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Age Spots By Jackie Dover - So What's Next?

MARCH 26TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Many times throughout the week I see and speak with people who are retiring or considering retirement. The logical question that follows is, “So what are you going to do with all your time?” Travel, spend more time with grandkids, nothing at all or anything I want are all common answers but one that has always stood out is when they tell me they want to volunteer and help others.

Volunteering can provide many benefits especially to seniors. Volunteering can provide seniors with a feeling of productivity. Sometimes it is hard to transition from working full time to having “extra” time on your hands. Helping others also can lead to a sense of personal fulfillment and satisfaction and it can increase a senior’s ties to their community. Many volunteers take on projects outside their past history and comfort zone and are able to meet new people and make a difference in their community. All volunteer work is appreciated.

So now that you are excited to begin volunteering, where do you go? Many of our senior centers are always looking for volunteers for different types of roles. Schools and non-profits usually have volunteer positions available, look for somewhere that excites you or has an interest you would like to explore.

An organization that Aging Matters works closely with is always looking for volunteers. CLAIM is the Missouri State Health Insurance Assistance Program

(SHIP). CLAIM trains volunteers to provide unbiased and confidential Medicare counseling. I know that sounds intimidating but CLAIM has a great training program and offers continuing education and support. By being a CLAIM volunteer you will learn the ins and outs of the Medicare process and be able to assist others. The satisfaction of helping those on Medicare is something I truly enjoy and believe you will too.

AmeriCorps is another national volunteer network that has over 3 million volunteers. AmeriCorps partners with CLAIM in Missouri. CLAIM-AmeriCorps volunteers receive additional benefits; they can earn an annual stipend of \$5,250 annually and may apply for up to \$2,885 annually in scholarships for themselves, their children or even their grandchildren. AmeriCorps members will be trained to do Medicare counseling but will also participate in outreach and education events and help recruit new volunteers for CLAIM.

The qualifications for a CLAIM-AmeriCorps member is must be 18 years old, a US citizen and live in the service area. Members must attend trainings and participate in monthly teleconferences. AmeriCorps members are asked to commit about 19 hours weekly, and there are some part-time positions also.

Problem-solving skills, the ability to listen and some computer skills are the desired skills. If you have questions please call CLAIM, 800-390-3330. Enjoy your retirement by helping others and yourself.

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