

## Community Involvement is Key to Multifamily Success

Coretta Scott King once said: “The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.” Those are words to live by in the multifamily rental housing industry. The value we bring to the areas we serve extends far beyond four walls and a roof, it is the care and compassion we deliver to our residents, team members, and the community. Over my many years in this industry, I have found that the most successful apartment home communities are those that make community involvement a hallmark of their marketing and resident retention strategies. The following are some strategies to be effective in your community involvement strategy.

1. **Intersection of Resident and Team Member Passions:** Passion amongst residents and team members is an important driver when making a community involvement strategy. Without that passion, many apartment managers find they can't get enough volunteers or participants to help with a project. As an example, we have found that a significant number of residents at our apartment home communities across Virginia are pet owners. They, like most of our team members, are passionate about their pets. That is why most of our communities have partnered with local pet shelters to assist with food, toys, and supply drives. We get a tremendous amount of participation with these drives and they build meaningful relationships with both our residents and the local communities we serve.
2. **Mirror Community Involvement Efforts to Holidays/Events:** Another effective strategy when implementing a community involvement effort is to tie them to significant events or holidays. Like our residents, events or holidays evoke certain feelings in us as well. Whether it be the last day of school or Thanksgiving, all of us have a positive memory about these milestones that inspire us to participate and give back. A successful example of this are the food drives that many of us conduct in the run up to Thanksgiving. These food drives remind team members and residents about the importance of the holiday and that there are individuals in our local communities who can't afford healthy and nutritious meals. Using holidays or events to your advantage will ensure success.
3. **Leverage Partnerships with Local Organizations:** There are few things more gratifying in life than when you can work together with individuals to make an impact on a shared cause. We are all members of the Virginia Apartment Management Association and for the past three years VAMA | Central Virginia has partnered with VCU on a backpack supply drive. These opportunities to bring apartment living professionals together for a shared cause are an amazing way to work together for the common good. We have implemented this strategy at HHHunt Apartment Living not only with VAMA, but also with local schools who host supply drives at the start of the year as well as local police departments. The connection between our residents, team members, and these organizations drive increased participation and the chance to really make an impact on someone's life.
4. **Get Involved at the Local Level:** It may seem obvious, but getting involved on boards, commissions, or committees is vital when managing an apartment home community. Not only does this help get the word out about your community, but it also helps with your personal brand. Joining or volunteering with local organizations can be challenging given life/work commitments but the rewards are endless. The key is to leverage those relationships for your fellow team members and your residents. You never know how one introduction or point of contact can influence a positive trajectory in someone's life.

The multifamily rental housing industry offers exciting and rewarding opportunities to make a positive impact in our local communities. Creativity and getting involvement from your residents will make your community involvement strategy even more rewarding.

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