

Oh, Where Have All the Volunteers Gone?

Finding it difficult to recruit volunteers in your community? It always seems like the busiest individuals in the neighborhood are the ones who constantly step up for additional volunteer duties! Not that we're not glad that someone will help out; but you know how it is once you're known as a ready volunteer for the association; your name seems to be called upon over and over again! These sometimes maligned board, committee and block representative positions are very important to the continuation of business in our community and require the dedicated service of more and more involved, educated residents. As we know, those who give their time often end up "taking the heat" for the many important decisions that must be made for the betterment of the association. It should be every association's goal to make volunteering as rewarding and hassle-free as possible!

How can your community make it just a little bit easier to streamline leadership and organization duties, and make volunteering more adaptable to your homeowners' busy time schedules?

Having meetings in the evening may be more difficult for your association management company to accommodate, but unfortunately it's a fact of life that it's easier for us to attend board and committee meetings and dedicate our attention more fully when it interferes less with full time jobs, childcare, or other important daytime responsibilities.

Of course, you want to make meetings as efficient and streamlined as possible in order not to scare anybody away. CAI has some excellent reference materials that can assist association leaders in running a well organized, effective meeting. One example is CAI's Conducting Meetings Publication – A Guide to Running Productive Community Association Board Meetings. This and many other topic specific publications are available at www.caisecure.net.

Get your neighborhood on the web! Setting up an association web site where volunteers can access important committee documents and information on a 24/7 basis can be a life saver for the forever stressed, always-busy, association representative. Accessing board information from a private, password-protected area of your association web site from your home or office computer, and being able to track all kinds of important committee tasks such as ARC committee notes and decisions can help shorten or even eliminate some of those meetings that go on for hours into the night. Not to mention that you can post volunteer needs directly on the site, and not just count on the same individuals to continue to man the committees. There are so many new residents moving into most neighborhoods; there's a new volunteer out there just waiting to be asked!

When association leaders work together to provide a positive and simple-to-use support system for volunteerism in your neighborhood, the board, residents and the management staff will all benefit!