

AGE STRONG COMMISSION'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Michelle Wu, Mayor of Boston | **Emily Shea**, Age Strong Commissioner
Joseph Goncalves, Director of Volunteer Programs

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Welcome to Boston's Age Strong Commission's September Volunteer Newsletter!

There's so much volunteer activity going on at Boston's Age Strong Commission that we've launched a monthly newsletter to keep you in the know!



AmeriCorps Seniors
Senior Companion Program Training

Inside, you'll learn more about our AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP program, AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer Philippina Loh, and one of our volunteer partner sites: Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center.

Are you interested in assisting at a local food pantry by assembling and distributing food? Join the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP program to uplift, inspire, and lend a hand to your community.

Thanks for reading,

Joseph Goncalves

*Director, Volunteer Programs
Boston's Age Strong
Commission*

LEARN ABOUT OUR AMERICORPS SENIORS RSVP PROGRAM ●●●●

Boston's Age Strong Commission runs a variety of volunteer programs where older adults age 55+ can share their time and skills to help fellow older adults.

We currently seek volunteers for our AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Program, which matches people 55+ with impact-driven volunteer opportunities designed to keep older adults actively engaged and living independently within their communities.

AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers help meet critical unmet community needs like assembling or distributing food at a pantry or delivering food to homebound older adults. Volunteers may find opportunities with any of the organizations Age Strong works with that address local, regional, and national challenges.

Why become an AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer? Volunteers who serve in our RSVP program choose how, where, and when they want to serve, with commitments ranging from a few hours—to up to 40 hours per week. Volunteering keeps you active and engaged within your community and allows you to use your skills and interests to help support older residents of Boston. In return, AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteers receive the training and support they need to make a difference.



AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Volunteer
Cynthia Korhonen

Volunteers may receive reimbursement for some out-of-pocket expenses, an invitation to our annual Volunteer Recognition luncheon and connection to free events sponsored by the City of Boston.

Who is eligible? AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Volunteers must be 55+, pass a background check, and serve in the City of Boston.

Interested? Reach out to Jose Ramirez, Volunteer Program Coordinator, by calling 617-635-4374 or emailing jose.ramirez@boston.gov.



MEET AMERICORPS SENIORS VOLUNTEER PHILIPPINA LOH



Philippina, an Age Strong AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer for 20 years, has served with the Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age's (GBCGA) Brighton House, is 85 years old.

Originally from Chongqing, China, "I spent most of my childhood in Taiwan. My dad was a diplomat. I travelled a lot as a child. I lived in Japan, Singapore, and London," she says.

“I attended high school and university in Taiwan,” Philippina continues, “and was a business leader in Hong Kong in the travel section of a very large trading company.”

At GBCGA’s Brighton House, “my main mission is to teach ESOL (English speakers of other languages), classical dance, and singing.

When asked what she would say to someone considering volunteering, she says “I think it is very rewarding because if you teach, you learn as well. Seniors have intelligent questions.”

When asked what Philippina enjoys most about her volunteer service, she says “I am doing a really valuable service to my fellow senior citizens. I am trilingual. I feel like I can tell their stories and share my experiences with my students.”

In addition to volunteering, Philippina, “loves to dance and sing. It's really good for my well being and keeps me active and healthy.”

LEARN ABOUT AGE STRONG’S VOLUNTEER PARTNER SITE: GREATER BOSTON CHINESE GOLDEN AGE CENTER’S BRIGHTON HOUSE



GBCGA’s Brighton House, a not-for-profit organization specializing in serving Chinese-speaking elders, safeguards the well-being and maintains the independence of Chinese-speaking elders. It has served as an Age Strong Volunteer partner site since 1986.



AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Volunteer Philippina Loh conducting a workshop



Greater Boston 中華耆英會
Chinese Golden Age Center

Since starting in 1972, GBCGA has committed to accommodate the needs of the ethnic elderly population through a comprehensive network of culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate programs and services. The goal is to enable this minority elderly group to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers, access mainstream elder services and to age well at home in the community.

Dr. Ruth Moy and her husband, Danny Moy, alongside dedicated Chinatown volunteers and social workers recognized a critical social crisis: elderly Chinese immigrants were severely isolated, struggling heavily with language barriers, cultural adjustments, and a lack of dedicated social services in the early 1970's.

To combat this, the group successfully persuaded the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) to grant them use of a storefront at 239 Harrison Avenue. Securing vital backing from the City of Boston's Elderly Affairs Department, they set up a small kitchen and hired a part-time cook to prepare hot, culturally-familiar Chinese meals for local seniors, attracting about 40 daily attendees.

In January 1971, Dr. Moy and her daughter, Mrs. Debbie Gove, made the pivotal decision to expand this nutrition-focused site into a broader social service operation. By January 1972, the organization was officially incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit under the name Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center.

Sensing the need for regional extension sites, Dr. Ruth Moy and Mrs. Debbie Gove established the Brighton House elder care facility in 1985.

GBCGAC provides:

- Social Services/Outreach
- Nutrition
- Adult Day Health (ADH)
- Social Day Care
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
- Healthy Aging Initiative
- Social and educational activities
- SHINE program (Serving Health Information Needs of Everyone)
- Family Caregiver Services

Volunteers at Brighton House teach English, lead yoga, dance, exercise, and arts classes. One volunteer shares, “teaching as a volunteer at Brighton House is not an entirely altruistic activity. I love my students. Their enthusiasm and hard work are an inspiration, but helping others makes ME feel good.”

Another volunteer says, “I do believe that if I hadn’t found an activity that fits my skills so perfectly, like teaching at Brighton House, I would be a lonely old woman.”

“I look forward to coming to Brighton House, because there is a wonderful camaraderie there. My Mandarin is terrible, but the staff, other volunteers, and my students are supportive of my efforts. As for English, my students help one another, too. Some are beginners and some are more advanced. Initially, I thought it would be impossible to teach a class like this, but we are supportive of each other, it works, and we even have fun. Additionally, I believe that what Brighton House offers supports good health. For my students who return home to China every 4-6 months, forming deep friendships with others here, and others who are also from China, is an important piece of happiness. Eventually, they may live in Massachusetts full-time and these friendships will make their lives here better.”



AmeriCorps Seniors Volunteer conducting a workshop at GBCGA

“I’ve often wondered whether I should teach children or teenagers, but I enjoy teaching adults the most. We tell adults to engage in lifelong learning. Here I am, happy to help with that goal. Lifelong learning is worth my support!”

“I find volunteering a most rewarding experience. It is the best way to spend your time after retirement. You offer what you know to others, and in return you will also learn from them, because we are all different and have diverse talents and life experiences. I particularly liked volunteering at Brighton House, as I am trilingual (English, Mandarin, Cantonese). I can conduct my classes three ways. I can also act as an interpreter when needed. Thanks to the station supervisor as always for being so considerate and thoughtful!”



“我喜欢在白礼顿楼BH做义工，因为这里的领导梅主任和她的团队充满爱心，始终关心、支持和鼓励我们，为义工提供必要的帮助，让我们感受到温暖与尊重。我也愿意尽自己的一份爱心回馈社会，为老人们做些力所能及的事，把快乐和关爱传递给更多的人。赠人玫瑰，手有余香；在帮助别人的同时，我也收获了快乐和幸福”

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY CORNER



Age Strong seeks volunteers for our Food Pantry volunteer opportunity with our AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP program to assemble and distribute food and provide nutrition information, including flyers and handouts.

Volunteers are needed on Sundays 2-4pm in West Roxbury.

Interested? Reach out to Jose Ramirez, Volunteer Program Coordinator, by calling 617-635-4374 or emailing jose.ramirez@boston.gov.

AGE STRONG SEEKS NEW VOLUNTEERS!

The Age Strong Commission offers four different volunteer programs to help older residents live their best lives, while aging in place.

AMERICORPS SENIORS RSVP PROGRAM

We match volunteers age 55+ with partner sites, including senior centers & food pantries, or train you to help residents learn English as a second language, prepare tax returns or facilitate opioid & scam prevention workshops.



BOSTON CITY HALL GREETERS

City Hall Greeters provide friendly assistance to residents visiting City Hall. Each volunteer has access to an iPad equipped with maps and other information to assist visitors.



PROPERTY TAX WORK-OFF PROGRAM

Boston homeowners age 60+ may "work off" up to \$2,000 from their property taxes by volunteering their skills & knowledge to one of the City's offices, community centers, or public schools.



AMERICORPS SENIOR COMPANION PROGRAM

Senior Companion volunteers age 55+ help older adults with everyday tasks like getting to appointments & shopping, as well as providing respite care to care partners. Some volunteers may qualify for a tax-free stipend.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

CALL 617-635-4366 OR VISIT [BOSTON.GOV/AGE-STRONG](https://boston.gov/age-strong)