

## **Volunteering at Community and Health Fair Events**

### **Likely Scenarios for National MS National MS Society Ambassadors**

In this section you'll see how to use the Top Ten talking points, facts and ideas for talking about MS and the National MS National MS Society. Plus, you'll find tips for how to be a good ambassador for the organization while you're at events held in the community.

These are the scenarios we role-played during the training. They are situations you may run into as a volunteer working the booth at community events. Consider these as suggestions for how to handle the scenario. In each case you may be able to provide unique stories or suggestions to the visitor.

#### **Scenario 1: (connection to MS and participant)**

- YOU: Hi, How are you? Are you familiar with MS or the National MS National MS Society?

VISITOR: Yes, my sister-in-law has MS.

- YOU: Is she connected with the MS National MS Society? We have a lot of programs and services for people with MS.

VISITOR: I'm not sure. I think maybe she is.

- YOU: Well, if you're interested in learning more about the programs we offer people with MS. She might be interested in learning more about them as well.

VISITOR: Thanks.

- YOU: You're welcome. Do you have any questions about the disease?

VISITOR: I don't think so. I do the Walk every year and I am on your e-mail list.

- YOU: Oh, that's great! Thanks for participating in Walk MS! We have our date set for next year. Here, take one of our brochures on Walk MS. It has information if you're interested in participating in or volunteering for one.

VISITOR: Great! Thanks.

- YOU: Thank YOU for all you do to bring us closer to a world free of MS. And thanks for stopping by!

## **Scenario 2: (no connection or knowledge of MS)**

- YOU: Hi! Are you familiar with MS or know anyone who has MS?

VISITOR: No. What is it?

- YOU: MS is a disease that affects the central nervous system, which is made up of the brain, spinal cord and optic nerve. It interrupts the flow of information from the brain to the rest of the body.

VISITOR: Oh is that the disease where people can't walk?

- YOU: In some cases. Symptoms are different for everyone depending on where the damage is in the nervous system and how progressed the disease is. They can range from numbness and tingling to paralysis and blindness.

VISITOR: Why does this happen? Is there a cure?

- YOU: We don't know for sure what causes it and there is no cure. There is a lot of research going on right now looking at what causes MS, how we can prevent it from happening and how we can slow down some of the damage that has already occurred.

VISITOR: Cool.

- YOU: Here is a brochure that will help you understand a little more about MS. Oh, and here is a list of all the fun events that we hold to raise money for research and programs to help people. You should check them out!

VISITOR: Alright.

- YOU: Oh, and here! Have a pencil!

VISITOR: Cool thanks.

- YOU: Thanks for stopping by!

### **Scenario 3: (person with MS)**

- YOU: Hi!

VISITOR: Hi, I just wanted to stop by to say I have MS and thank you for being here.

- YOU: Oh, it's our pleasure.

VISITOR: I was diagnosed 8 years ago and I participate in Walk MS and also volunteer for Bike MS.

- YOU: Well we are glad you've been so involved with us. We have lots of other great ways you can get involved and share your story.

VISITOR: What do you mean share my story?

- YOU: Well everyone affected by MS has a unique story that is important. The MS National MS Society has opportunities for you to use your personal story to raise awareness in your community, help create change at the capitol and lots more.

VISITOR: Oh, I don't think I'd be good at that.

- YOU: Well I think you should consider it. Here – this is our volunteer brochure with lots of simple ways to make changes in your community. Also, here is some information about our MS Ambassador program. This is a great way to get the inside scoop on stuff that's happening at the National MS Society, tips for telling your story and fun ways to get more involved with the chapter. You can also participate in the Bike MS Champions program and connect a cyclist to the mission. Here's a brochure on how to register.

VISITOR: Ok thanks. I'll think about it.

- YOU: You definitely should. And if you have questions, you can call the National MS Society. Let them know you stopped by the National MS Society booth.

VISITOR: Ok. Well thanks.

- YOU: Thank YOU! Have a wonderful day

#### **Scenario 4: (person interested in research)**

- YOU: Hi. Are you familiar with MS or know anyone with the disease?

VISITOR: I'm familiar with it, but I don't think I know anyone with it. MS is the one that affects the nervous system, right?

- YOU: Yes you're correct. It damages the insulation around the nerves and makes it difficult for the brain to send messages to the body.

VISITOR: Yeah, so what's the status on research? Have they found a cure yet?

- YOU: They haven't found a cure yet, but there is some exciting research happening that is leading to new treatments and a better understanding of how to prevent damage to the nervous system.

VISITOR: What kind of treatments?

- YOU: Currently there are six treatments to slow the progression of the disease. And all of them are injections. Right now there is a pill that looks promising. The FDA approved it in the fall of 2010.

VISITOR: Well that's great!

- YOU: Yes, there is so much exciting research happening to investigate the cause of and cure for MS. Here is a brochure on the grant funded research programs we offer as well is information about our NOW (No Opportunity Wasted) Research Campaign. You can always go to the National MS Society website to learn more. Plus, the MS Connection newsletter has some great research news in it.

VISITOR: Great!

- YOU: Do you have any other questions about MS?

VISITOR: Nope. I don't think so. Keep up the great work you're doing. This is a great cause.

- YOU: Thanks for stopping by!

### **Scenario 5: (a child)**

- YOU: Hi. Would you like a piece of candy?

VISITOR: (nods head yes) what is this? (Referring to booth/organization)

- YOU: We're from the National MS Society. MS is a disease that affects the brain and spinal cord. It makes it hard for the brain to send messages to the body.

VISITOR: Does it happen to everybody?

- YOU: It mostly happens to adults. We don't know for sure what causes it and right now there is no cure for MS.

VISITOR: Do people die from it?

- YOU: No it's not a fatal disease. Sometimes when people have had MS for a really long time they can die from other things related to MS, but they never die just because of the MS.

VISITOR: Ok.

- YOU: Thank you for stopping by to learn about MS. Have a fun day at the fair!

Scenario 6: (someone facing a new diagnosis)

- YOU: Hi. How are you? Are you familiar with MS?

VISITOR: Yeah I am actually. I was just diagnosed a couple months ago.

- YOU: I'm sorry to hear that. Have you reached out to the MS National MS Society yet?

VISITOR: No, I've kind of "not wanted to deal with it.

- YOU: Well one of the best things you can do is get connected with us. We have tons of programs, support and activities. We have three social workers that can help people with MS find resources and answer questions. The social workers also offer consultation programs especially for people newly diagnosed. If you'd like to write down your contact information we can have one of them call you.

- YOU: Plus, they can tell you about other great things that our chapter offers like newsletters, special events, activism and other volunteer opportunities, and lots more!

VISITOR: Well I don't know how much I want to be involved yet.

- YOU: I definitely understand. If you'd like, I can offer some materials at the booth that might be interesting to you.

VISITOR: Sure, I'd like that.

- YOU: Great! (Give the visitor materials the most pertain to his/her situation...probably MS Connection. Programs Connection, volunteer, event, and activism cards) Please let us know if you have any questions or need anything. I will give your contact information to our social workers and they will be in touch.

- VISITOR: I appreciate your help.

- YOU: My pleasure. Thanks so much for stopping by. It's such an important step to make.