



“It’s Not You, It’s Me” – Attracting and Retaining Volunteers



Cora, Greg and Juli

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- City of Springfield, Missouri
Director of Public Information & Civic Engagement
- Co-creator of Give 5 Program
- 18 years at Mercy Health





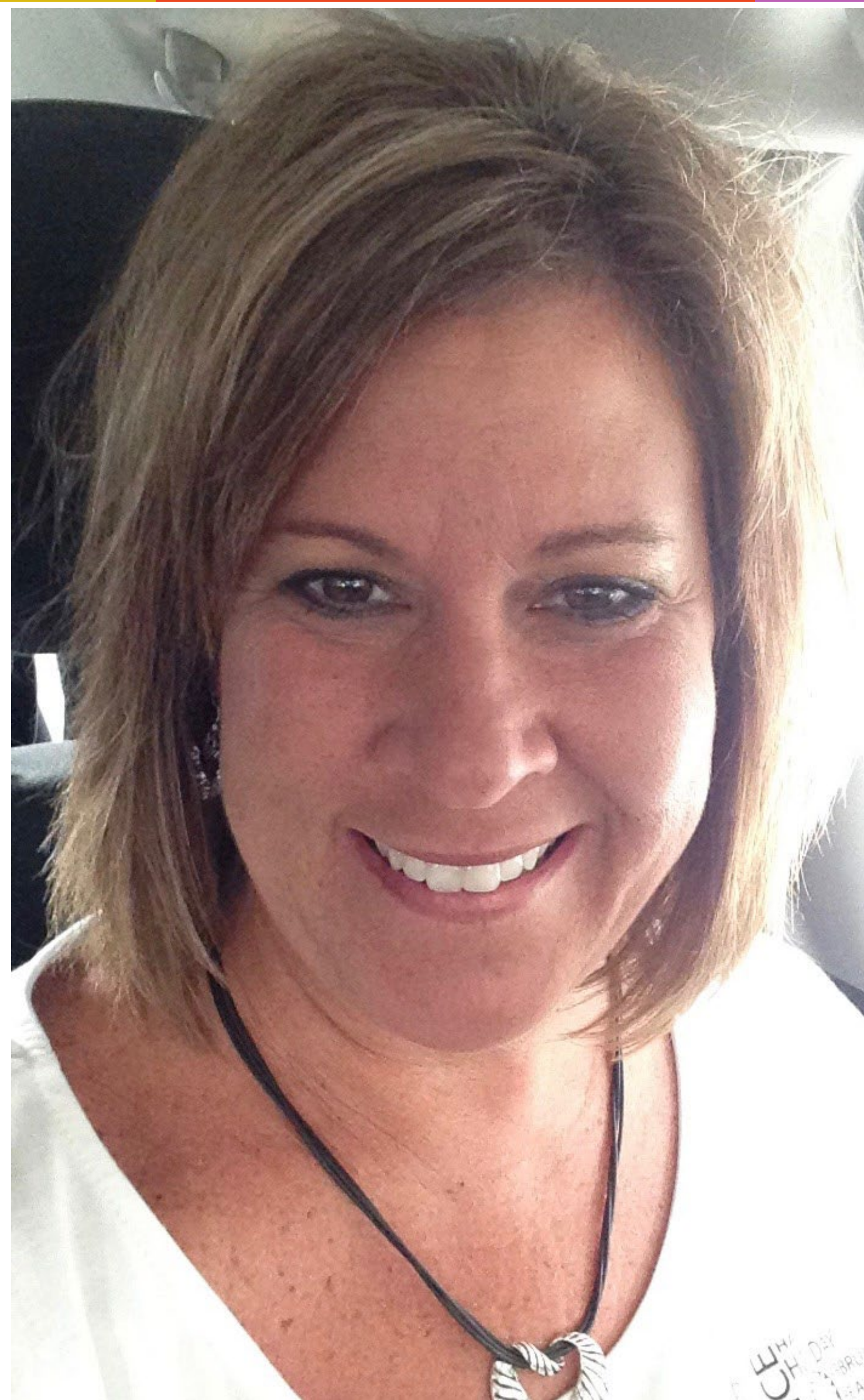
Greg Burris

- President/CEO United Way of the Ozarks
- Founder of Give 5 Program
- 10 years as Springfield City Manager
- 25 years at Missouri State University



Juli Jordan

- Director of Marketing, Community Engagement & Wellness, SeniorAge (14 years)
- Marketing Manager, Paul Mueller Company (13 years)
- Events and Fundraising Coordinator, Arthritis Foundation (4 years)
- Favorite Dessert: Mac and Cheese



**Part 1: “It’s Not You, It’s Me” —How to
Attract Them**

Part 2: Generational Volunteerism

Part 3: How to Keep Them!

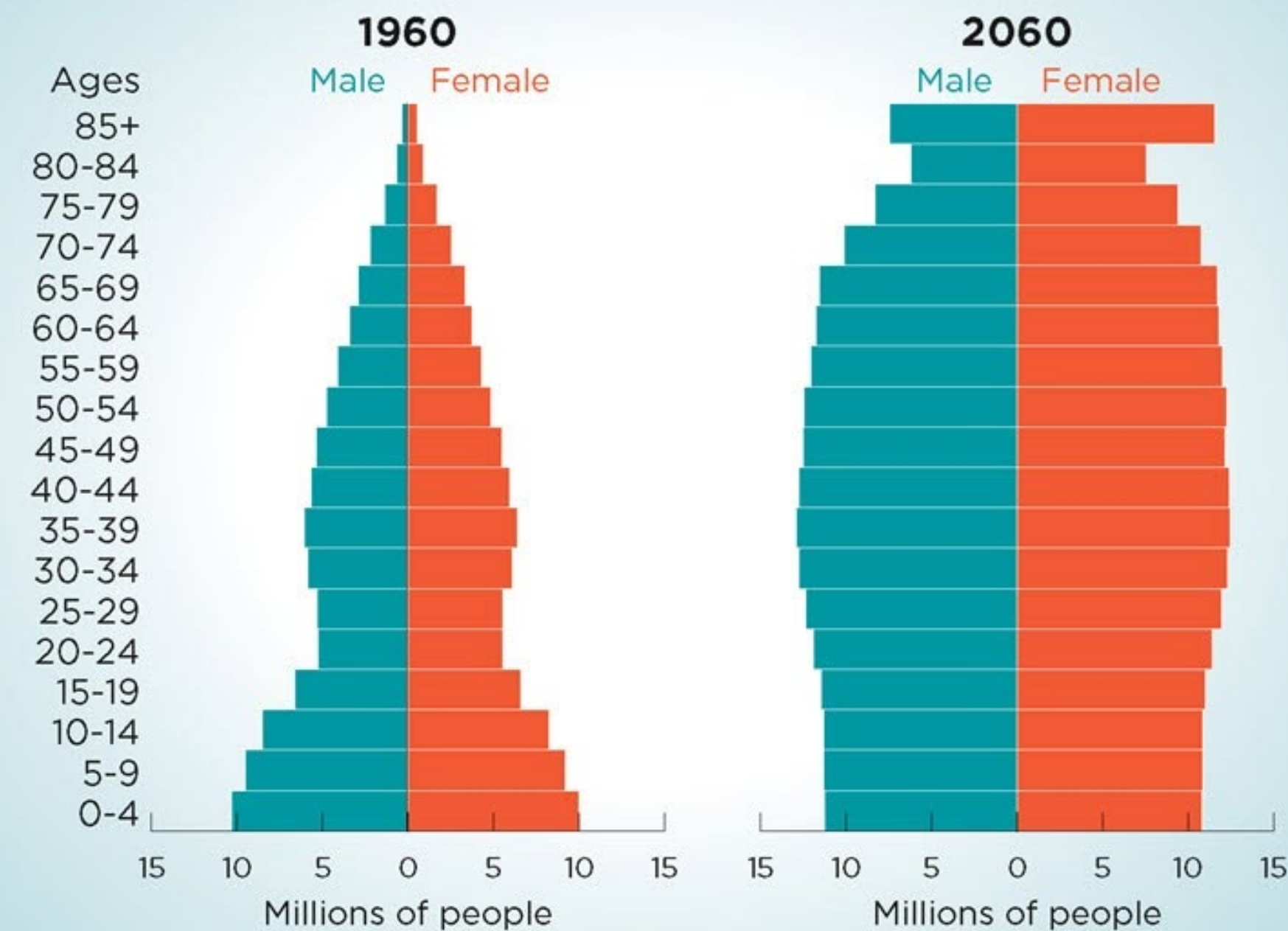


But first, a bit of context . . .



From Pyramid to Pillar: A Century of Change

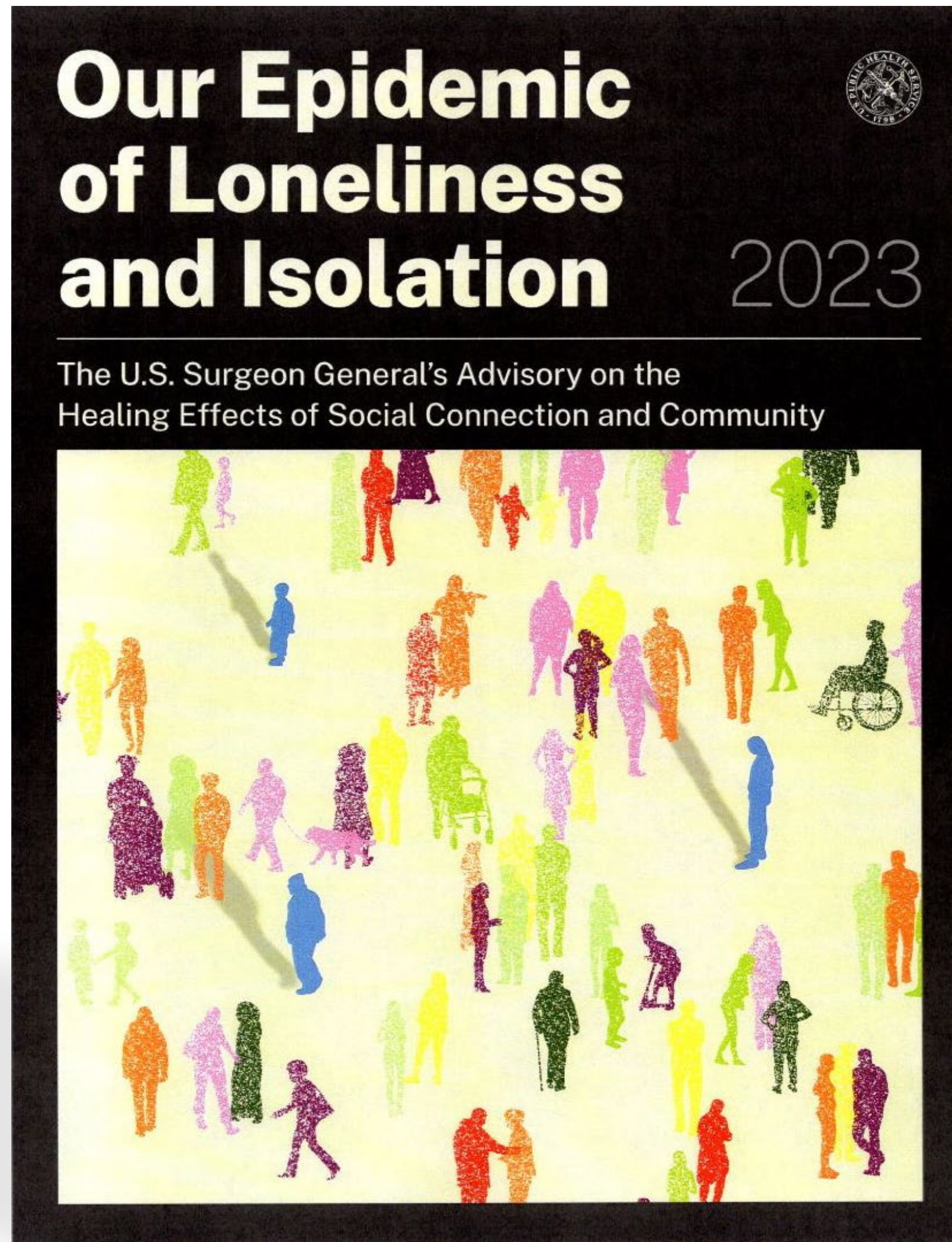
Population of the United States



United States™
Census
Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
[census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

Source: National Population
Projections, 2017
www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popproj.html



U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory- 2023

Changes in key indicators, including individual social participation, demographics, **community involvement**, and use of technology over time, suggest both overall societal declines in social connection and that, currently, **a significant portion of Americans lack adequate social connection**-- p. 13

A **fraying of the social fabric** can also be seen more broadly in society. **Trust** in each other and major institutions is at near historic lows. Polls conducted in 1972 showed that roughly 45% of Americans felt they could reliably trust other Americans; however, that proportion shrank to roughly 30% in 2016. This corresponds with levels of polarization being at near historic highs.— p. 13

“A child born in the West today has a more than 50 percent chance of living to be over 105, while by contrast, a child born over a century ago had a less than 1 percent chance of living to that age.”

Source: The 100 Year Life by Lynda Gratton and Andrew Scott, p. 2

As a society, we have less empathy.

- “Us” vs “Them”—We selfselect into ‘bubbles’
- Media “Echo Chambers”—Reinforces our preconceived notions



Part 1: “It’s Not You, It’s Me” – How to Attract Volunteers

**What does someone
say when they want to
break up . . . ?**

The Dating Analogy

(Checking each other out)

It's Not You, It's Me – The Importance of Finding a Good Match

- **The importance of first impressions – Be prepared; make them feel welcome; good hygiene; pick an appropriate outfit for the situation**
- **Pick the right location**
- **Be on time**
- **Be polite – Your character will be exposed by the way you treat the staff**
- **Share the talking and listening – listen actively**

It's Not You, It's Me – The Importance of Finding a Good Match

- **Prepare conversation starters**
- **Be relaxed, but interested**
- **Don't come on too strong**
- **Don't focus on yourself**
- **Unplug – Stay off your phone**

It's Not You, It's Me – The Importance of Finding a Good Match

- **Be open-minded about the possibilities**
- **Highlight your strengths humbly**
- **Don't sound desperate – Might scare a potential volunteer away if they think the future viability of the organization depends on them signing up!**
- **Pick up the check**
- **Be honest – Is this a good fit for both of you?**

It's Not You, It's Me – The Importance of Finding a Good Match

One exception to the analogy . . .

Don't flirt!

Best Practices

- **Reimagine your volunteer opportunities – View the world through a “lens of abundance” instead of a “lens of scarcity”**
- **Volunteer “job description” – Part of the team; set expectations**
- **Don’t assume they know anything about your nonprofit**
- **Provide take-home materials – They are drinking from a firehose**
- **Meet in a quiet location with few distractions**

Best Practices

- **Offer a tour**
- **Provide a handout with testimonials from current/past volunteers**
- **Outline specific volunteer opportunities that match the volunteer's skills and interest**
- **Follow up!**
- **Make them an ambassador for your organization**



**What are the different
generations seeking?**

(License to Generalize?)

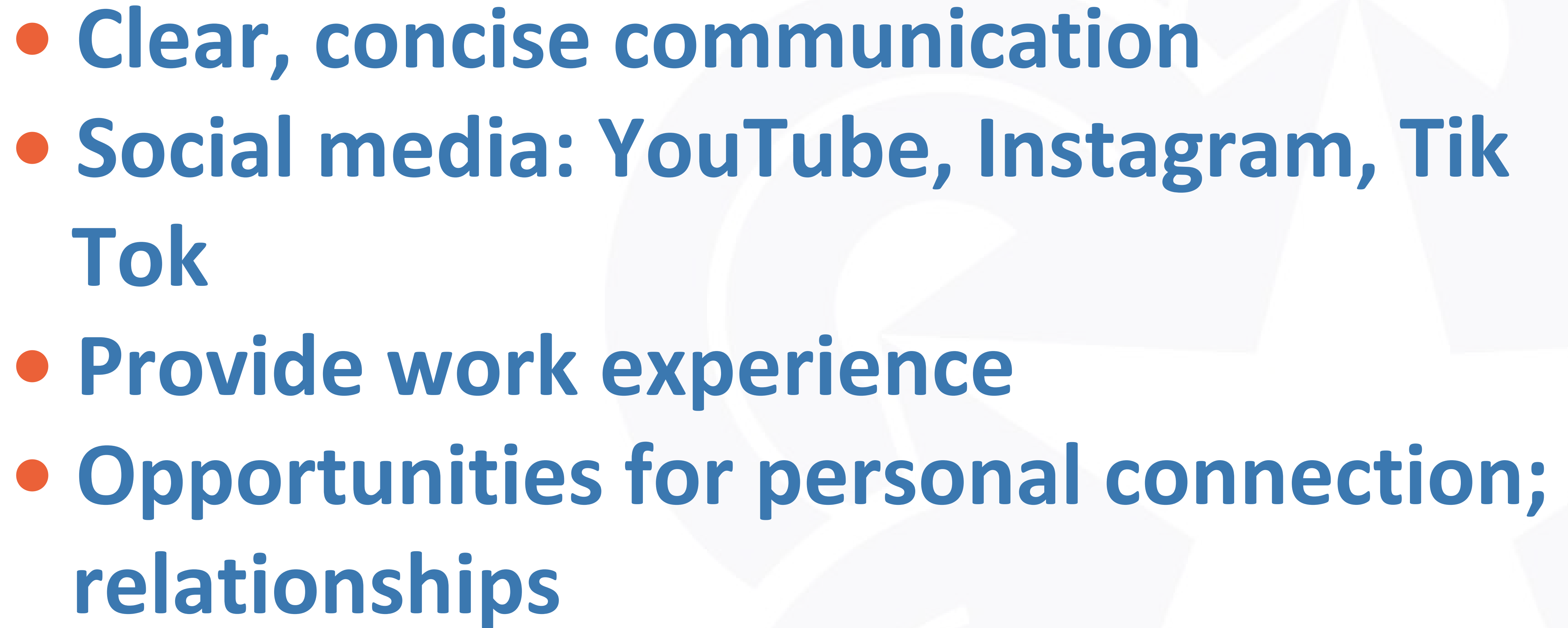


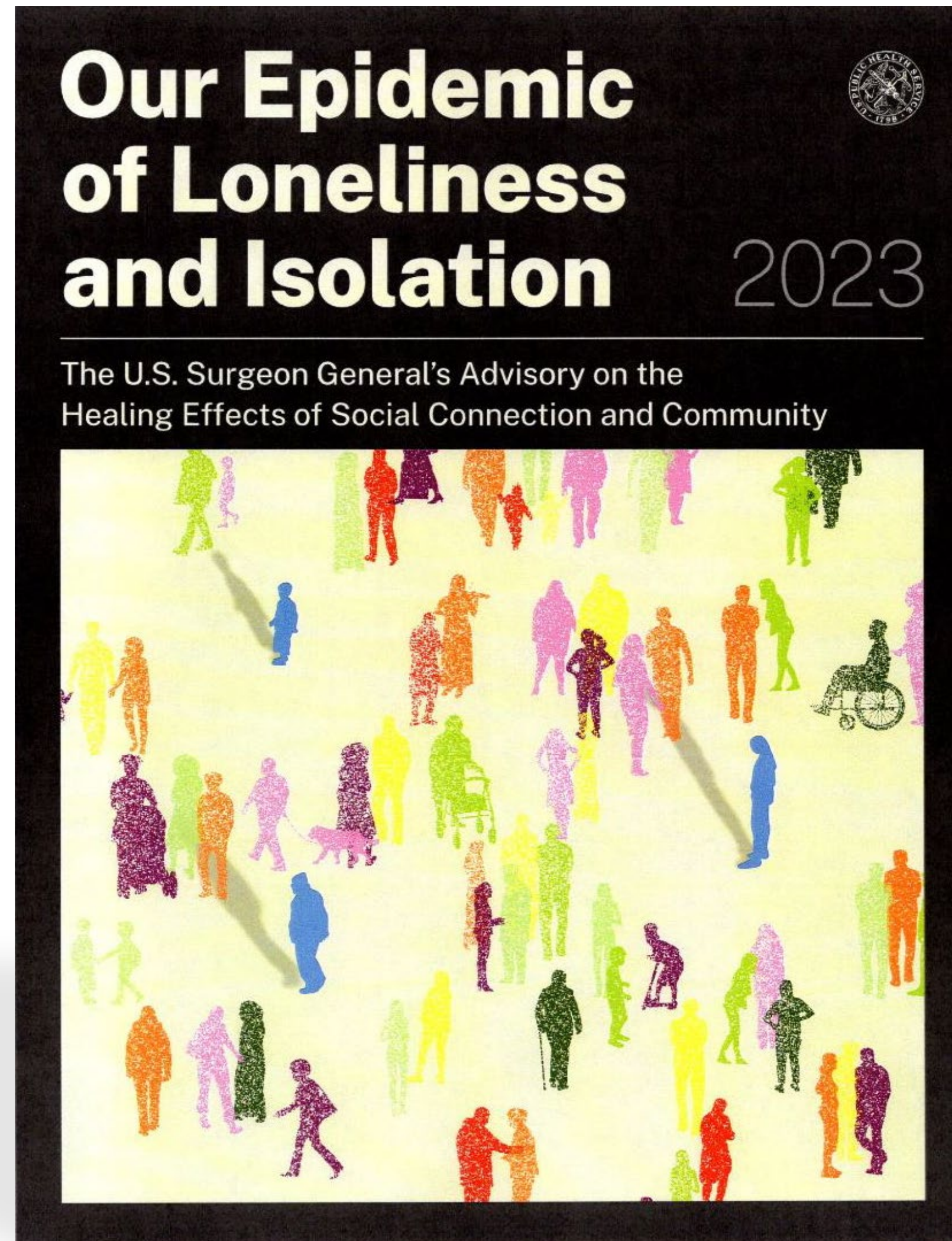
Gen Z

(1995-2012)

What is Gen Z seeking?

- 
- Short-term commitments and flexibility; micro -volunteerism
 - To be heard; respect
 - Opportunities to focus on social justice, equality and the environment

- 
- **Clear, concise communication**
 - **Social media: YouTube, Instagram, Tik Tok**
 - **Provide work experience**
 - **Opportunities for personal connection; relationships**



U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory 2023

“The rate of loneliness among young adults has increased every year between 1976 and 2019.” p. 19

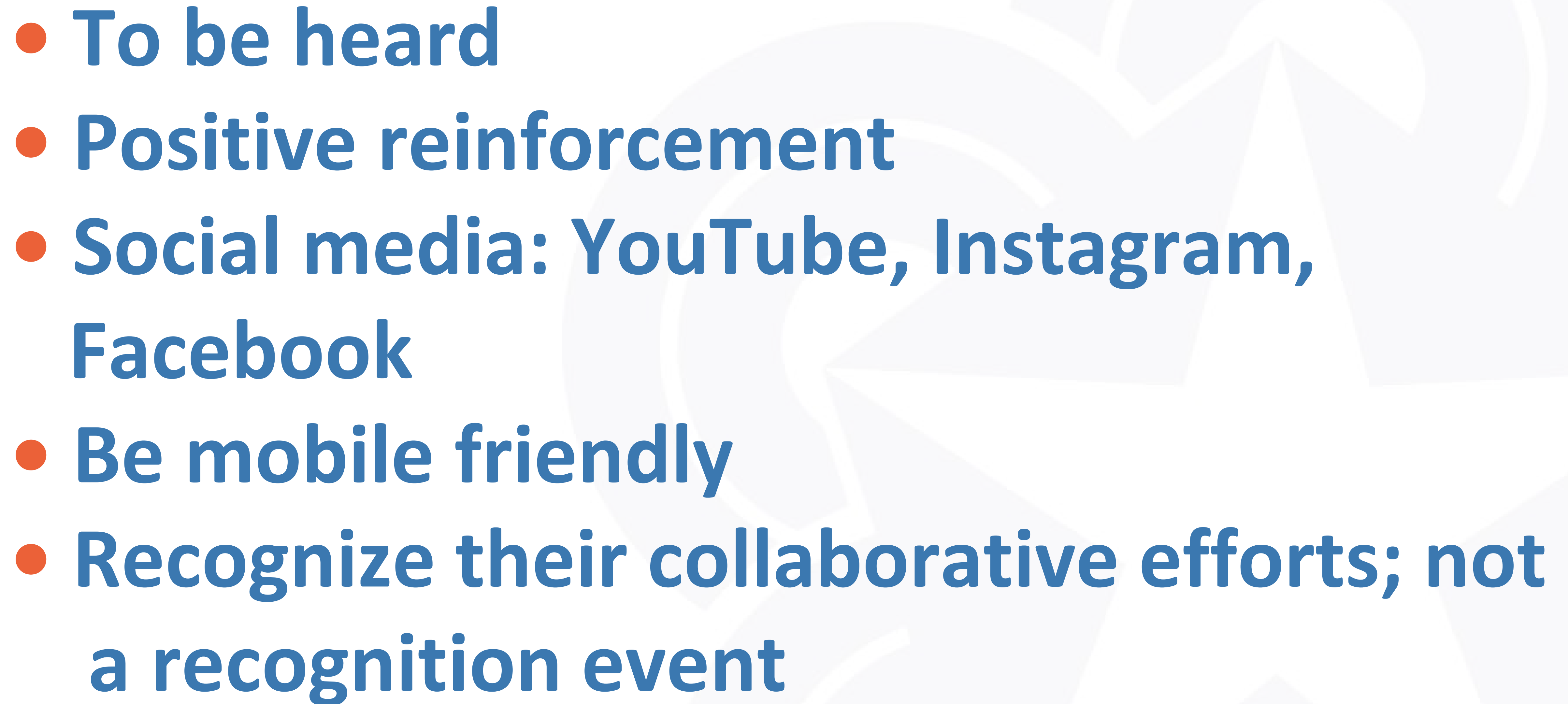
“While the highest rates of social isolation are found among older adults, young adults are almost twice as likely to report feeling lonely than those over 65.”— p. 19

Millennials

(1980-1994)

What are Millennials seeking?

- 
- **Human connection**
 - **Want flexibility; create the rules**
 - **Opportunities to engage the entire family**
 - **Impact social, environmental or community issues**
 - **See their impact**

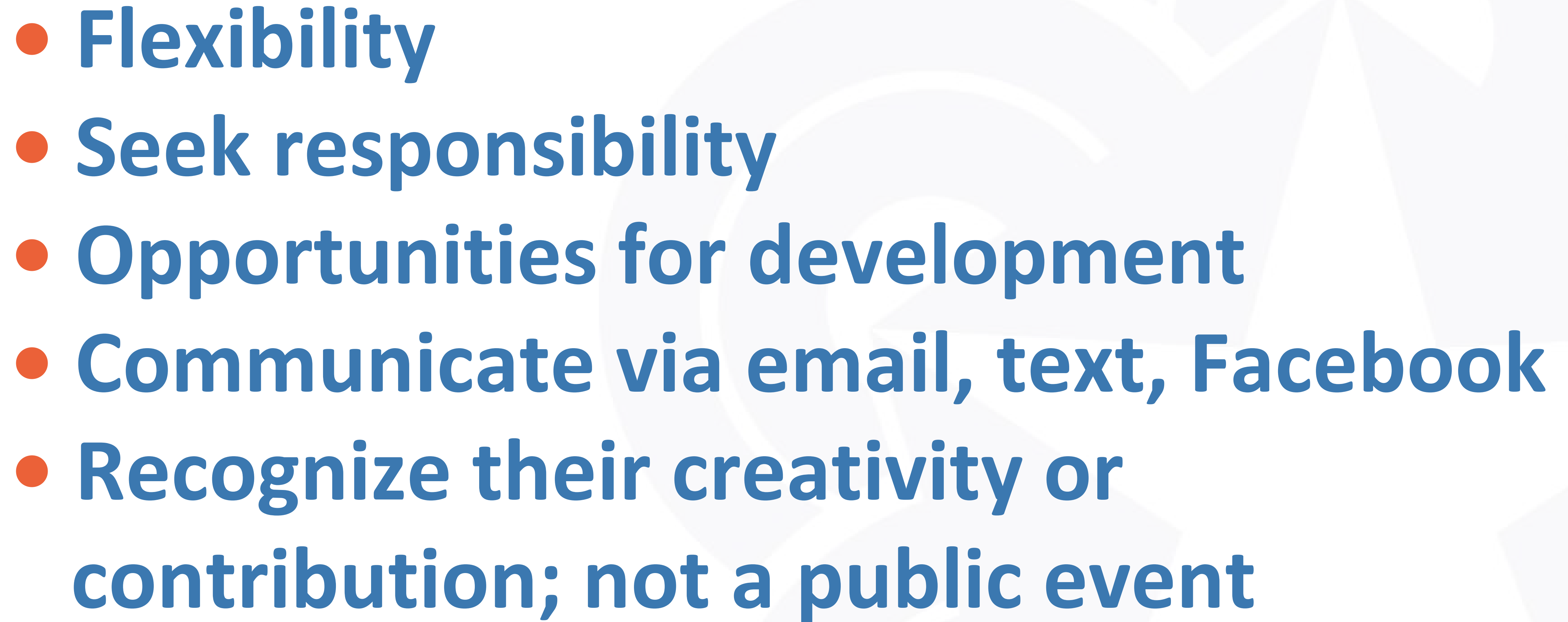
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- **To be heard**
 - **Positive reinforcement**
 - **Social media: YouTube, Instagram, Facebook**
 - **Be mobile friendly**
 - **Recognize their collaborative efforts; not a recognition event**

Gen X

(1965-1979)

What is Gen X seeking?

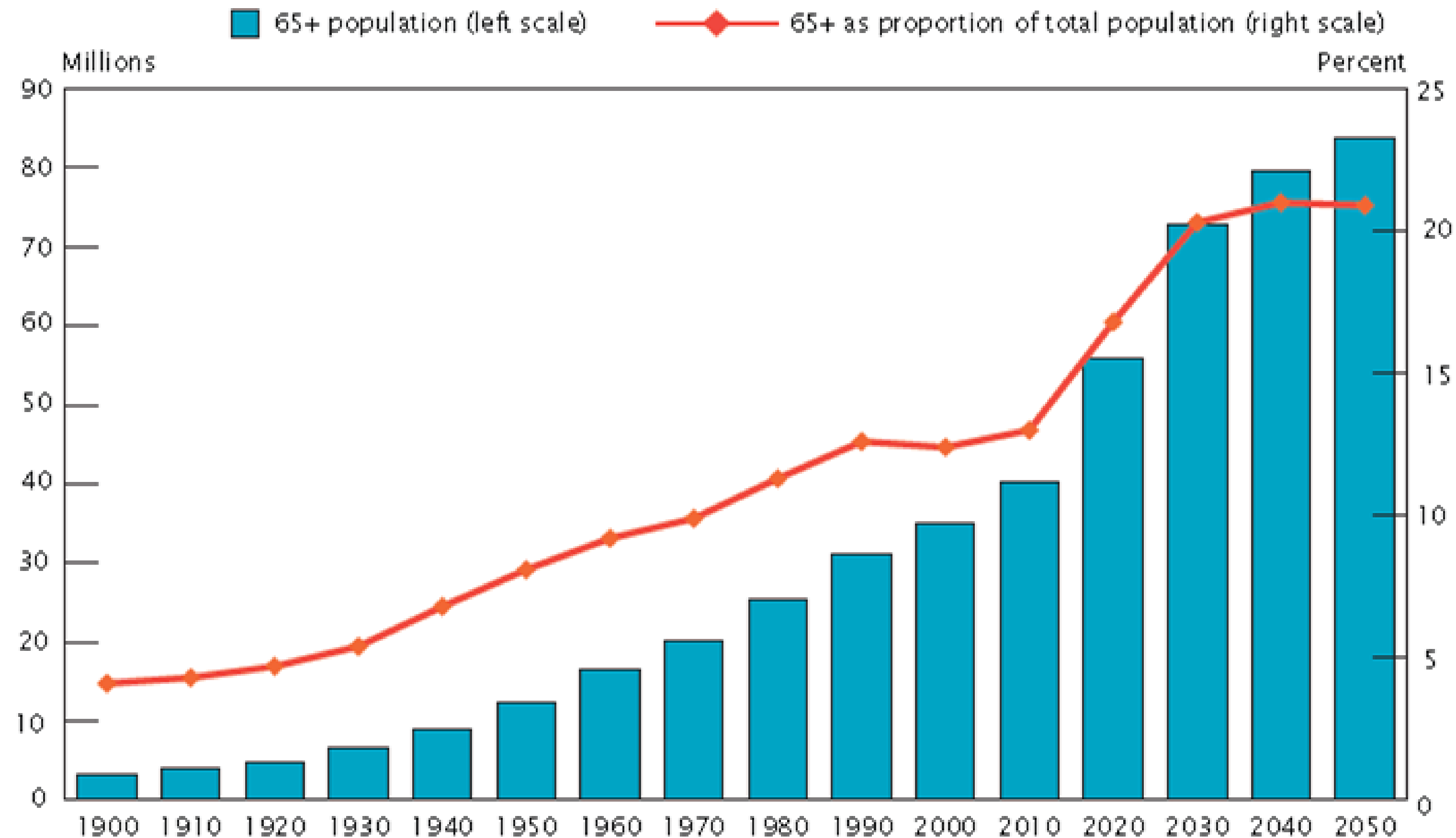
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- **Hands-on opportunities**
 - **Share their knowledge and expertise**
 - **Don't micromanage them**
 - **Connect and build relationships**
 - **Communicate via traditional and digital media**

- 
- **Flexibility**
 - **Seek responsibility**
 - **Opportunities for development**
 - **Communicate via email, text, Facebook**
 - **Recognize their creativity or contribution; not a public event**

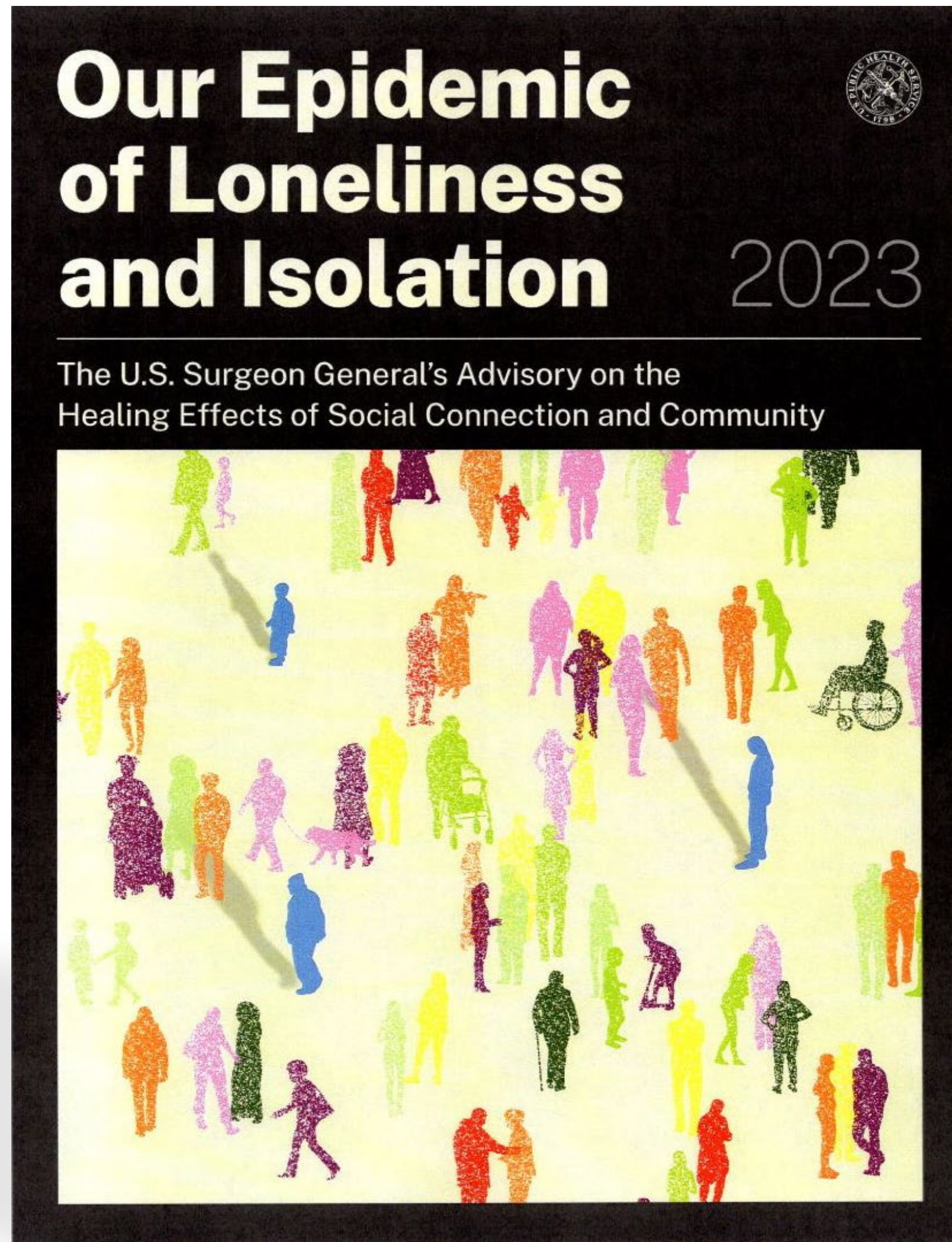
Baby Boomers

(1946-1964)

Population Aged 65 and Over: 1900 to 2050



Sources: 1900 to 1940, and 1960 to 1980, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983; 1950, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1953; 1990, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992; 2000, U.S. Census Bureau, 2001; 2010, U.S. Census Bureau, 2011; 2020 to 2050, U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a; 1900 to 2010, decennial census; 2020 to 2050, 2012 National Population Projections, Middle series.



U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory 2023

“Requires the nation’s **immediate** awareness and action.”— p. 6

“Approximately **half** of U.S. adults report experiencing loneliness.”— p. 9

“Social isolation among older adults alone accounts for an estimated **\$6.7 billion** in excess Medicare spending annually.”— p. 9

“Every level of increase in social connection corresponds with a **risk reduction** across many health conditions.”— p. 10

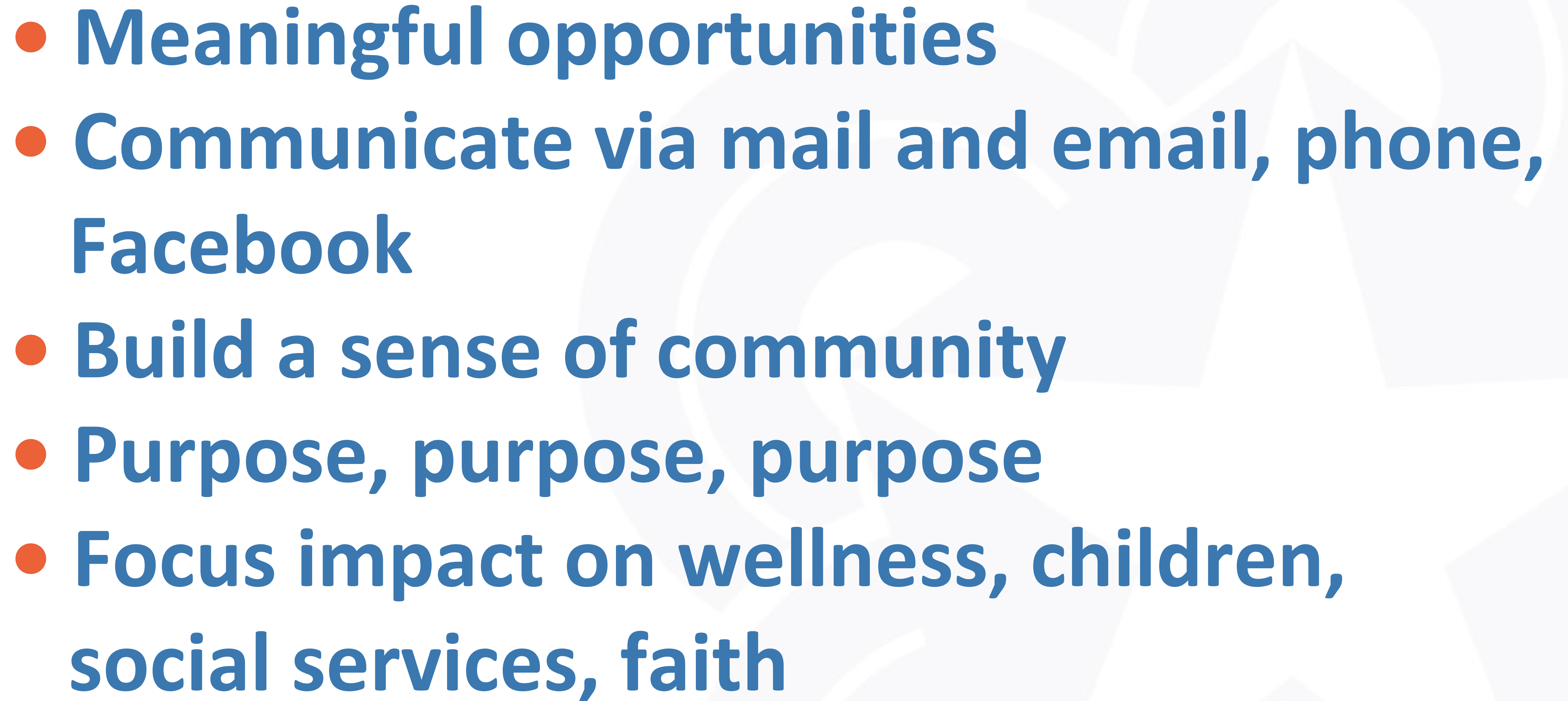
Metaverse

Enhancing one's ability to isolate?





What are Baby Boomers seeking?


- 
- **Meaningful opportunities**
 - **Communicate via mail and email, phone, Facebook**
 - **Build a sense of community**
 - **Purpose, purpose, purpose**
 - **Focus impact on wellness, children, social services, faith**

- 
- **Being part of something bigger**
 - **Opportunities to use their skills**
 - **Work focused**
 - **Mentors**
 - **Recognize their leadership, expertise, hard work, commitment**

Silent Generation

(1925-1945)

What is the Silent Generation seeking?

- 
- **Meaningful opportunities**
 - **Flexibility**
 - **Some seeking remote opportunities**
 - **Public/formal recognition events
(certificates, pins)**

- 
- **Communicate via phone, letters or in person**



Many are seeking a
shared experience.

[Creates a sense of belonging.]

Part 3: How To Keep Them!



**Once you've
reeled them
in, what's
next?**

- **Make Your Volunteers Feel Needed and Appreciated.**

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Inspire Your Volunteers with Your Cause, Not Your Organization

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Ask Volunteers to Help in Specific, Actionable Ways

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Stay Connected, and Make Sure Your Communication Channels Go Both Ways.

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Develop A Community Of Volunteers.

- Make Your Volunteers Feel Needed and Appreciated.
- Inspire Your Volunteers with Your Cause, Not Your Organization
- Ask Volunteers to Help in Specific, Actionable Ways
- Stay Connected, and Make Sure Your Communication Channels Go Both Ways.
- Develop a Community of Volunteers.

Show Your Volunteers How They Made a Difference

What else?

- Provide quality induction and training
- Make resources available.
- Communicate often and effectively.
- Be accessible.
- Be organized and accurate.
- Provide feedback.
- Provide learning opportunities.



#1 Motivation for Volunteering:

“It is the right thing to do.”

Civic duty, or a belief in the common good, is one of the most common reasons for volunteering (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Civic-minded volunteers are motivated to work because they believe volunteering is the right thing to do for their community

WE ♥ OUR
VOLUNTEERS

And finally – “Thank You” does not have to be expensive

You don't have to spend a lot, but keep this in mind!

- **Make it meaningful and memorable – use creative liberty**
- **Make it useful, practical, or yummy**
- **Always remember that a little ribbon goes a long way – a bowtie makes it more formal**
- **You don't have to logo your gifts**
- **Present the gift in a special way**
- **Always keep your program front of mind**
- **Plan a little event**

Handmade all the way - Pinterest is your friend



And Just Remember...

**You Can Never Say
Thank You Enough!**



Questions? Ideas?



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