



Gary M. Solomonson

Storyteller ~ Speaker ~ Author ~ Coach

For the past 53 years, Gary has worked with many teams in the senior living industry to help create exceptional living environments, working in the areas of design, management, sales, marketing, life enrichment, fundraising and volunteerism throughout the US and UK, offering independent living, assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing. His leadership style has always been one of empowerment for all team members, helping them create tools to be successful in their work, careers and personal lives. During these decades, he has also developed volunteer programs and taught sustainable fundraising and resource development initiatives for nonprofits.

Gary's early years were lived passionately in a small farming community in Minnesota's southwestern rolling prairie with its patchwork of meadows, lakes, rivers, marshlands, fields and grove-sized wooded areas surrounding small towns and family farms. His parents were very active volunteers and they mentored him from an early age in a wide range of volunteer and fundraising activities in schools, churches, scouts, community organizations and The Salvation Army, including regular visits with seniors in their homes, nursing homes and hospitals.

Following high school, Gary earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at St. Cloud State University with majors in philosophy and speech/theater arts and a minor in German language. From 1967-1972, he completed an additional four years of graduate studies at Luther Theological Seminary where he received a Masters of Divinity.

Gary finds working with volunteers in nonprofits to be an inspiring and fulfilling personal experience. In teaching those who are connected to and responsible for what happens to their community and networks through the benefits of their nonprofits, he believes it is a privilege to help each person find fulfillment in their volunteering. Gary understands that as a coach, it is his opportunity to draw out the creativity of each individual and innovate collectively, knowing that everyone is creative and that sustainability comes through innovation.

In addition to his work with volunteers and senior living communities, Gary has been a nationally-recognized speaker and facilitator at universities, including MIT, and many associations in the US and UK, and is an author in the fields of volunteerism, dementia care and fundraising.

During the past 15 years, he has developed a passionate interest in working with caregivers caring for loved ones living with dementia, whether in the family home or an assisted living community. He especially enjoys working with individuals of all ages in community organizations and churches, helping them develop volunteer programs and self-study programs for caregivers.

Recently, Gary has returned to The Goodman Group, a company he helped grow over a period of 35 years where he served as vice-president of marketing, sales and new development. The Goodman Group manages 32 senior living communities, 27 residential communities and 6 commercial properties in the US.

During his personal time, living with his family on the North Shore of Lake Superior, in addition to writing, gardening and sculpting, Gary continues to explore the development of new models for volunteering which will inspire people of all ages to contribute their talents and gifts in the service of their communities.