Example for a Wake up project of Gemeinsam leben und lernen in Europa e. V.

Mobile phone help for seniors

Draft:

Today many people think that the handling of mobile phones is easy and self-explaining. In fact it's true that young people only have very few problems, but there are not only young people, but also older ones who didn't have the chance to grow up with the new technology. That's why they have no real access to the range of possibilities you normally have with a mobile phone. Therefore the volunteers of Gemeinsam leben und lernen in Europa decided to offer a mobile phone help for seniors. It usually takes place at the Gemeinschaftsraum (Ort 9), where young volunteers help elderly with their questions for about two hours per event. Sometimes there are also some presentations about current topics/basic skills like how to find the best mobile phone contract for oneself and how to get photos from the cellphone to the computer.

How to make seniors aware of this project:

You can reach seniors with newspaper advertisements, but also with Facebook posts. Thanks to some surveys that were executed through some volunteers we have the information that seniors mostly still read newspaper. Even the Facebook posts help to inform elderly about the project, as their children or grandchildren read the advertisement and share it with the affected persons. Of course you can also reach some more guests by mouth-to-mouth propaganda. If somebody came and is happy about the help he will talk about it and accordingly make some advertisement for the phone help.

Behaviour towards seniors:

Seniors are in general very polite and happy about our help. As there are always more elderly than volunteers it may be the case that one volunteer gets up to 6 seniors who need help. In this case waiting times are unavoidable and some seniors start to talk to the volunteer although he helps another person with a different problem. If this happens the volunteer should tell the "troublemaker" to wait until he has finished. For the case that one guest has many problems and it takes too much time you can ask him to come again the next time (we want to offer the mobile phone help two times a month from September 2019 at the latest). If you explain something to elderly you should get sure that they write down what you have said them, otherwise there is a higher risk that they ask the same question the next times too. If a senior should show symptoms of dementia it's very important to stay polite and especially patient in an appropriate dimension.

In this case you can refer the senior to the next meeting, if answering all the questions takes too much time.

Questions of the seniors:

In general there is a wide range of questions. Some seniors for example haven't heard anything about WhatsApp, whereas others want you to tell them what mobile phone contract is the best for them. As the volunteers are no experts they may also have problems to answer the questions. If this happens to you as a volunteer you can consult other volunteers, look for appropriate solutions in the internet or tell the senior that he should come again the next time so you can ask some real experts. But usually all questions are manageable, at least after you've briefly thought about it.

How to realize a "mobile phone help for seniors" event:

First of all you need a place where you can invite all the seniors, this could be your organization, a senior center etc. Furthermore you need a pool of volunteers who are available whenever you plan the next event. Please keep in mind that every volunteer should not have more than 5 seniors, otherwise it may become unpleasant for the seniors as well as for the volunteer.

You should not forget to make enough advertisement for the event in the local newspaper etc.

If you want to do a presentation make sure that you have the necessary devices (computer, video projector etc.).

Try to cooperate with other similar providers of mobile phone help, so that you can help each other to recruit volunteers/get new guests.