Senior Wish Program
Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation for Quality Long Term Care

Fulfilling a Wish

I. Key Points about the Wish Program
   a. Personal/About the Person
   b. Honor relationship of caregivers with the resident/individual
   c. Voluntary/integrate volunteers from within residence, family, community and outside organizations & businesses.

II. Key Messages
   a. You need the “Tool Box”
      i. Website-www.OESFonline.org, Where to go, how to use it
      ii. Inclusion in Move-In Interview/Admissions Paperwork
      iii. Activity Director’s Role
          1. 72 hours on chart
          2. Activity Participation Record
          3. Care Conference/90 days
          4. Involving family during Care Conference and other meetings
      iv. Think “outside of the box”; Take chances
      v. Keep it simple
      vi. Never say never and don’t take no for an answer
      vii. Don't panic and give up when the first person rejects your request

III. Questions to Get you Going
   a. Who would you like to meet?
   b. Do you have any special dream or wish?
   c. Find out what is most important to this person
   d. Ask family about special interests, desires, unfulfilled longings
   e. Look for “trigger” information: tidbit that gives you an entry to developing an idea or wish (photo, article, letter, passing comment)

IV. Overcoming Obstacles: Identify common barriers early on and brainstorm solutions:
   a. BARRIERS
      1. Not enough money
      2. Thinking too small
      3. Thinking too big
      4. Not enough time
      5. Restricted mobility
      6. Activity Director is too busy
      7. Too hard to come up with the original idea
      8. Staff is jealous or resentful
      9. What about all the other residents?
     10. Family would get angry or not approve
     11. Thinking “inside” the box
OESF Senior Wish Program

Training Guide

Bring the Senior Wish Program to your LTC Community and..........

*Enhance morale among staff members and residents*

*Spotlight the positive spirit of your LTC Community*

*Build connections with local businesses and utilize community resources*

*Change the perception of aging, one dream at a time*
Training Guide Overview

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Senior Wish Program Overview

Program Purpose:

- The Senior Wish Program was created to help fulfill the personal life wishes of senior citizens residing in long term care facilities such as assisted living, residential care, senior retirement, and nursing/rehabilitation communities. Created and founded by Jennifer Hoffer of Marquis Companies, the program was adopted statewide and is now supported and promoted by the Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation (OESF). Employees and volunteers at care facilities in Oregon work with local businesses, community groups and opinion leaders to make senior wishes a reality.

- Granting of the dreams and wishes of Oregon elders through the Senior Wish Program helps to fulfill OESF’s mission of enriching the lives of Oregon Seniors who reside in long term care facilities.

- OESF provides hands on training sessions for long term care professionals on how to successfully implement the Senior Wish Program, distributes a training guide on how to conduct the program, presents a motivating Senior Wish video, chronicles and promotes Senior Wish initiatives conducted by long term care (LTC) facilities throughout the state to enable the granting of senior wishes.

Value of the Program to Facility and Residents:

- While the Senior Wish program is not intended to be a marketing program, it is a wonderful way to showcase the positive spirit of your LTC setting to both your local community and the greater public, and in so doing sets yourself a step above your competition. As prospective residents and their family members expect a LTC community to meet its residents medical, physical, and mental needs, they will place higher value on what the community is doing to engage and enrich the lives of their residents.

- Successful marketing of your community is not limited to your advertising budget. Making your resident’s dreams come true through the Senior Wish program can help you achieve positive media coverage; which benefits not only your community, but the long term care profession as a whole.

- By forming life enrichment committees within your community made up of family members, residents, and staff, you can help wishes become realized while engaging all participants. This improves staff morale and retention, provides residents with meaningful social interaction and renewed sense of achievement, and gives family members a new opportunity to be engaged in the lives of their loved ones.
Phase 1:  
Pre-Dream Prep

- **Step One:** Select a small group of individuals, such as facility staff members/volunteers, residents, and family members that may be able to help you identify possible Senior Wish projects.
  - Ask this group to identify residents who may have shared their interests or dreams.
  - Ask this group if they have any connections or resources that may be able to assist you with granting wishes.

- **Step Two:** Have individuals in your small group ask residents the following questions:
  - What are you most proud of?
  - What is your biggest accomplishment?
  - What are your interests?
  - What have you always wanted to do? This can be meeting someone, picking up a new hobby, and/or participating in an event or activity.

- **Step Three:** After you have collected information about residents and identified possible wishes or dreams to grant, select one to begin investigating further:
  - Be sure to check with the resident’s doctors, hospice, health care providers, and family members. It is important to make sure the resident is physically, mentally, and emotionally capable of participating in the desired wish.
  - Focus on granting dreams or wishes that involve other residents at the facility, or at least have some element of a group activity. It is important that this wish or dream include as many residents and community members as possible!
  - Always keep in mind that your efforts are for the benefit of the resident and there’s no “right” or “wrong” type of wish. Every dream takes its own unique shape, so be creative and flexible in your planning.
Phase 2:
Planning the Dream

- **Step One**: Identify elements (resources, time, expertise, etc..) you will need to make the dream a reality
  - These elements may include: transportation, the activity itself, food, beverages, flowers, decorations, gift baskets, etc..

- **Step Two**: Create a budget for the event
  - Inform fellow employees and pool all resources. Coworkers, friends, and families may be able to help you make this dream a reality.
  - Benefits to businesses for donating include: possible media coverage, company exposure on OESF website, visibility within facilities through newsletters, websites, etc.

- **Step Three**: Send out announcements for the upcoming event and spread the news through word of mouth & social media. Involve staff members, community residents, and family members in the activity. **Be sure to invite the board members of Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation!**
  - Plan on taking photos at the event
  - Consider having your event videotaped
  - Have your event participants sign an OESF Photographic Release Form, found in the Appendix of this guide so you event may be posted on the OESF website.

- **Step Four**: Contact OESF and share the dreams/wishes you are working on
  - Discuss ways to solicit donations, collect ideas, or suggestions for a successful senior wish.
  - If items/services are being donated, contact OESF because these donations are a tax write off. OESF can provide you with a donation letter for businesses that contribute financial or in-kind.
Phase 3:  
Post Dream Follow up

- **Step One: Recap the success of your event to your community.** Submit a write up of the Senior Wish to your facility’s newsletter, put together a scrapbook of the wish, and/or post a collage of photos from the wish in your facility, and throughout your company’s social media. Feel free to contact OESF for guidance with this if necessary. Discuss your successes at resident councils, family forums, and with fellow staff members.

- **Step Two: Spread the word beyond your community.** Use the sample in the Appendix to write a press release for your event. Contact OESF for guidance with this if necessary. Your resident’s story and your hard work can make it into your community’s newspaper, senior publications, social media, or even be featured on your local news!

- **Step Three: Follow up with OESF.** Submit photos and media coverage to OESF so your Senior Wish event can be featured on our website & social media. Send in the Senior Wish Description form (included in the appendix of this training guide) so OESF has the details of the event and is aware of what companies or individuals made donations for your project. Be sure to send thank you notes to everyone who assisted you.

**CONGRATULATIONS ON A JOB WELL DONE!!!!**
Appendix of Resources

Guidelines for Soliciting Donations

The Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation (OESF) is a 501 (c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization registered in the state of Oregon. Our Tax ID number is available upon request. Our mission is to serve older and disabled adults, their families and caregivers through education, research, and community service.

As part of fulfilling the wishes of senior and disabled adults through the Senior Wish Program, individuals organizing these events ask community members, businesses, and organizations for a variety of donations: in kind items and services, cash funds, and discounts applicable to the wish request. It is important to know that all donations from the public must be requested in support of the Senior Wish Program of the Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation.

All items or services requested must be solicited on the basis of a general gift for the Senior Wish Program of the Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation (OESF) and not under the specific individual’s name for which the Senior Wish is organized and not under the company/facility/organization’s name who is organizing the event.

You should coordinate the procurement process with the Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation. The Foundation needs the following pieces of information in order to process donations:

1) The donor’s name and address;
2) The value of the donation. If the donation exceeds $4,999 contact the Foundation as there are different procedures for these gifts;
3) The facility name, your name and title, and your business address and phone number.

If the requesting organization is its own nonprofit entity, then the donations can be directed to it, and that organization is required to perform the tax donation acknowledgement. We prefer that all donations on behalf of the program go through the Foundation so that we can accurately track and acknowledge donations and gifts.

**PLEASE CONTACT OESF WITH QUESTIONS REGARDING DONATIONS FOR YOUR EVENT!**
Appendix of Resources

Community Relations & Media Tips

• Networking allows you to share ideas and work toward a goal. By meeting new people you can brainstorm ideas and learn about resources in your community to turn these ideas into actions. Networking opens doors and makes successful Senior Wish Projects achievable.

• In order to network successfully:
  o Attend community events, presentations, or other networking meetings regularly. Examples; Chamber meetings, Kiwanis meetings, local senior networking events.
  o Make talking to new people a priority. Go out of your comfort zone. Share stories about your work and ask questions about what they do. Listen for opportunities to work together.
  o Set an appointment with at least one new person by inviting them to have lunch or coffee at your facility.
  o Look for individuals who really stand out at meetings and get to know them. Successful networkers are often willing to share ideas and they know where other opportunities are.
  o Be creative in saying thank you so your interactions are memorable.

• Media coverage can be one of the more daunting tasks associated with the Senior Wish Program, but if you use the tips detailed below, you are sure to make progress with media relations. Be sure to visit the Media section of the Oregon Blue Book website (http://bluebook.state.or.us/cultural/media/media.htm) for a complete listing of media resources across the state.

• How to Get Media Coverage:
  o Communicate what is different or special about your project. Research what others have done, or are doing, and try to put your own unique spin on your project.
  o Be timely with your story. The media is looking for stories that feed into current events and reflect larger socio-economic trends.
  o Appeal to emotion. Use visual elements, humor or drama to stand apart. Direct the media to the OESF website: www.oesfonline.org to see pictures of previous Senior Wish projects and send your own as well.
Appendix of Resources
Community Relations & Media Tips Continued

- Keep it simple. Journalists are looking for stories that are not especially complicated. Sometimes less is more.

- Follow-up with the media contact. Even when you have tried your best, you may not get media coverage. If you initially fax or e-mail, follow up with a phone call. You need to sell the importance of your work! Try calling at different times of the day, or different days of the week. Voice messages may not be returned—do not take this personally. If you do make contact remember that you have about 30 seconds or less to communicate your story.

- Practice your 30 seconds. You will be more confident if you have scripted your conversation ahead of time. Practice until it sounds natural and you are comfortable. Remember to smile when you speak. Planning ahead of time will give you confidence and increase your chance for success.

- Use the sample press release included in this training guide (page 7). Be sure to mention the Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation as the charitable organization supporting and promoting the Senior Wish program. Contact OESF if you need help relaying the Foundation’s role in the program, or visit the website www.oesfonline.org. Citing OESF is crucial to sustaining the life of the Senior Wish Program and to soliciting future donations.

- Do not forget to say thank you! Thank the journalist for their time and ask about the next steps. Ask if you can send the journalist a press release, or if they would like to arrange an interview. Be sure to find out the most effective way to communicate with them. Even if the media does not attend your event, be sure to send pictures anyway— you never know what will happen.

- Make the most of what you get. If you do not receive media coverage you should still be proud. Display it in your facility, put it in your facility newsletter, or add it to the website. OESF will always feature your work on the website: www.oesfonline.org. Your work is not old news to someone who has never heard the story before. Keep copies of stories and photos on hand for the next interaction you have with the media. This will also increase your credibility when you ask for community and/or media support.
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Sample Donation Letter

[YOUR COMMUNITY’S STATIONERY]

Date:

To (Name of Manager/Owner/Supervisor)
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Re: Senior Wish Program/ Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation (OESF)

The Senior Wish Program was created to help fulfill the personal life wishes of Oregon's senior citizens residing in long term care facilities, such as assisted living, residential care, senior retirement, and nursing/rehabilitation communities. The program is statewide and is sponsored and promoted by the Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation (OESF). Employees and volunteers at care facilities in Oregon work with local businesses, community groups and opinion leaders to make senior wishes a reality. Granting of the dreams and wishes of Oregon elders through the Senior Wish Program helps to fulfill OESF’s mission of enriching the lives of Oregon Seniors who reside in long term care facilities.

On behalf of the Senior Wish Program, sponsored by the Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation, and the residents of [Insert your community’s name], I request your support to enable the fulfillment of [Insert resident’s name or activity]. We would like to request your support by asking you to donate [Insert item/service] for our current senior wish.

The Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of seniors in Oregon. Your contribution of (insert item/service) will be tax deductible as a charitable in-kind contribution, and OESF will provide you with a receipt.

[IF YOU PLAN TO DO MEDIA RELATIONS AND ACTIVITY PROMOTION, WHICH IS ENCOURAGED, INSERT FOLLOWING SENTENCES.] By supporting the Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation’s program, your business will be recognized in a media release from our community, and may receive newspaper or television coverage. We will also recognize the generosity of your organization/business by placing your name on our event publicity, as well as recognizing you within our community [Discuss ways to do this, i.e., community newsletters, with your Administrator or Marketing Director].

I will be in touch with you to follow up on this letter, and I look forward to your positive reply. Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Your name & title
Your community
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Sample Press Release

MAKE THIS BRIEF AND TO THE POINT!

What: The Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation and [Insert the name of your community] honors [Insert name of the recipient] through the Senior Wish Program by making his/her dream of [Insert dream/event] come true.

When: Date of Event
Time of Event

Why: Describe the event and what will occur. Explain why this enriches the lives of your community’s residents, and how dedicated the staff is to the project.

Where: Location name and address of the event

Who: Briefly describe the background of the Senior Wish recipient. Mention any VIP’s who will attend the event, as well as the administrators/owners/managers.

Additional Information:

Contact: Include your name/title, your community’s name/address, your phone number, your email address, and the OESF website (www.oesfonline.org) (for more info on the program) that can be published in the paper in case readers have any questions.

Press contact: ____________________________
daytime phone number: ____________________________
(if it is different than the number to be published)
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Photographic Release Form for the Senior Wish Program

I agree to have my picture or image used by the Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation (OESF).

I understand that the pictures or images will be used in a positive manner and that OESF have unlimited use of my pictures or images under this agreement.

Name (please print):

Signature:

Date:

LTC Facility Name:

Address:

City, State and ZIP:

Please send this information to the Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation:

Email:  karrib@metrowest.fm

Mail:  Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation
       2330 Debok Road
       West Linn, OR 97068
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Event Description Form

Senior Wish Organizer (name, title & phone number):

Facility/Company Name:

Who (Who was the event for? Full name, age, & brief description):

What (What was their wish? How did it come about?):

When/Where (Details of what took place):

How (How did you do it? Who helped you? Donations?):

Other Comments:

Photos and Press Do you have photos? Articles from the newspaper? Clips from any TV coverage? Please send them to us!!

If you have photos to send, please complete and return a photo release form so we may post them to our website. Please send this information to OESF:

Email:  karril@metrowest.fm

Mail:  Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation
       2330 Debok Road
       West Linn, OR 97068
Appendix of Resources

Sample Thank You Letter

Date:

To (Name of Manager/Owner/Supervisor)
Company Name
Street Address
City, State Zip

Re: Senior Wish Program
Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation (OESF)

Dear [Name],

On behalf of the Senior Wish Program of the Oregon Eldercare Support Foundation, and the staff and residents of [Name of your community], I would like to sincerely thank you for helping make a wish come true for [Name of the wish/dream recipient].

This program could not meet the needs of seniors in our community without the active participation and support of the community. Your generosity and willingness to donate [Insert the kind of items/services this person contributed to the wish], made it possible for [Resident’s name]’s wish to come true.

[Describe what took place/how their gift was used/the emotions felt by staff and the recipient].

Thank you again for your support and for being a part of the Senior Wish network of caring partners.

Sincerely,

Name and Title
Community