

HELP Volunteer Program

at Clara Maass Medical Center

What is HELP?

The Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP) at Clara Maass Medical Center aims to provide extra attention and care to senior citizens admitted to the hospital.

The goals of the program is to:

- To maintain physical and cognitive functioning throughout hospitalization
- To maximize independence at discharge
- To assist with the transition from hospital to home
- To prevent unplanned readmissions

Whether it's reading the newspaper together, engaging in conversation, providing company during a meal or taking walks, volunteers can make a significant impact in the mental, social and physical health of elderly patients at Clara Maass Medical Center.

Who can be a volunteer?

Requirements:

- 18 years or older
- Minimum of one 4-hour shift per week
- Commitment to 6 months of volunteering
- Training
 - 4 hours of classroom education
 - 1 hour of Physical Therapy/Speech Therapy training
 - 16 hours of shadowing/unit training provided by our Geriatric Coordinator or experienced volunteers
- Must complete Clara Maass Volunteer requirements
- Must be reliable
- Strong communication skills and an interest in helping others

What can I gain?

- Experience working with older adults
- Interest and experience in the field of healthcare
- Confidence working with patients
- Satisfaction in knowing you helped improve the hospital stay of older adults by providing companionship, stimulation, orientation and therapeutic activities
- A complimentary meal on days that you are serving as a volunteer



Clara Maass Medical Center was able to launch 5 the **HELP** program through a generous grant from The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey.

Meet the Coordinator

Dhyana Velez, RN-BC is the Geriatric Coordinator for the Elder Life Program at Clara Maass Medical Center. She is responsible for checking on our patients to see if they are having challenges such as signs of confusion, change in behavior, or any type of decline that has been observed since being admitted.

Additionally, she enrolls elderly patients who meet our criteria into the **HELP** program. Those patients then receive ongoing attention to keep them engaged and feeling comfortable during their hospital stay.

Are you interested in being part of our team?

The **HELP** program has been recognized for volunteer excellence by the American Hospital Association.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer for the **HELP** program, contact us at **973-450-2559**.