here is an example of verbal consent:

"Ina I really enjoyed hearing that story (hearing that song) would you be comfortable sharing that in a recorded variety show format that we hope to present and share at the end of the spring."

Elders will have final verbal consent if they want to share their stories in the final recorded variety radio show.

3. For the initial calls, which I will make today, am I supposed to lead with one of the questions on the list? Or just look at this call as an introductory call to invite them to the Tues. and Fri. sessions?

Today's call is just an introductory call, invite the elder to Tune-in-Tuesday and figure out a time that works for both of you to do your weekly conversation. Do not record today's call.

4. If I can't make the session on Tuesday, should I let you know?

You don't have to RSVP to the Tuesday or Friday events, only join if you want to.

5. Should I assume that I'm just giving them the dial-in number for 4 p.m. (that they're not using Zoom)?

Most of the elders do not have computers or smartphones. Assume you are giving them the dial-in instructions for telephone. You may ask if they have an email address and would like the link.

VOLUNTEER WAIVER OF LIABILITY

As a volunteer, I understand and I hereby agree to the following terms by submitting this form:

I, the Volunteer, release and hold harmless the Organizations/Agencies/State and its successors and assigns from any and all liability, claims, and demands of whatever kind or nature, either in law or in equity, which arise or may hereafter arise from my volunteer work with the Organization.

I understand that this Waiver discharges the Organization from any liability or claim that I, the Volunteer, may have against the Organization with respect to bodily injury, personal injury, illness, death, or property damage that may result from my participation on the Organization's work site. I also fully understand that the Organization does not assume any responsibility for or obligation to provide financial assistance or other assistance, including but not limited to medical, health or disability insurance, in the event of injury, illness, death or property damage.

I, the Volunteer, understand that I expressly waive any such claim for compensation or liability on the part of the Organization beyond what may be offered freely by the representative of the Organization in the event of such injury or medical expense and release my claim whatsoever which arises or may arise in the future.

I expressly agree that this Waiver is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the laws of the State of New York in the United States of America, and that this Waiver shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of New York.

Contact Information for Call-An-Elder Leads

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