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**How to Visit Local Schools and Talk About Careers in Aging – Careers in Aging Month**

Careers in Aging Month in March 2025 is the perfect time to engage the next generation and introduce them to the diverse and rewarding career opportunities within aging services. Visiting local schools to speak about careers in aging not only raises awareness but also helps ensure we have a strong, dedicated workforce to meet the growing needs of our aging population. Here’s how to organize a successful school visit and inspire students to consider a future in aging services:

**Step 1: Plan and Organize Your Visit**

1. **Identify Target Schools**: Reach out to local middle schools, high schools, and even colleges with healthcare or social services programs. Focus on schools that may have career-oriented classes or programs that align with the skills needed in aging services, such as health sciences, social work, or business management.
2. **Contact School Administrators**: Connect with the school’s career services office, guidance counselors, or faculty members who can help you schedule a presentation. Be sure to discuss the benefits of your talk for students and emphasize how it aligns with the school's curriculum or career day events.
3. **Choose Your Audience**: Tailor your presentation based on the age group and interests of the students. For example, high school students might be more interested in learning about different career paths, while college students may want more detailed information about advanced degrees or internships in aging services.
4. **Set a Date and Time**: Coordinate with the school to set up a date and time that works for both the students and the staff. Consider aligning your visit with Careers in Aging Month to make the event part of a larger, nationwide celebration of the field.

**Step 2: Create a Compelling Presentation**

1. **Introduce the Aging Services Field**: Start by explaining the growing importance of aging services. Highlight the demographics of an aging population and how this impacts healthcare, social services, and day-to-day living. Emphasize that aging services is a rapidly expanding field with a wide variety of roles.
2. **Showcase Career Opportunities**: Highlight the wide range of careers within the aging services sector. Discuss roles such as:
   * Nurses and caregivers
   * Social workers and counselors
   * Activity coordinators and recreation therapists
   * Healthcare administrators
   * Medical technicians, dietitians, and therapists
   * Volunteers and support roles

Explain how each role contributes to improving the quality of life for older adults, and stress the value of these careers in creating positive societal change.

1. **Discuss Skills and Qualifications**: Talk about the skills and education required for different positions. Break down the typical career paths in aging services, such as:
   * Degrees or certifications needed (e.g., nursing, gerontology, social work)
   * Key personal traits (e.g., empathy, communication, patience)
   * Opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training
2. **Incorporate Real-Life Testimonials**: Share stories from current employees or volunteers in your organization who work in aging services. These firsthand accounts help students relate to the material and see real-world examples of career fulfillment in this field.
3. **Explain the Growing Demand**: Share statistics on the aging population and the increasing demand for aging services professionals. Highlight job security, career growth potential, and the opportunities for making a tangible difference in people's lives.
4. **Interactive Q&A Session**: Allow time for students to ask questions. Be prepared to answer questions about everything from career paths to specific daily tasks in aging services. Encourage students to ask about opportunities for internships or volunteer work at your facility.

**Step 3: Make It Engaging and Interactive**

1. **Use Visual Aids**: Incorporate slides, videos, or real-life examples of aging services to make your presentation more dynamic. This could include showing a day in the life of a caregiver or a nurse, or explaining the impact of social activities on seniors' well-being.
2. **Provide Hands-On Learning**: If possible, bring in interactive materials that students can engage with, like brochures, career guides, or educational games. This helps them connect with the material and see how aging services impacts their community.
3. **Offer Giveaways**: Provide small, branded items like pens, brochures, or educational booklets that students can take home. This serves as a reminder of the discussion and can inspire them to learn more about aging services careers later.

**Step 4: Provide Resources for Further Exploration**

1. **Hand Out Career Resources**: Share contact information for local organizations, universities, and career centers where students can find additional resources about aging services careers. Provide links to job boards or internship opportunities that cater to this field.
2. **Offer Volunteer or Internship Opportunities**: Let students know about potential volunteer opportunities or internships at your facility or others in the community. This is a great way for students to gain hands-on experience and get a feel for the profession.
3. **Direct Students to Educational Programs**: Recommend specific programs or courses in aging, gerontology, nursing, or social work at local universities or technical schools. Providing these pathways can help students start planning for their future careers in aging services.

**Step 5: Follow Up After the Visit**

1. **Thank the School**: After your visit, send a thank-you note to the school staff for allowing you to speak with their students. Acknowledge the students' engagement and enthusiasm.
2. **Stay Connected**: Keep the conversation going by offering to return for future events, provide additional resources, or even set up a career fair booth in the future. Stay in touch with the school to continue building relationships with the next generation of workers in aging services.
3. **Track Engagement**: Keep track of how many students attended, how many expressed interest in pursuing careers in aging services, and whether any students followed up with you for volunteer or internship opportunities. This will help you refine future outreach efforts.