THE COMPANIONS OF THE ORDER OF MALTA

# COMPANIONS' CAFE VOLUNTEERS
# Best Practice and Volunteer Tips

## Best Practice

It is worth remembering that many of our guests are facing increasingly difficult and unhappy times. With this in mind it is important to remember some of the key point of Best practice in caring for our guests:

(1) Never argue with a guest, disengage before any conflict arises

(2) If a guest is argumentative or upset, immediately inform the activity leader

(3) If a problem does arise with a guest, avoid any physical contact, direct eye contact and lower your voice (nearly whisper)

(4) Always follow the instructions of your activity leader

(5) Love our guests and remember we have no clue what it feels like to be homeless or in need or how fragile the person in front or you may be

## Volunteer Tips

With our work we are reaching out to the isolated in society. Our strength is to make our guests know they are valued and to give them a little respite from the difficulties of their daily lives. We encourage our volunteers to sit down with our guests, chat and have a cup of tea or even join them for the meal.

(1) Always introduce yourself to the guest: "Hi, my name is …., would you mind if I sit down and have a cup of tea/ breakfast etc… with you?"

(2) If you don't know the name of the guest, address them politely, Sir or Madam can work

(3) Conversation topics could be current affairs, sport, weather, books (no films or TV), their interests etc.. nothing personal, and show empathy

(4) Be a good listener, smile and be encouraging

(5) Use your common sense

(6) To end the conversation: always thank the guest for the conversation "it was great chatting to you", and give a reason "sorry, I think the team needs me to tidy up, serve drinks etc…"

(7) Have a sense of humour, make it fun and interesting, the more it is the more fulfilling for the guest and you!

*Your safety and that of our guests is paramount. Thank you for your commitment and devotion.*