Creative Community Nights & Continuing Volunteer Development

Volunteer formation doesn't have to be limited to orientation and retreat times. Weekly community nights provide an ideal opportunity to help volunteers grow and deepen in their understanding of program values. Inviting local speakers to enjoy community night with volunteers enriches the volunteer experience and promotes wide spread support of the volunteer program. Speakers can be drawn from a variety of places and engage volunteers on topics connecting to program values. Get ideas for building a formation program that teaches volunteers how to seamlessly incorporate program values into their daily lives…during their year of service and beyond!

1. What are your program values?
    a. Ex: Vincentian Spirituality, Prayer, Community, Faith life, Social Justice

2. When you think about your volunteers at the end of their year, what do you want them to have learned? What will make them a successful "VMC" volunteer or "x" volunteer?

3. Brainstorm specific topics that connect to your program values and goals.

4. Who are your local resources that could speak to your volunteers about these issues? Any there local events that they could attend on community nights?
    a. Think of specific alums, service site connections, other religious or local leaders

5. If you are not in the same area as your volunteers, how can you help support them in planning these types of community nights on their own?
    a. Spend time talking with them about your goals for community night when you are in person/face-to-face with them
    b. Help them start a community binder – include all the resources we have talked about including a list of topic ideas, local speakers, and a brief explanation of how these connect to your program values and volunteer formation
    c. Start small with one or two community nights a month
    d. Check in with them regularly to see how community nights are going, ask them how you can continue to be a support to them
    e. Keep notes and build on program each year