

# Ohio University Respite Volunteer Program



*Free respite services for caregivers of adults with disabilities, with a focus on communication and socialization*

## **What is the Respite Program?**

The Respite Volunteer Program is a free in-home relief and interaction-focused program. Volunteers provide a break for caregivers of adults with disabilities and other challenges by providing personalized care and social interaction in the home. Excursions outside the home may also be possible. Caregivers have the option of leaving or remaining with the volunteers. Adults living alone or in residential facilities are welcome to participate. Families and student volunteers benefit mutually.

Dr. Brooke Hollowell, a professor specializing in neurological communication disorders, oversees the program. The coordinators are graduate students in Communication Sciences and Disorders and research assistants in the [Neurolinguistics Laboratory](#) at Ohio University. Following a meeting between the coordinators and a potential Respite family, volunteers are placed in qualified families' homes.

Volunteers are required to be enrolled as majors in Communication Sciences and Disorders at Ohio University. Their training involves creative and research-based means of facilitating communication, socialization, and quality of life. The program offers a wonderful example of how students engaged in service related to their academic work can make a vital difference in people's lives. Volunteers are not merely giving of themselves; through the program they gain a great deal on personal and professional levels.

The Ohio University Respite Volunteer Program was founded in 1996, initially through a service-learning course on Communication and Aging. Originally founded to help relieve stress of caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's disease, the program has been expanded to include caregivers of adults with a wide range of other challenges.

Respite services are **free**. Donations are welcome.

Volunteers are not qualified to provide medical care. Respite service depends on volunteer availability.

## **Do you experience stress related to caregiving?**

All caregivers feel stressed and burdened at times. A challenge that many caregivers face is to acknowledge that stress and burden because at the same time they so cherish and want to help the person they are caring for.

Taking breaks from time to time is essential to quality and sustainable caregiving.

- Would you benefit from a break in your caregiving schedule?
- Would you like to leave home from time to time?
- Would you enjoy having trained volunteers occasionally provide care while you stay at home?
- Would the person you care for benefit from increased social opportunities?

If so, the Respite Volunteer Program may interest you.

Source: <https://www.ohio.edu/chsp/rsc/csd/communityengagement/respit-program.cfm>

Filename:

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## Who is eligible for respite services?

The program does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, gender, or sexual orientation. To qualify for services, the person cared for ideally:

- Is an adult.
- Resides within approximately 15 miles of Athens, Ohio.
- Walks independently or with minimal assistance.
- Is able to take his or her own medication, if medication is needed during respite time.
- Toilets himself/herself or requires minimal assistance.
- Does not have acute problems related to drugs or alcohol abuse.
- Is free from communicable diseases.

## Would you like to start a free Respite program in your community?

Having over 16 years of experience running the Ohio University Respite Volunteer Program, we are delighted to provide hands-on workshops for others wishing to develop such programs. We are honored to take what we have learned, including the materials, resources, and processes we've developed – and some of the wisdom we've gained – and use it to help other universities develop such programs. Contact us to discuss possibilities.

## Contact us

If you or someone you know would like more information about this program or would like to receive services or make a donation, please contact us.

Dr. Brooke Hallowell  
Communication Sciences and Disorders  
Grover Center W218  
Ohio University  
Athens, Ohio 45701

**Phone number:**  
(740) 593-1356  
**E-mail:**  
hallowel@ohio.edu