

**Sometimes youth involvement can seem like a challenge or extra work. If you address fears you may have, it will be easier to overcome them and develop strong, healthy relationships with youth volunteers.**

## **ADDRESSING and RESOLVING FEARS and CHALLENGES**

### **Irresponsibility**

Youth adults are learning to transition into an independent lifestyle. As long as they are aware of what is expected of them, they will do their best to perform just like adults do. Prepare a Partnership Agreement so that all volunteers are aware of their responsibilities. Spend time training youth volunteers up front so they will be able to meet your expectations. Set clear deadlines and check their progress periodically. Ask them for weekly reports of their status if needed. If you give them the tools to succeed, they will.

### **Lack of Focus**

Youth may overextend themselves as they want to help with as many activities as possible. Today's competition to get into college and obtain scholarships is intense, youth need to be very active to be competitive. As an adult, you have an opportunity to help them prioritize and focus on the most important tasks first. Try not to dismiss their other responsibilities, they made a commitment to them too.

### **Disruptive:**

It is important to set reasonable limits when dealing with youth. If they are expected to be loud, they will be. If there are no activities for them, they will find their own and these may not be the activities adults had in mind. Involve youth in the decision making and let them have a say in the rules. They are more likely to accept them. Allow youth to decide what activities should be included and engage them in meetings so they remain interested. Ask for input from youth volunteers and they will buy in.

### **Intimidation:**

Some adults may be intimidated by youth energy and mannerisms. People are likely to feel uncomfortable with the unfamiliar. Over time and with more interactions with youth, confidence will grow and the positive experience will calm concerns and the benefits will be great. Reference your communication tab for ideas on how to communicate between volunteers of all ages.

### **WHEN IN DOUBT...**

- Treat youth with respect
- Address any issues with youth volunteers in a non-threatening, non-confrontational manner
- Go directly to the youth and don't 'tattle' on them to another authoritative figure
- Do not pass judgment or make assumptions that all young people are unruly
- Establish reasonable rules and regulations and openly communicate them to EVERYONE
- Recognize that they are here to fight the same disease that adults are and give them the knowledge, opportunity and resources to join the battle under your guidance



# **CHALLENGES**