

BEST PRACTICES

1 EVENT PLANNING

Exhibiting at fairs or community events can provide great opportunities to promote the AARP Driver Safety Program in your state or local area. Some events to consider attending include:

- Senior Center Events
- Health Fairs
- Church Events
- County/State Fairs
- Safety Expositions
- Agency on Aging Events
- Military Retiree Appreciation Day
- Community College Events

When planning for events, reach out to your AARP State Office. Find out what events they are attending, and inquire about sharing a booth. You can also volunteer to help staff the booth or provide them with DSP materials to include. This may provide opportunities to attend new events and establish open communication with your State Office.

2 RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

A great online resource for recruiting volunteers for the AARP Driver Safety Program is AARP's Create the Good website. You can post DSP course information, upcoming events and local volunteer opportunities. Looking to recruit bilingual instructors? Use this website to post an opportunity. The website has an option to be translated in Spanish. To post a volunteer position simply click on the "Post Opportunity" link on <http://createthegood.org/>. In addition to using this resource, remember that one of the best ways to recruit volunteers is in the classroom course. Be sure to highlight the great volunteer opportunities with DSP and encourage participants to take volunteer information (brochures and applications) with them.



3 PROMOTING DSP at EVENTS

Plan out your booth layout and design to make it visually appealing and engaging for the potential audience. Talk to your State Coordinator to consider using money from your state marketing budget to purchase items like table banners, plastic containers for brochures, and 3-panel display boards. *(Pictures from Bruce Rayman, IL Marketing Specialist)*



4 SOCIAL MEDIA



Social media is changing the face of marketing. Marketing is all about conversations, and through social media channels we are building relationships and encouraging conversations.

The AARP Driver Safety Program has an **Online Community** on http://www.aarp.org/online_community/. Search for us under "Groups" and "AARP Driver Safety." We also have a **Facebook** page, AARP Driver Safety Program. Both pages provide a forum for discussion on driving-related articles, DSP updates, etc. If you are not currently online, we encourage you to join and help us post driving-related articles. We would love to hear your comments and feedback.

5 EVENT EVALUATION

After you attend an event, evaluate the event in terms of (1) how many people stopped by the booth, (2) how many people were interested in becoming participants or volunteers, (3) how many potential hosts you talked to, and (4) what marketing brochures you ran out of. Evaluating events will help you determine whether the event was a success and whether you should attend in the future.

6 STATE OFFICES

Establish a good, working relationship with your AARP State Office. State Offices can help you promote DSP through local AARP Chapters and NRTA affiliated chapters. Additionally, they often have good contacts with the state press and other media outlets. Invite the AARP staff to take the DSP class so they can experience the course. **Remember:** Establishing a relationship with the State Office is a two-way street. Work with them to identify other opportunities where you can help them outside of DSP as well.

8 HOST APPRECIATION

Write a thank you note or certificate to your host to show your appreciation for providing the facility in which to teach the AARP Driver Safety Program course. This will maintain a good relationship with the host. In addition, hosts will often display the thank you notes/certificates on their bulletin boards, so it is a great way for others in the community to learn about the course.

9 MEDIA GUIDELINES

The AARP State Office must handle all media communications. Work with your State Coordinator and the AARP State Office Communications Director (or liason) for possible communications and promotional related topics including: advertising, community newsletters, safe driving articles, and inclusion in state newsletters.



7 SECURING NEW HOSTS / PARTNERSHIPS

Always look to secure new hosts that will reach new participants in your communities. Here are some ideas for hosts to reach out to in the New Year:

- **Adult Communities:** Contact the Activities Director about using the Rec Center to host a course.
- **Community Colleges:** Reach out to ones that offer adult education classes.
- **Athletic/Fitness Clubs:** A great way to reach Boomers, with a tie-in to "Driving Fitness." Remember: If you are trying to attract Boomers to take a course, you must go where the Boomers are. Find hosts that can offer evening and weekend courses to attract working Boomers.
- **Trucking Companies:** Offer to instruct the whole fleet
- **Auto Dealerships:** A great way to incorporate Car Fit
- **Local County Courthouses**
- **Schools & Libraries**
- **Agencies/Councils on Aging:** Can be a great network for you
- **Real Estate/Insurance Companies**

Be proactive in your search for new hosts and consider going through a telephone book to identify businesses and organizations that may be a good fit for the program. You can place cold calls to the businesses you identify and try to set up a meeting with someone to discuss the opportunity. **Note:** You may find that it is easier sometimes to engage hosts than participants. Therefore, focus on bringing on hosts that are enthusiastic about pursuing their own participants, or have a pre-established network of members, clients, customers etc.

Sometimes there are opportunities to work with groups/organizations--beyond just serving as a host facility--by creating **partnerships**. Groups that promote public safety like law enforcement officers and firefighters, as well as other groups that promote health/well-being--like optometrists--can form mutually-beneficial partnerships with the AARP Driver Safety Program. Contact groups like these to see if they can help by putting DSP literature in their offices and providing new volunteers to teach the course, in addition to offering their facility for a course location.

10 VALUABLE RESOURCES

Volunteer Net: This website has an abundance of materials for volunteers to access and download. Find reports, member statistics, training materials and much, much, more. Check it out at www.aarpvolunteers.com/

Promotions & Marketing Guide: These guides, released in July 2010, are a great resource for marketing the AARP Driver Safety Program. The guide is also available to download in PDF form on Volunteer Net.

(20)11 LOOKING AHEAD...

February 2011: The first of the Quarterly Marketing Specialist Calls by geographical group will take place.

March 2011: The roll-out of the marketing event kits is expected.

Stay tuned for more new and exciting marketing plans coming in the New Year!