



Experience Counts

MARKETING VOLUNTEERING
TO PEOPLE 55+



volunteer centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Cathair Bhaile Átha Cliath

DUBLIN CITY



This market research is a follow-on to *Experience Counts: Volunteering amongst People aged 55 and over in the Dublin City Area* (Dublin City Volunteer Centre, 2015).

Experience Counts provided a clearer understanding of volunteering amongst the 55+ age group in Dublin, with a particular emphasis on levers/motivations and barriers to volunteering.

One of the recommendations from *Experience Counts* was to conduct research into the language and imagery used for marketing volunteering towards older adults in Ireland. This presentation outlines the main findings of the market research.

The next step for DCVC will be to develop a campaign to inform and portray positive images and messages in relation to volunteering and ageing.

Groups may freely use this research but should reference Dublin City Volunteer Centre [DCVC]. (2017) *Marketing Volunteering to People 55+*. Dublin: DCVC.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- **Volunteer Researchers Marianne Hennessy and Dr Susan Giblin**
for their work in transcribing and analysing the data and writing up the research report.
- **Staff from Dublin City Volunteer Centre**
Edwina Dewart, Frances Hayden and Kasia Timofiejew – who organised and facilitated focus groups.

RESEARCH METHODS

Focus Groups	Age Group	Men	Women	Total
1	55-64	4	4	8
2	65-74	5	3	8
3	75+	2	2	4

- 3 focus groups met in 2016
- All focus groups were Dublin based
- Focus groups were shown a series of posters and asked to discuss their preferences.

POSTERS USED IN THE FOCUS GROUPS

All real recruitment posters



Poster A



Poster B



Poster C



Poster D



Poster E



Poster F



Poster G



Poster H



Poster J



Poster K



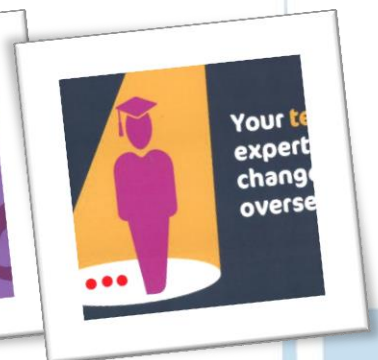
Poster L



Poster M



Poster P



Poster Q

Key themes from research: LIFE STAGE

- People in **all** life stages volunteer
- For 55+ volunteering viewed as a way to keep busy and continue to live a full and meaningful life.
- However, there were subtle differences among age groups in how this sentiment is framed:
 - 55-64 onset of retirement and free time or 'empty nest' a push factor
 - In 65-74 and 75+ volunteering is part of a normal weekly routine

'When you retire you are worrying about what you're going to do. Well, I've never felt that because I've always kept myself busy. Literally, busy busy. I mean I get up in the morning at 7 [am] and at 2, 3 o'clock in the morning I'd still be going, you know.' (Participant in 65-74 age group)



Key themes from research: LIFE STAGE

- As such, for the two older groups, there was a sense of having settled into a post-retirement routine, while the youngest group were perhaps still in a period of transition.
- A **marketing campaign** specifically targeting the 55-64 age segment might need to take this into account. Indeed, this age group could be the best one to target, as many are actively trying to develop a new routine. These findings fit in with the Life Stage Model as put forward in Making the Connection (Volunteer Development Agency, 2009).

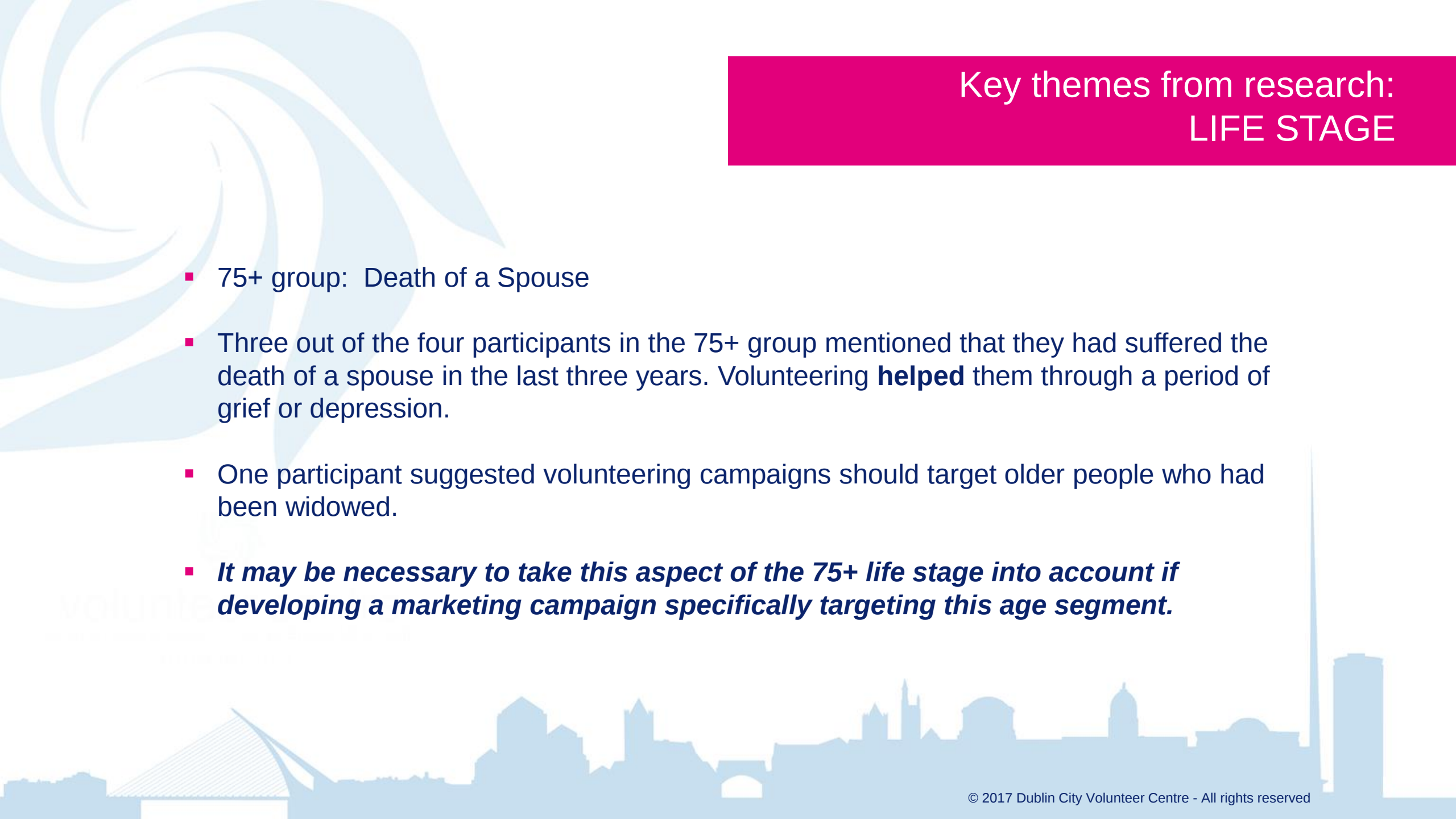
Key themes from research: LIFE STAGE

- 55-64 and 65-74 groups: Age **Doesn't** Matter

"When I look in the mirror I say, "Who's that guy?" Because the guy I'm looking at has red hair and he's young and full of energy. I think something like that is in many elderly people. They don't see themselves as old. You see yourself as young."

"Anything that's going I'll give it a go. Age doesn't enter into it as far as I'm concerned."

- Acknowledged that *some* people at this life stage might underestimate themselves.
- Therefore, a marketing campaign targeting this age segment could perhaps focus on the concept of **capability**.



Key themes from research: LIFE STAGE

- 75+ group: Death of a Spouse
- Three out of the four participants in the 75+ group mentioned that they had suffered the death of a spouse in the last three years. Volunteering **helped** them through a period of grief or depression.
- One participant suggested volunteering campaigns should target older people who had been widowed.
- ***It may be necessary to take this aspect of the 75+ life stage into account if developing a marketing campaign specifically targeting this age segment.***

TERMINOLOGY

Recommended	Not recommended
✓ 55+	✗ Over 55 (esp. for 55-64 group)
✓ Calling all adults 55+	✗ Elderly
✓ Older people	✗ Baby-boomer (viewed as American)
✓ Senior (75+ group only)	
✓ Healthy aging (75+ group only)	

*“All adults 50+ is fine, but not ‘over 50s’. [...]
Because ‘over 50’ the image is you’re on death’s door. ‘I’m, near the grave’, you know. [I’m old].
Just hop in there, you know”.*

Key themes from research: INFORMATION and LANGUAGE



The poster is for the 'Wizard of Words' reading programme. It features the 'Better Finglas' logo at the top left and the 'Barnardos' logo with the website 'www.barnardos.ie' at the top right. The title 'Wizards of Words' is prominently displayed in a stylized font. Below the title, there are two photographs: one of an older woman reading to a young girl, and another of an older man reading to a young boy. The text on the poster asks if the reader would like to volunteer to bring the magic of reading to children. It lists two criteria for volunteers: being passionate about reading and having time on their hands. It also states that Barnardos is looking for adults aged 55 years and older for a volunteer reading programme in primary schools in Finglas, Dublin 11. At the bottom, there is a section titled 'Interested?' with contact information for Suzanne Connolly, including office, mobile, and email addresses.

Better Finglas

Barnardos
www.barnardos.ie

Wizards of Words

Would you like to volunteer to bring the magic of reading to children?

- Are you passionate about reading and understand its value?
- Want to help children reach their potential?
- Have you got time on your hands?

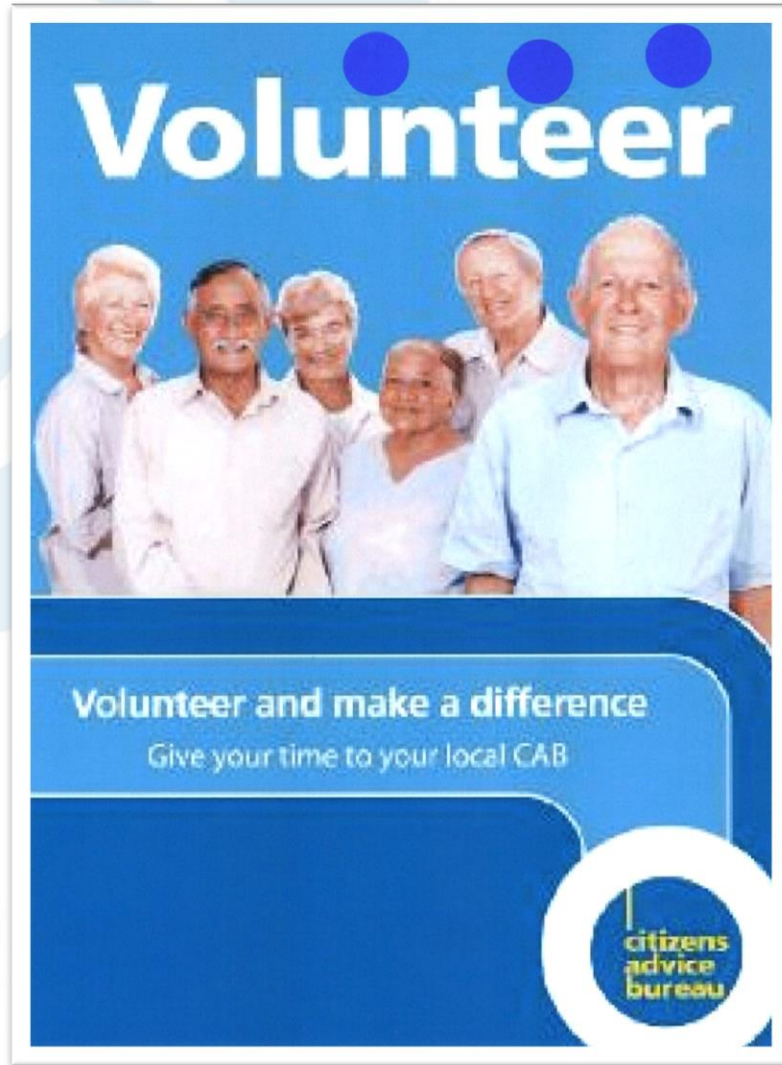
Barnardos is looking for adults aged 55 years & older for a volunteer reading programme for a number of Primary Schools located in Finglas, Dublin 11.

Interested?

For more information on volunteering with the Barnardos Wizards of Words Reading Programme please contact:
Suzanne Connolly, Barnardos Volunteer Service
Office: 01 7080431 | Mobile: 086 857 0112 | Email: volunteers@barnardos.ie

- **Clear message** important
- In regard to the Barnardos poster, one participant said: *'It's clear in what it's trying to achieve. It's asking you if you're interested in helping children'.*
- Another person from a separate group said *'it's telling you what it's about.'*

Key themes from research: INFORMATION and LANGUAGE



- Simple message: *'Volunteer and make a difference – Give your time to your local CAB'.*
- 75+ Group also liked this poster (although 55-64 group thought it looked 'medical')

Key themes from research: INFORMATION and LANGUAGE



- Example of unclear message
- Two groups pointed to the Home Care poster as one with a confusing message. It was unclear as to whether they were being asked to volunteer or donate to charity.

Key themes from research: INFORMATION and LANGUAGE



- 75+ Group felt this poster was confusing
- What does 'RSVP' mean? Better for a poster to be self-explanatory.
- “‘A community of talents serving others’ is not self-explanatory and needs to be interpreted” (participant, 65-74 group).

Key themes from research: INFORMATION and LANGUAGE

**TRANSITIONS,
MILESTONES, AND LEGACIES**

VOLUNTEERING AND RETIREMENT PLANNING

VOLUNTEERING

HOW DOES
VOLUNTEERING FIT IN TO
RETIREMENT PLANNING?

WHAT KIND
OF VOLUNTEERING
SHOULD I CONSIDER?

HOW DO I FIND
VOLUNTEERING THAT
IS RIGHT FOR ME?

 VOLUNTEER
BÉNÉVOLES
CANADA

 **Manulife Financial**
| For your future

- Dislike of **complicated words, long phrases** or **too much text**, with a preference for fewer and simpler words where possible.
- 75+ '*Transitions, Milestones and Legacies*' "too complicated"

Key themes from research: INFORMATION and LANGUAGE

- **Large, clear typeface**
- **Active language** rather than passive e.g. '*Engaging older people*'

55-64: '*Volunteer*' as a verb rather than a noun, a call to action, or as one person put it, 'a command – Volunteer!'

55-64: Drawn to '*Want to change the world again?*'. Call to action, ironic and humorous.

- **Creative language**, e.g. alliteration in '*Wizard of Words*' (for two older groups, the word 'wizard' was picked up on as a positive term in relation to older people).

Key themes from research: INFORMATION and LANGUAGE

- Posters with a lot of detailed information would work better as **leaflets** or **notice boards flyers**, rather than advertisements in magazines.
- Appreciation for more detailed information:

*“You wouldn’t need to ask any questions.
It’s very clear. Because usually they are the kind of
things that people are worried about – “Can I park?”,
“Who do I talk to?”
But that gives you every bit of information.”*

- Flyers suitable for notice boards where people have to queue or wait.

The flyer is titled 'Wizards of Words' and features the Barnardos logo and 'Better Finglas' logo. It includes a photo of an older woman and a young girl reading together, and another photo of an older man and a young boy reading together. The text asks 'Would you like to volunteer to bring the magic of reading to children?' and lists two bullet points: 'Are you passionate about reading and understand its value?' and 'Want to help children reach their potential?'. It also mentions 'Have you got time on your hands?' and provides contact information for Suzanne Connolly.

Better Finglas

Barnardos
www.barnardos.ie

Wizards of Words

Would you like to volunteer to bring the magic of reading to children?

- Are you passionate about reading and understand its value?
- Want to help children reach their potential?

Have you got time on your hands?

Barnardos is looking for adults aged 55 years & older for a volunteer reading programme for a number of Primary Schools located in Finglas, Dublin 11.

Interested?

For more information on volunteering with the Barnardos Wizards of Words Reading Programme please contact:
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Office: 01 7080431 | Mobile: 086 857 0112 | Email: volunteers@barnardos.ie

The flyer is titled 'CALLING ALL ADULTS 50+:' and asks 'Want to change the world again in 2014 by volunteering?'. It invites people to join an 'Information Session' on Monday, January 13, 2014, at 5:30 p.m. at The Daniels Fund, 101 Monroe St., Denver. It also mentions 'Patient Navigator Training' on Monday, January 27 thru Friday, January 31, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Robert E. Loup Jewish Community Center, 350 S. Dahlia, Denver. Registration information is provided at the bottom, along with the 'boomers leading CHANGE' logo and contact details for Katie Creedon.

CALLING ALL ADULTS 50+:

Want to change the world again in 2014 by volunteering?

Join us at our next
Information Session:
Monday, January 13, 2014
5:30 p.m.
The Daniels Fund
101 Monroe St.
Denver

Then mark your calendar for our next
Patient Navigator Training:
Monday, January 27 thru Friday, January 31
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Robert E. Loup Jewish Community Center
350 S. Dahlia
Denver

To register to attend, log onto our website at blclh.org/events—or contact Katie Creedon at kcreedon@blclh.org or 303-4BOOMER.

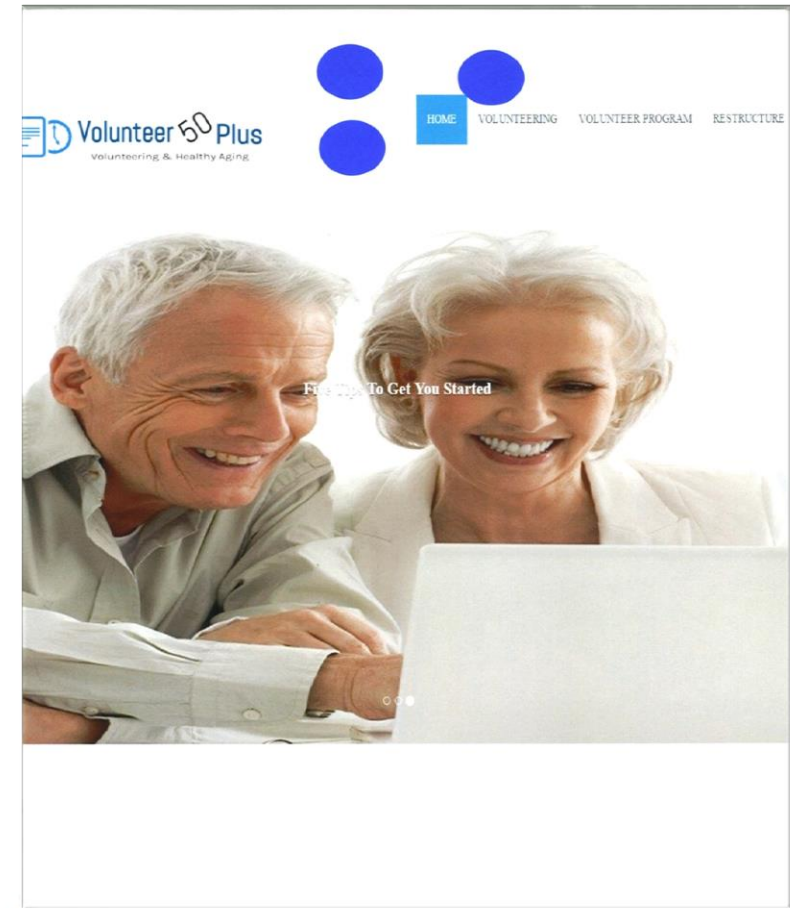
No cost to attend. Light refreshments will be served. Free parking available.

boomers leading CHANGE
No results

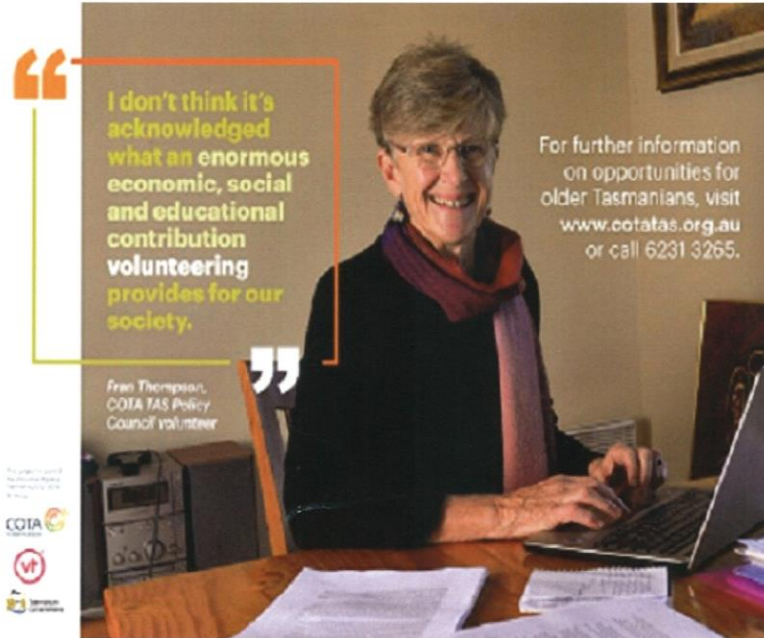
blclh.org • 1700 E. 17th Ave, Suite 102 • Denver, CO 80218 • 303-4BOOMER

Key themes from research: IMAGERY

- One person in the 55-64 age group described this image as 'almost too perfect' and could be for 'dental treatment'.
- A participant in the 65-74 age group said this could be 'an ad for getting your teeth done'.
- Dislike for generic or commercial imagery, with **no obvious link to** volunteering. Two participants in the 65-74 age group felt the image was too general:
- *Male – “It could be [for] anything. Persil washing powder.*
- *Female – “It could be health, it could be anything”.*



Key themes from research: IMAGERY



- All three groups appreciated imagery that showed a **volunteer activity in action**, or at least some aspect of a volunteer's role.
- However, no group was drawn to this poster: desire to see the volunteer activity but also **social interaction** in the poster – not solitary.
- They also want to see themselves in the poster – 'ordinary' people like them
- Happy faces – merits of a genuine smile



Volunteering
helps people
improve their
quality of life
and well being

Key themes from research: COLOUR

- In line with ICAA guidelines (2011), participants were attracted to **bright, saturated colours**, with particular mention given to green, blue and yellow.
- **Clear colour contrast** was brought up by participants. Some particularly liked the colour contrast between blue and white or using yellow for more impact.
- Use of grey controversial – grey-haired models, clothing, backgrounds (for 55-64 and 65-74 groups, 75+ felt it was appropriate)

“Female – ‘We thought some of the images were very negative in regard to older people. Everybody’s grey, wearing grey t-shirts. They didn’t look too healthy to be honest.’

Key themes from research: MEN

- 65-74 age group drew particular attention to the presence of **men** in posters.
- Made note of the number of men in posters.
- Seemed to be an agenda for both men and women in this focus group to get more men involved in volunteering.
- Overall sentiment was that men needed far more encouragement to get involved in volunteering, and that depicting them in a poster campaign could go some way towards challenging the idea that volunteering is more of a 'woman's' activity.

"I don't think males have been asked to volunteer. I think it's much more natural [for women]. I'm generalising [but] women in general have a much wider social network and are more inclined to get into things like that. A lot of our age group's women wouldn't have been working full time; would have built up relationships with their children in school. Whereas a man can be isolated once he retires [...] So I'm pushing the "Ask the male", because they're not being asked."

How and Where to Promote New Marketing Materials

- Avenues of recruitment were often **local** or **personal**. In terms of promoting new posters or flyers, this should be taken into account.
- A church talk
- A leaflet through the door
- A small ad in a parish/community newsletter
- Experience Counts Coffee Mornings (3rd Tuesday of month on Abbey Street, Dublin 1)
- People also mentioned that they were recruited through a friend or family member **already involved** in the organisation.
- Being aware of local needs

How and Where to Promote New Marketing Materials

- As mentioned previously, most participants liked the idea of **leaflets or notice board** flyers. Effective in any venue where you had to wait for a significant amount of time.
- A number of suitable places to promote flyers and leaflets were suggested:
 - ✓ Coffee shops
 - ✓ Local libraries
 - ✓ Churches
 - ✓ Post offices on pension day
 - ✓ Government buildings

- Language in a poster should have a clear message
- Use fewer and simpler words where possible
- Avoid having two or more competing messages
- Aim for message to be self-explanatory and not requiring too much interpretation
- Use a typeface that is big enough and easy enough for older people to read, particularly for posters and notice board flyers
- Reversed out type (white text on a dark background) can be used for posters provided it is used skilfully
- Reversed out type perhaps best used sparingly for leaflets or flyers with lots of textual information
- Use active rather than passive language to grab readers' attention
- A 'call to action' (phrase designed to prompt an immediate response) could be effective e.g. 'Calling all adults 55+', 'Want to change the world again?' (see poster C), 'We need you' (DCVC, 2015)
- 'Volunteer' to be used as a verb (action word) rather than a noun
- If including a lot of informational text, better to use leaflet or flyer rather than poster format

- Avoid imagery that looks very commercial, sterile, generic or formal
- Avoid heavy airbrushing of photo imagery
- Models in photo imagery should be informally dressed, unless a particular volunteer role requires a uniform e.g. St John Ambulance cadet
- Imagery should show some aspect of a volunteer activity
- To avoid making a sole model look isolated, incorporate some element of social interaction e.g. other people in the background
- Graphic design elements of a poster should use bright, saturated colours e.g. yellow, blue or green
- Use a clear colour contrast e.g. blue and white
- Avoid use of grey clothing as a marketing gimmick
- If using a group photo, include older people with coloured hair as well as grey hair
- Models should be smiling or have happy faces; A smile should be genuine and not too posed; Ensure model is not smiling at someone in a patronising way
- Try to include a mix of men and women if a photo includes more than one person
- Older, white Irish demographic needs to be included in imagery
- Poster series recommended if trying to show 'full range of volunteer activities and [...] interests' of older people (DCVC, 2015) – see poster series developed by Volunteer Now organisation (2013)

- Use of leaflets and/or notice board flyers is encouraged
- Benefit of leaflets and flyers for older people is that they can provide lots of information
- Leaflets and flyers don't necessarily require an image or photograph – their main function is to deliver information
- Reversed out type (white text on a dark background) perhaps best used sparingly for leaflets or flyers
- Perhaps best to use flyer no smaller than A4 size for ease of reading

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

How and Where to Promote New Marketing Materials

- In order to attract a larger and more diverse range of people, use a varied range of promotional methods (Volunteer Development Agency, 2009)
- Use local and personal promotional methods such as:
 - ✓ Church talk
 - ✓ Leaflet through the door
 - ✓ Local newspapers
 - ✓ Newsletters e.g. parish newsletters
 - ✓ Social groups
- Leaflets could be promoted alongside a talk from a volunteer(s) already involved in an organisation
- Advertise in areas where older people are likely to go in their normal day to day life (Volunteer Development Agency, 2009)
- Focus on recruitment events and volunteer opportunities in the older person's local area (Volunteer Development Agency, 2009)
- Flyers could be advertised on notice boards in venues such as:
 - ✓ Coffee shops
 - ✓ Local libraries
 - ✓ Churches
 - ✓ Post offices
 - ✓ Government buildings

- While Irish research (TILDA, 2011) confirms there is little difference in volunteering between men and women, perhaps the public image of volunteering still remains one that is stereotypically female. Further research could be done in this area, perhaps focusing on volunteer roles that men are less likely to choose or are less likely to be recruited into.

FURTHER READING

- Dublin City Volunteer Centre [DCVC]. (2015) *Experience Counts: Volunteering amongst People aged 55 and over in the Dublin City Area*. Dublin: DCVC.
- International Council on Active Aging [ICAA]. (2011) *Guidelines for effective communication with older adults*. Vancouver BC: ICAA.
- TILDA. (2011) *Fifty Plus in Ireland 2011: Results from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing*. Dublin: Trinity College Dublin.
- Volunteer Development Agency. (2009) *Making the Connection: Volunteering by the over 50's in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Volunteer Development Agency.
- Volunteer Now. (2013) *One Good Reason to....: Outcomes and Research Findings of the Unlocking Potential Project of 2008-2013*. Belfast: Volunteer Now.