



# SPARK!

CULTURAL PROGRAMMING  
*for* PEOPLE WITH MEMORY LOSS

**SPARKing a moment between care partners**

**Early to Mid-stage Memory Loss**

**Equally for caregivers as people with memory loss**

**Use of multi-sensory objects and experiences**

**Living IN THE MOMENT!**

[www.sparkprograms.org](http://www.sparkprograms.org)





the **SPARK** alliance  
CULTURAL PROGRAMMING *for* PEOPLE WITH MEMORY LOSS

**SPARK! Programs are hosted at nature centers, museums, galleries and other cultural venues around the U.S.**

**Wisconsin  
Colorado  
Minnesota  
Michigan  
Tennessee**

**All programs are FREE! The cost of offering the programs are low and can be covered by a startup grant.**

# **SPARK! Guided Discussions**

**Living in the Moment**

**Not reminiscent program**

**Visual Thinking Strategies: discovering personal meaning in art, nature and objects.**

**Guided interactions to spark conversations**

**NOT lecture style**



# Sensory Stimulation

Sensory stimulation is  
*brain* stimulation

Familiar foods and clothing/fabrics and materials

Natural materials, such as flowers, leaves, rocks

Tools and utensils

Smells: Tea, coffee, tobacco, spices, oils, soaps/lotions

Cooking, tasting

Each program includes a multisensory approach



# Sample Program Outline

- 30 Minute Social Time
- Overview of the program
- Introductions, welcome
- Community Events/Announcements
- 45-90 Minute program delivery (either an activity, conversation, nature walk, etc)
- Wrap Up with takeaways and promote next months program
- Goodbyes (stay and explore)



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# SPARK! Program Planning



- Training: Conference, site visit
- What will the program look like? Activity based or exhibit/nature based? Combination of both?
- Where will the program take place? Accessible locations
- What day of the week and time of day? Avoid conflicts w/support groups, memory cafes, etc.

# **Logistics – Space and Accessibility**

- **Providing comfort and relaxation: Lighting, noise, over-stimulation.**
- **Public Spaces: Elevators? Crowded spaces? Accessible routes? Accessible restrooms? Adult changing facilities?**
- **Chairs, benches, seating: Provide seating for all participants.**
- **Staff training for frontline staff, volunteers and security**
- **Safety precautions, know evacuation routes/procedures**



# **Using Volunteers to Lead a SPARK! Program**

**Minnesota Marine Art Museum has been leading monthly SPARK! programs since October 2009 for ONE reason...VOLUNTEER support.**

## **SPARK! Volunteer Job Description:**

**This is a person who champions radical hospitality, inclusivity, and accessibility. Someone who likes to plan parties/ events, and who is reliable and self-motivated.**

**Think about your own volunteer experiences. When did you feel especially satisfied as a volunteer? (think in your head, or use the chat box to share)**

**Did satisfaction correlate to:**

- amount of effort/ work you put in?
- someone acknowledging your efforts/ showing gratitude
- making a difference in someone's life.

# Success with Volunteers

1. Empower your Volunteers
2. Prioritize Personal Connections with Volunteers



# Top Tips:



**Make time for you SPARK! volunteers.**

**Give SPARK! Volunteers ownership. Give them a budget. Let them come up with the theme and content.**

**Ask specific questions to better gauge who will do what. Don't mistake consent for commitment. Rank their level of interest in different things so you know where the holes are.**

**Don't create problems where there aren't any. Recovering perfectionists take note. Seek to improve, always, but accept that there are truly many means to the same end.**

**Budget money for training and rewarding your volunteers.**

# Volunteers help create a welcoming environment

Hospitality is why participants come back.

Personal invitations. Call, email, text participants the day before with a “we’re excited to see you tomorrow” message.

Make your space beautiful, clean, and comfortable.

Serve coffee, tea, seltzer, snacks, treats, etc.

Partner immediately with attendees as they come in and assist them with whatever they need and then spend some time talking to them.

Listen. Hold space. Be comfortable with silence.

\*Not hospitable- volunteers standing in the back of the room watching, talking to each other, rushing around, dominating the conversation

# Funding your SPARK! Program

Who might fund your program?

- Think about for people/ organizations whose values and mission align with the values and mission of your SPARK! program
  - People interested in supporting wellness, creative aging, mental health, accessibility, inclusion, and people interested in a social return (strengthening the community and improving people's lives)
- Health organizations, local service clubs (rotary, lions, etc.), family foundations, individuals
- Start slow. Make connections. Build & Nurture Relationships. Emphasize how you will be helping them meet their mission.



# Community Partnerships

**Who in your community might be interested in helping to support your program, financially, programmatically, or with communication?**

**Financial Partners-** provide funds to pay for associated costs (budget slide is next)

**Program Partners-** local musicians, therapists, artists to lead a portion of your program as a special guest

**Communication Partners-** radio stations are required to do some many public service announcements, newspapers will run your press release, businesses will let you put up a poster, other organizations might let you be a bullet point in their monthly newsletter (paid advertisement note worth a mention- a \$20 targeted facebook ad is good bang for your buck)

# Sample SPARK! Budget

Your pilot grant, or request for funding, could include expenses to cover:

- Training (\$100/person conference or onsite \$300 plus travel)
- Travel to observe existing SPARK! Programs
- Marketing
- Guest Artist / Speaker Fees
- Supplies
- Admission/program costs
- Support materials like stools, carts, objects, etc.



# Sample SPARK! Budget

## Supplies:

- Sturdy stools, or chairs with backs
- Supplies- (props, art making/ project supplies, etc))
- Artist stipends for 12 programs
- Refreshments for 12 programs
- Rentals (tent, trolley, tour boat, etc.)

Admission: (Ex: 16 people at 12 programs x \$per person)

## Marketing Expenses:

- Brochure
- Webpage Development
- Targeted Advertising (Facebook ads, radio spot)
- Community partners informational lunch

## Training:

- Conference or onsite training
- Travel to other SPARK! Institutions Host Alz Association Free Training Session, Dementia Friends Training Session
- Refreshments for Participants

## Staff Time:

- Staff Time- program leader, marketing person, etc. (EX: 15 hours/ month x \$/hour x 12 months)

# Bring SPARK! to your community

## Cultural or Nature Based Organizations

- Museum
- Art Gallery
- Performing Arts Group
- Nature Center
- Historical Society
- *Not* senior centers, church's or care communities

*“Me and my Mom come to SPARK! as it is a way of travelling to new places without the anxiety and confusion caused by getting on an airplane - like today, we still got to visit India, but in a different way.”*

- SPARK! Participant

# Next Steps

Identify host site(s)

Identify facilitators

Training (a mentor will be provided)

Choose and train volunteers

Plan the calendar

Market to audience

BAM! Have fun building relationships!



**SPARK! Annual Conference**

**November 3 & 4, 2022**

**Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, Milwaukee**

**\$100 Both Days / \$75 Thursday only**

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# Questions? Comments?



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