

## 10 Ways Seniors Can Volunteer “Forever”

1. **Find a passion.** Some people live their passion through jobs and careers, but that isn't always the case. Retirement is the time to save the whales, feed the homeless and brighten up the neighborhood. Find something that fulfills.
2. **Look for a need.** That won't be difficult these days. A 2009 survey, conducted by the Corporation for National and Community Service, found that 80 percent of nonprofit and AmeriCorps organizations surveyed reported some level of fiscal stress. To find out where volunteers are needed, contact the local Area Agency on Aging office, church or synagogue, or [Senior Corps](#).
3. **Laugh it off.** Laughter eases tension and helps lighten the load. For a quick “laugh fix,” visit [CaregiverStress.com<sup>SM</sup>](#) and “[Laugh with Mary Maxwell](#).” Mary is a senior who has her own perspective on aging that is sure to delight seniors everywhere.
4. **Avoid perfectionism.** It's easy to want that special church event to be perfect or that remodeling project to look like it belongs in the nation's leading home improvement magazine. Chill out! Perfectionism can ruin the project for everyone on the team.
5. **Strive for joy.** If nothing else, a volunteer job should be something fun. Volunteer work can be dirty and difficult (the top projects in the Home Instead Senior Care network survey, at 45 percent, are hands-on projects and general labor). It should still be enjoyable.
6. **Deflect criticism.** It's best to try to brush off criticism. If a fellow volunteer thinks he or she can do the better job, step back. While criticism can be tough to take, it shouldn't ruin the project.
7. **Steer clear of conflict.** While turf wars and disagreements can complicate life in the business world, try to avoid them in volunteer life. Turn the other cheek or give up ground on an idea to keep the peace, if necessary.
8. **Don't overdo.** Older adults can become so committed to a cause it becomes a job. While that kind of dedication is admirable, remember that retirement work should be a labor of love, not drudgery.
9. **Shun negativity.** There's always the neighbor who finds something wrong with every idea or the church member who shoots down all the fun stuff. Turn a deaf ear to the negativity and gravitate toward people and projects that inspire.
10. **Get help.** Local [Home Instead Senior Care](#) offices employ CAREGivers<sup>SM</sup> – many of whom are seniors themselves – who are screened, trained, bonded and insured. CAREGivers can help around the house with meal preparation and light housekeeping so their clients can volunteer. They could also participate with their client in volunteer projects, or help provide transportation to and from special events.