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COMMUNITY GROUPS VOLUNTEER COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

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"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless." — Sherry Anderson

Glen Eira has a vibrant community of dedicated volunteers who are vital to helping build a healthy, connected and inclusive community.

Many community organisations, programs and groups would not exist without volunteers and at the same time, volunteers are able to make meaningful use of their time and skills by contributing to social and community outcomes.

For many volunteers, the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that the benefits they experience through their volunteering activities have largely, if not completely stopped. While we are now moving towards a state of COVID normal, things are not going to return to how they used to be for some time yet.

Research conducted by the Australian National University in April 2020 (*The experience of volunteers during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic*), showed that 65.5 per cent of volunteers in Victoria reported they had stopped volunteering since the spread of COVID-19. It is expected that, with the more recent stage four lockdown in metropolitan Melbourne, these figures have been even higher in recent months than they were in April.

It has never been more important for organisations with volunteer programs to continue to communicate and engage with their volunteers. During a pandemic, volunteers need trust, consistency, transparency and predictability.

For many organisations, traditional ways of communicating have also changed during the pandemic, and technology-based communication methods have had to be adopted like never before.

To support the challenges the pandemic has had on community organisations and their volunteers, we have developed a *Volunteer Communication and Engagement Toolkit* to provide ways for community organisations to communicate and engage with their volunteers during this time. The following pages outline both social media and newsletter content with messaging centered on four key themes: mental health; being kind; maintaining an active lifestyle; and healthy eating. Also included is information on how to engage with volunteers online, platforms to use, engagement ideas and virtual get-together suggestions.

Whilst this *Toolkit* is directed at volunteers, community organisations are welcome to use the messaging more broadly and adjust the content to engage with clients, staff and stakeholders.

Should you have any questions about the *Toolkit* and how to use it, please contact the community development and engagement team on 9524 3333.

"The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention." — Oscar Wilde

In the pages below you will find:

- <u>Social media content 12 week plan</u>
- <u>Newsletter content</u> fortnightly, monthly and <u>quarterly</u>
- <u>Online engagement</u> how to engage your volunteers online including:
 - Platforms to use.
 - Engagement ideas.
 - <u>Virtual get together ideas.</u>
- Other resources

Social media content

12-week plan

Below is a 12-week social media plan containing key messages for volunteers on mental health, being kind, maintaining an active lifestyle and healthy eating. Community groups can incorporate these posts into their existing schedules or can distribute them as stand-alone posts. The text and images are available to use on social media platforms to assist in delivering key messages to volunteers.

Feel free to adjust the text to suit your audience or insert an image of your choice. All images below are free from <u>Pixabay</u> — a royalty free stock imagery website.

Week one — mental health	
For many volunteers, the strain of COVID-19 is taking its toll on mental health. It has never been more important to look after yourself as we continue to live through the pandemic. Self-care is essential to building your resilience. Check out this self-care checklist for some tips and ideas: <u>https://www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/media/6470/factsheet_self- care-checklist.pdf</u> Optional text: If you are feeling isolated and would like to connect with fellow volunteers, please contact us via << <i>INSERT CONTACT METHOD AND</i> <i>DETAILS>></i>	https://pixabay.com/photos/self-care- self-care-self-reliance-4899284/
Week two — be kind	
Volunteers — remember to be kind to yourself. Treat yourself and do something you love. Take a bath, read a book, cook your favourite meal. Whatever it is, take some time for yourself and really enjoy it. #BeKindGlenEira	https://pixabay.com/photos/kindness- chalk-handwritten-word-1197351/
Week three — active lifestyle	
Whether it's outdoors or inside your house, a step can be found anywhere. Incline walking activates your glutes — a necessity after sitting all day. It also strengthens your knees by enhancing the power and functional performance of your lower limbs. Next time you go for a walk, find some stairs or a hill in your suburb, or try <i>GEL Anywhere</i> 's step class inside your home. www.facebook.com/GESAConline/videos/990337261482867/ Optional text: Like an exercise buddy? Contact us via << <i>INSERT CONTACT METHOD/</i> <i>DETAILS</i> >> and we'll try to connect you with a local, fellow volunteer!	https://pixabay.com/photos/ run-outdoor-sport-runner- exercise-1270806/

Week four — healthy eating

Volunteers, remember to eat well during the pandemic. As research into the link between gut health and our brain evolves, we are developing a better understanding of how our food can have a significant impact on our mental health. Poor quality diets have been associated with depression and anxiety — but making small changes can improve your wellbeing and happiness. <u>www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/</u> <u>services/support-and-safety/public-health/staying-healthy/food-andmood</u>

https://pixabay.com/photos/vegetableskewer-paprika-tomato-3317060/



Week five — mental health

We know the COVID-19 pandemic has been tough for our volunteers. Nellie might be just what you need. Nellie is a free three-week automated daily SMS message service providing you with regular health and wellbeing check-ins and information while you adjust to your new COVID normal.

Further information and FAQs are available online and to get started, simply text the word COVID to 0427 741 876. www.semphn.org.au/resources/nellie/nellie-for-community.html https://pixabay.com/photos/mobilephone-communication-male-799514/



https://pixabay.com/photos/cookiesoatmeal-confectionery-2345439/



https://pixabay.com/photos/walk-pathwalking-feet-trail-2635038/



Week six — be kind

Now more than ever, it is important that we are kind to each other — especially those in our community who are most vulnerable. Call your parents or grandparents, touch base with a neighbour, deliver a random act of kindness. You will feel good and so will the receiver! #BeKindGlenEira

Optional text:

Are you able to assist us? To learn about our current volunteering opportunities, contact us via <</NSERT CONTACT METHOD/DETAILS>>

Week seven — active lifestyle

Staying active is important for everyone, including volunteers. If you are new to exercise or getting back into it after a break, remember to start gently and build endurance and intensity gradually. Start with just 10 minutes a day and work your way up to 30 minutes or more. Learn more here www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/ten-tips/How-to-make-exercise-fun

Optional text:

Like an exercise buddy? Contact us via <<INSERT CONTACT METHOD/ DETAILS>> and we'll try to connect you with a local, fellow volunteer.

Week eight — healthy eating

Volunteers, give growing your own vegies, herbs or fruit a go! It is both fun and rewarding as well as great for your health — and you can share the fruits of your labour with friends, family and neighbours. If space is a challenge, try planting with pots on your balcony or courtyard or grow vertical with crops like peas, beans and tomatoes. Learn more here <u>https://www.sgaonline.org.au/produce-in-pots/</u>

https://pixabay.com/photos/seedlinggardening-greenhouse-5009286/



Week nine — mental health

Volunteers, want to bring some peacefulness into your day? Regular meditation practice may help to calm your thoughts. If you haven't tried it before, have a look at some of the common myths and then give it a try. <u>www.beyondblue.org.au/personal-best/pillar/wellbeing/</u><u>debunking-myths-around-meditation</u>

Be kind to businesses. Volunteers can explore ways to support

over recent months and they will appreciate your support.

METHOD/DETAILS>> to learn about our current volunteering

their favourite local businesses. Many local businesses have struggled

Looking for ways to help others? Contact us via << INSERT CONTACT

https://pixabay.com/photos/wellnessstones-relaxation-zen-955796/



https://pixabay.com/photos/supportletters-scrabble-help-2355701/



Week 11 — active lifestyle

Week 10 — be kind

#BeKindGlenEira

Optional text:

opportunities.

Volunteers, get moving with your dog! Dogs are great exercise partners, motivators and really make the experience of being active more enjoyable. Before you know it, you've completed your 30 minutes of exercise.

Next time you walk your dog, try and incorporate intervals — 30 seconds fast pace, 30 seconds slow. You and your dog will benefit.

https://pixabay.com/photos/animal-doglabrador-white-walk-1766151/



Week 12 — healthy eating

Cooking your meals at home is associated with higher quality diets and greater fruit and vegetable intake. Meal planning can help volunteers alleviate time pressures, reduce food waste and ultimately save money. Learn more <u>www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/services/support-and-</u><u>safety/public-health/staying-healthy/top-10-food-shopping-hacks</u>

https://pixabay.com/photos/vegetablescarrot-food-healthy-1085063/



Newsletter content

Below is newsletter content containing key messages on mental health, being kind and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. We have created content for fortnightly, monthly and quarterly newsletters so whatever the frequency of your newsletter, there is content to suit.

Feel free to adjust the text to suit your audience or insert an image of your choice. All images below are free from <u>Pixabay</u> — a royalty free stock imagery website.

Fortnightly newsletter content

Fortnight one — mental health

Volunteers, are you looking after yourself?

For many volunteers, the strain of COVID-19 is taking its toll on mental health. It has never been more important to look after yourself as we continue to live through the pandemic. Self-care is essential to building your resilience. Check out this self-care checklist for some tips and ideas. <u>www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/media/6470/factsheet_self-carechecklist.pdf</u>

Optional text:

If you are feeling isolated and would like to connect with fellow volunteers, please contact us via <</INSERT CONTACT DETAILS>>

Additional resources and information can be found at:

- Beyond Blue: <u>www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/looking-after-your-</u> mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak
- Australian Psychological Society: <u>www.psychology.org.au/COVID-</u> <u>19-Australians</u>
- Headspace: <u>https://headspace.org.au/young-people/how-to-cope-</u> with-stress-related-to-covid-19
- Black Dog Institute: <u>www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/coronavirus-</u> <u>anxiety-resources</u>
- Comcare: <u>https://www.apsc.gov.au/sites/default/files/spe-mc-postive_routines-fact_sheet.pdf</u>

https://pixabay.com/photos/self-careself-care-self-reliance-4899284/



Fortnight two — be kind

A little bit of kindness goes a long way

Volunteers — remember, while it's important to be kind to others, it is equally important to be kind to yourself.

Putting some time aside to treat yourself and do something you love has never been more vital. Take a bath, read a book, cook your favourite meal — whatever it is, take some time for yourself and really enjoy it. You deserve it.

Fortnight three — healthy lifestyle

How volunteers can maintain a healthy lifestyle during the pandemic

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle during the pandemic is important for general health and wellbeing. Volunteers can employ some simple, yet effective strategies to maintain a healthy lifestyle by:

- getting outside for some fresh air and exercise everyday;
- eating well by planning and cooking meals;
- resting up and getting a good night's sleep; and
- staying connected with family, friends and colleagues.

Optional text:

Would you like an exercise buddy? Contact us via <<INSERT CONTACT METHOD/DETAILS>> to connect with a local volunteer colleague!

Fortnight four — mental health

Volunteers, meet Nellie ...

Nellie is a free three-week automated daily SMS message service providing you with regular health and wellbeing check-ins and information while you're adjusting to your new COVID normal. Further information and FAQs are available online. To get started, simply text the word COVID to 0427 741 876.

www.semphn.org.au/resources/nellie/nellie-for-community.html

https://pixabay.com/photos/kindnesschalk-handwritten-word-1197351/



https://pixabay.com/photos/personman-woman-people-couple-3553814/



https://pixabay.com/photos/mobilephone-communication-male-799514/



Fortnight five — be kind

Volunteers, why not surprise someone with a random act of kindness!

Now more than ever, it is important that we are kind to each other, especially those in our community who are most vulnerable. Why not take the time to call a loved one, touch base with a neighbour or deliver a random act of kindness. You will feel great and so will the receiver.

Optional text

Are you able to help us? To learn about our current volunteering opportunities, contact us via <<INSERT CONTACT METHOD/ DETAILS>>

https://pixabay.com/photos/cookiesoatmeal-confectionery-2345439/



Fortnight six — healthy lifestyle

Grow your own veggies ...

Volunteers, give growing your own vegies, herbs or fruit a go! It is both fun and rewarding as well as great for your health — and you can share the fruits of your labour with friends, family and neighbours. If space is a challenge, try planting with pots on your balcony or courtyard or grow vertical with crops like peas, beans and tomatoes. Learn more here <u>https://www.sgaonline.org.au/produce-in-pots/</u>

https://pixabay.com/photos/seedlinggardening-greenhouse-5009286/



Newsletter content

Monthly newsletter content

Month one — self care

Volunteers, are you looking after yourself?

For many volunteers, the strain of COVID-19 is taking its toll on mental health. It has never been more important to look after yourself as we continue to live through the pandemic.

To check how you are tracking with looking after yourself during the pandemic, take a look at this self-care checklist. <u>www.gleneira.vic.gov.</u> <u>au/media/6470/factsheet_self-care-checklist.pdf</u>

If you feel like you need a little help, you might find Nellie useful. Nellie is a free three-week automated daily SMS message service providing you with regular health and wellbeing check-ins and information while you're adjusting to your new COVID normal. Further information and FAQs are available online. To get started, simply text the word COVID to 0427 741 876. www.semphn.org.au/resources/nellie/nellie-for-community.html

Optional text:

If you are feeling isolated and would like to connect with fellow volunteers, please contact us via <<INSERT CONTACT METHOD AND DETAILS>>.

Month two — kindness

A little bit of kindness goes a long way ...

• Be kind to yourselves

Treat yourself and do something you love. Take a bath, read a book, cook your favourite meal. Whatever it is, take some time for yourself and really enjoy it.

• Be kind to others

Now more than ever, it is important that we are kind to each other — especially those in our community who are most vulnerable. Call your parents or grandparents, touch base with a neighbour, deliver a random act of kindness. You will feel great and so will the receiver.

Be kind to business

Explore ways you may be able to support your favourite local businesses. Many businesses have struggled over recent months and they will appreciate your support.

Optional text:

Are you able to help us? To learn about our current volunteering opportunities, please contact us via <</NSERT CONTACT METHOD/ DETAILS>>.

https://pixabay.com/photos/self-care-self-care-4899284/



https://pixabay.com/photos/kindnesschalk-handwritten-word-1197351/



Month three — healthy lifestyle

Simple and effective strategies for volunteers to maintain a healthy lifestyle

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle during the pandemic is important for general health and wellbeing. Volunteers can employ some simple, yet effective strategies to maintain a healthy lifestyle:

• Get some fresh air everyday

Step outside, breathe in the fresh air, enjoy nature, clear your head and get some exercise — so many benefits!

• Eat well

Plan your meals and do your weekly shop so you have everything you need. Cooking at home is associated with higher quality diets and greater fruit and vegetable intake.

• Rest up

Getting a good night's sleep is vital for our overall health and wellbeing. Adults need around eight hours of sleep a night — so create a routine and stick to it for a better night's sleep.

• Stay connected

Stay connected with family, friends and colleagues. Be it in person, by phone, online or by video, make the time to connect regularly with those important to you.

Optional text:

If you would like to stay connected, we have some volunteering opportunities available, please contact us via <</NSERT CONTACT METHOD/DETAILS>> to learn more.

https://pixabay.com/photos/personman-woman-people-couple-3553814/



Newsletter content

Quarterly newsletter content

Quarterly — holistic self care

Volunteers — are you looking after yourselves?

It is crucial to look after your whole self during the pandemic and employ some simple, yet effective strategies to stay fit and healthy.

• Get some fresh air everyday

Step outside, breathe in the fresh air, enjoy nature, clear your head and get some exercise ... so many benefits and even better if you can share it with someone from your household or with a neighbour/friend (1.5m apart of course).

• Eat well

Plan your meals and do your weekly shop so you have everything you need. Cooking at home is associated with higher quality diets and greater fruit and vegetable intake so get those recipe books out and create!

Rest up

Getting a good night's sleep is vital for our overall health and wellbeing. If we don't get enough sleep, it affects the way we think, feel, work, learn and interact with other people. Adults need around eight hours sleep a night so creating a routine and sticking to it is important.

• Stay connected

Stay connected with family, friends and colleagues. Be it in person, by phone, online or by video, make the time to connect regularly with those important to you and be honest about how you're feeling and coping.

To check how you are tracking with looking after yourself, take a look at this self-care checklist. <u>www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/media/6470/</u> factsheet_self-care-checklist.pdf

If you feel like you need a little help, you might find Nellie useful. Nellie is a free three-week automated daily SMS message service providing you with regular health and wellbeing check-ins and information while you're adjusting to your new COVID normal. Further information and FAQs are available online and to get started, simply text the word COVID to 0427 741 876. www.semphn.org.au/ resources/nellie/nellie-for-community.html

Optional text

If you are feeling isolated and would like to connect with fellow volunteers or would like to find out about our current volunteering opportunities, please contact us via <<INSERT CONTACT METHOD/ DETAILS>>. https://pixabay.com/photos/self-care-self-care-4899284/



Online engagement

The restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic have made us 'pivot' and think about how we can still interact with our volunteers at a time when we can't see each other like we use to.

This has been challenging for some and a breeze for others. For those forced to embrace new technology in a way they hadn't contemplated before, we have put together some information to help you get online and engage with your volunteers.

See below for online platforms, engagement ideas and virtual get together ideas.

Online platforms:

There are many online platforms available, so we have narrowed it down to a selection below that are readily available, easily accessible and best of all — mostly free.

Zoom			
Plan	Cost	Maximum people	Time limits
Basic	Free	Up to 100	40 minutes per meeting
Pro	\$20.99AUD per month	Up to 100	No limit

Cisco Webex			
Plan	Cost	Maximum people	Time limits
Free	Free	Up to 100	50 minutes per meeting
Starter	\$20.95AUD per month	Up to 100	No limit

<u>WhatsApp</u>			
Plan	Cost	Maximum people	Time limits
Nil	Free	8	No limit

<u>Skype</u>			
Plan	Cost	Maximum people	Time limits
Nil	Free	50	No limit

Facebook messenger			
Туре	Cost	Maximum people	Time limits
Messenger rooms*	Free	50	No limit
Messenger video calls	Free	8	No limit

*Facebook account not required — available to use over the internet.

Engagement ideas:

We have highlighted ideas below suggested by <u>Volunteering Victoria</u> as well as a full list of ideas on how to engage and connect virtually with your volunteers.

'I'm grateful' photo share

An album curated by the volunteer team leader. Each week, volunteers take a picture of one aspect of home they are grateful for and send to the volunteer co-ordinator who collates them into a slide show and sends back to the volunteer team. Suggest setting parameters of the photo (eg. close up, no identifying background, no people) and a theme each week that mitigates any privacy concerns.

Run an online recognition program

It could be a formal awards program, or just showcasing volunteers who have made great contributions via your website, newsletter or social channels. (Remember to check for permission if necessary before you share.)

Plan some volunteer training

From sending out reading materials through to delivering training online, use the chance to upskill volunteers as needed.

Help your volunteers stay connected

If you've become a whiz at using online video conferencing platforms, why not share with others? Send out some simple instructions, then follow up with a practical online group session.

Update your organisation's timeline and history

This provides recognition for achievements made with volunteers who have been with you for the long haul and fills in details for volunteers who have joined more recently. You could even run an online process asking volunteers to nominate memories of great achievements or milestones in your history. Share the stories and encourage volunteers to keep with you on the journey.

Get competitive

Put together an easy competition — best recipe, a baking championship, home or garden projects completed, best pet photos. It's a good way for volunteers (and staff) to connect.

Share video messages

Video messages are so powerful so why not send a video message to your volunteers from your CEO or a Board member? You can also use video messages to say thank you to volunteers, highlight achievements or simply share relevant information.

Virtual get-togethers

Not every online meeting or conference call has to be about your organisation's work. Meeting virtually for friendship is a great idea and the chance to catch up as usual with volunteer and staff colleagues. To do this effectively, you might like to put some topics in place first and actively move the discussion around the group to give everyone a chance to speak. For additional ideas to connect virtually, see page 13.

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart." — Elizabeth Andrew

Virtual get-together ideas:

There are many ideas for how to get together virtually with your volunteers. We have listed a range of options below, some that we have come up with and others we have heard from individuals and community groups.

Trivia/quizzes	
Online quiz	If you have a subscription to the <u>Herald Sun</u> , why not get together online, share your screen and complete the quiz together! Alternatively, <u>Sporcle</u> is a quiz-based website with thousands of quizzes for you to play at home.
Pub trivia	Get a group together online and play trivia — it's just like having your own table at a local venue. Some quiz companies offering online trivia are <u>Melbourne Trivia Company</u> and <u>Quiz Meisters</u> .

Get active	
Online exercise classes	<i>GEL Anywhere</i> offers several classes online for free. Classes can be accessed on-demand via the <u>Glen Eira City Council website</u> or live via <u>Facebook</u> . There are sessions for all ages and abilities from stretching and meditation to high impact workouts. Get a group together online and get active!

Get together around food		
Host a dinner party	Host a dinner party with friends, family, neighbours, colleagues. Everyone prepares the same meal and then sits down to enjoy it together online. It could be someone's favourite recipe or treat yourselves to something from one of the restaurants on a platform like <u>Providoor</u> .	
Wine and cheese tasting	Select some wine and complementary cheeses and get together online to taste and discuss your favourites.	
MasterChef challenge	Arrange a challenge amongst a group eg. cook a dish within a time frame.	
Morning tea	Schedule a regular morning tea catch-up over a cuppa and maybe even a scone to stay connected.	

Share skills or activities	
Learn to grow seeds	Maybe someone in your group is a green thumb. Can they teach others how to grow herbs or vegetables online? If not, growing green thumbs can help.
Review/discuss TV shows, movies, books etc.	Select a shared activity to watch/read and then schedule a time to review and discuss online as a group.

Enjoy live events together	
Live Sunday Sessions	Enjoy <u>free live entertainment</u> for all ages every Sunday at 3pm.
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra	Join the <u>online concert series.</u> Set up your own online catch-up around these events, share your screen and enjoy the music with your friends and family.

Other resources

Other useful resources for social media, newsletter and engagement content can be found at:

- Volunteering Victoria:
 - o <u>COVID-19 Volunteer Manager Resources</u>
 - o <u>COVID-19 Useful Resources</u>
 - o <u>COVID-19 For Volunteers</u>
- <u>Volunteering Australia:</u>
 o COVID-19 Resources
- Better Health Channel
- Nutrition Australia
- Beyond Blue
- <u>Australian Psychological Society</u>
- Headspace
- Black Dog Institute

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." — Mahatma Gandhi



GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

Glen Eira City Council

To access food relief and essential items, contact Glen Eira City Council's COVID-19 Hotline on 9524 3733.

www.gleneira.vic.gov.au

National Relay Service

If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired, we ask that you call us via the National Relay Service and then ask for (03) 9524 3333.

Online: https://nrschat.nrscall.gov.au/nrs/internetrelay Teletypewriter (TTY): 13 36 77 Speak and Listen: 1300 555 727

Social media

What's on in Glen Eira: www.facebook.com/GlenEiraCityCouncil

@cityofgleneira: www.instagram.com/cityofgleneira

Glen Eira arts, gallery and events: www.facebook.com/gleneiraarts

Glen Eira Leisure:

www.facebook.com/GESAConline www.instagram.com/gleneiraleisure www.twitter.com/GESAConline

Glen Eira Libraries: www.facebook.com/GlenEiraLibraries www.instagram.com/gleneiralibraries

Glen Eira Maternal and Child Health: www.facebook.com/GlenEiraMaternalandChildHealth

Glen Eira sustainable living: www.facebook.com/sustainablelivinggleneira

Glen Eira Youth Services:

www.facebook.com/GlenEiraYouthServices www.instagram.com/gleneirayouthservices

