

# Creating Group Projects

*A GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY-WIDE GROUP PROJECTS*



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# Introduction to a Powerful Experience

Volunteering with others in a group project is a powerful experience. It provides all the benefits of individual volunteering, including expressing social values, building self-esteem, and giving back to the community. Volunteering as part of a group project also provides opportunities for people to connect across community boundaries, make new friends, and see tangible changes brought about by combined efforts. And, it lets people see that their values and concerns are shared by others.

## What is a group project?

A group project is an event. Often a one-time event, the project brings people together and focuses their combined energies and talents on completing a specific task or set of tasks designed to address a specific community or organizational need.

## Who can plan a Group project?

Anyone who is passionate about an issue and sees a way to address a community need can plan a project. Group projects often are planned with the help of entities that have experience creating such events—Volunteer Centers, non-profit organizations, government agencies, membership organizations, and employee volunteer programs. You may

decide you want to partner with such a group, or you may decide to bring together a new group of people to work on an issue that is important to you and your community.

## Why are group projects useful?

Group projects offer opportunities to create innovative solutions to community needs by drawing on the skills and knowledge of various people. The projects also leverage the human and capital resources of diverse pools of community members and organizations: young people, adults, older adults, businesses, communities of faith, people with disabilities, families, low-income communities and government. Volunteers working together to help

solve a local need also sends a positive message to the community.

## How can I create a group project?

That is the question this book seeks to answer.

# Project Planning

The following worksheet will guide you through the step-by-step process of planning activities for your group volunteer project. As you read this guide, refer to the worksheet below, and once you have completed it, you are ready to get started on your group project.

## 1. Defining Goals

Develop a set of expected outcomes and set the parameters for your event planning. When you let your initial step in event planning be goal setting, you streamline the remainder of your planning process. Use the goals you develop to pick and choose the most useful parts of this book to your project. For example, if you already know a goal is to emphasize the contributions of an existing volunteer program to the community, you are unlikely to need additional information on recruiting. You could then minimize your use of Step 5.

Develop your own list of steps to Creating A Group Project. Create a flyer of your steps to share with your planning team and guide their use of this book.

### Some things to consider:

- \* What is the scope of your project: a community-wide event, a membership event, a class project?
- \* What do you want to see happen in your community as a result of your project?
- \* How will your choices of goals affect how you select and plan the project, recruit, develop resources, work with the media, or affect your ability to sustain the service?

## 2. Creating a Group Project Team

Invite participation from different non-profits, communities of faith, businesses, government agencies, and local residents to provide advice and leadership to the group project. Get to know each other's interests, skills, and knowledge of the community during your initial

meetings. Develop norms for your team including meeting times, communication systems, and responsibilities. (See Appendix A, Sample Task Sheets).

### Some things to consider:

- Who has participated in past volunteer events?
- Who has expressed an interest in volunteering?
- Who has demonstrated good leadership?
- Would team members be interested in planning year-round activities?

## 3. Selecting your Project

Identify the issues and needs in your community that your team members want to address.

### Some things to consider:

- \* What community issues concern community members? (See Step Three Appendix)

- \* What charities and causes do members already support with time and money?
- What specific skills do the community members have that could benefit a particular issue?
- Does your team have a natural affiliation with a social issue or local need?
- What current community service activities does your team perform? Could these be expanded?
- How much experience does your group have in organizing community service projects?
- Understand your project – how much time and resources will the project require?
- Find the right size and type of project – how much time and energy does your group have to invest in selecting and planning a project?
- What types of activities or events can your group do to be successful based on available time and resources?

To get additional information on community needs or advice on choosing a project, contact your local Volunteer

Center or other nonprofits that focus on a particular issue. Find your Volunteer Center at [www.1800Volunteer.org](http://www.1800Volunteer.org), or

### Nine Project Steps

1. Defining Goals
2. Creating a Project Team
3. Selecting Your Project
4. Planning the Project
5. Recruiting Volunteers
6. Budgeting and Resource Development
7. Engaging the Media
8. Implementing
9. Sustaining the Service

call 1-800-VOLUNTEER.

### 4. Planning The Project

Careful and thoughtful planning will ensure its success!

#### Some things to consider:

- Organize the work – what needs to be done and who is going to do it?
- What is the timeline for planning the project, running the day, providing follow-up information to donors and

sponsors. What are the potential safety or liability issues?

- Share your success – submit your project report to the Points of Light Foundation.

### 5. Recruiting Volunteers

One of the most important jobs in organizing a group project is to recruit volunteers.

#### Some things to consider:

- Will you be recruiting from within an organization or its membership?
- Will you use this project as an outreach to acquire new members?
- Who do you need to participate in your project as volunteers— young people, persons with disabilities, families, seniors, members of communities of faith, community members?
- Does your project team have contacts to help you recruit in different parts of the community?
- Who and how will you collect information on people who tell you they want to volunteer?

## 6. Budget and Resource Development

A well-organized budget with a realistic timeline is crucial to success of any service project.

### Some things to consider:

- When do tasks need to be completed?
- What financial resources do you need? (See Appendix A and Step Six Appendix.)

## 7. Engaging the Media

Creating a publication and generating excitement is essential to the success of group projects

### Some things to consider:

- Who needs to know about your event?
- What is the best way to reach them?
- How will you publicize your project?
- How will you involve public officials and other local dignitaries?

## 8. Implementing

After your planning and hard work, your team will want the day to run smoothly.

### Some things to consider:

- Designate decision makers and team leaders.
- Provide training and orientation;
- Take time for reflection – when and how will you plan for reflection on the project? (See Step Eight Appendix.)
- Celebrate your success – how will you recognize volunteers both during the project and afterward?

## 9. Sustaining Service

The project is complete. Does that mean the service is over?

### Some things to consider:

- How can you make this group project a regular event?
- How can you help episodic volunteers find a home in ongoing service?
- Use volunteer evaluations to develop new projects. (See Step Nine Appendix).

- Use insights from reflection activities to define goals for projects.

To get started, take a look at the Project Planning Process on the next page. By answering the questions and following “the flow” depending on your questions, you’ll be well on your way to a successful group volunteer project!

# Step One – Defining Goals

The first step to creating a volunteer project is to define your goals. By developing a set of expected outcomes, you can set the parameters for your event planning.

For example, you may have a goal to increase connections between local residents and students at a nearby college. This would lead you to select a project that addresses an issue important to both populations. Your recruitment strategy would include ways to contact college students such as e-mails on the college messaging system, an information table in the student union, and contacting campus volunteer outreach groups.

Different strategies also would be used for recruiting residents that might include providing information tables at local parks or grocery stores and flyers in local businesses. In selecting your project, choose one that would allow participants to mix together and talk. Then highlight this cross-population connection in your media alerts.

On the other hand, if you are a project coordinator for the regional office of a local membership organization, you may decide that your local project will be used to reinforce to the public how your members serve the community. You choose a project that benefits the whole community, but draws on your members as volunteers. Your recruiting strategy might include challenges between local clubs to see who can bring out the most volunteers. Your media messages highlight the contributions of your members and the difference the project makes to the community.

## Need Help Defining Your Goals?

Here are some questions that can help you focus your project goals:

- What do you want to see happen in your community as a result of your project?

- What do you want volunteers to carry away from the event? Do you want them to have learned something about the community? A new skill? Know more of their neighbors?
- Do you want to create a community-wide project that draws in participants from different parts of your community: business, schools, local neighborhoods, nonprofits? Are there specific segments of your community's population you want to bring together?
- If your project is not community-wide, will you be recruiting volunteers from within an organization or business? Will you be recruiting from a membership base? Do you want the project to highlight the contributions of your employees or members?
- Do you want to use the project as an outreach opportunity to recruit new



members or volunteers to your program? How will that effect the type of project chosen and your recruiting strategies? What messages will you need to include in your publicity materials?

- Will the project be a one-time event? Will you use the project as a kick-off to a continuum of events and volunteering opportunities around a particular issue?
- Is there a specific organization whose work you want to support? How can a project best support that work?

Once you have defined your goals and set the parameters of your project, go over the rest of the steps outlined in this book. You may find that not all of these steps are necessary for you to create your group project. While this book covers basic issues important to any group project, it is specifically geared to creating community-wide projects. For example, recruiting suggestions are aimed at fostering inclusion of cross-sections of the community including businesses, volunteer groups and residents. These suggestions may not be

necessary for projects being developed by member organizations. Use the goals you have developed to pick and choose the most useful parts of this book to reproduce and share with your project team.

# Step Two – Creating A Group Project Team

## The Project Team

Get off on the right foot by giving yourself plenty of time to plan. Depending on the size of your project, you may need from a few weeks to a year to plan it. For example, community-wide projects that require large venues—convention centers, parks, or community centers—may need to be booked more than a year in advance. The timeline we provide in this book calls for at least 10 to 12 weeks of advance planning and includes an additional two weeks for follow-up after the project is complete. (See Step Two Appendix, Timeline).

You are ready to begin; so, gather a core group of people together to help get the project off to a good start. The project team should develop a consistent and organized method for incorporating the talents and ideas of a diverse group of participants. Remember, inclusive projects start in the planning phase; so, begin thinking here of project team members who encompass diverse abilities, experiences, ages, and perspectives.

Create a channel for these diverse volunteer voices to be heard in project selection, logistics for the day of the project, and recruitment of other volunteers. The opportunity to voice opin-

ions and to play an integral role in all aspects of the project encourages greater volunteer participation and buy-in. After the project is complete, continue to use your project team to get feedback from volunteers and partners, and to build on-going volunteer activities.

Your project team might include people who:

- can help with recruiting and publicity;
- are good at organizing and planning;
- are knowledgeable about community volunteers;
- are knowledgeable about volunteering systems;

- know the community and its needs;
- have previous experience with community projects;
- are currently involved as volunteers;
- have fundraising skills and/or contacts;
- have energy and enthusiasm and who care deeply about making a positive difference.

Once your project team is gathered, assess your assets:

- What skills and commitments are people and organizations bringing to the table?
- What contacts does each person and organization have?
- Who can bring other diverse

perspectives and abilities to the team?

Finally, when you approach potential project team members, be sure to bring them up to speed with what has happened so far. Any new members should understand the goals of the group and their responsibilities as the project moves ahead.

### Building Project Planning Partnerships and Alliances

A frequent error made by project teams is to select a project before finding partners. Invite potential partners to work with you before starting the planning process, then select the project together. This lets people realize a sense of ownership for the project. The more people are involved from the beginning, the more successful the partnership will become. This also prevents the creation of redundant or unneeded projects and makes it possible for more people to volunteer on one project effectively.

Sometimes the most difficult part of planning a group project is recognizing who else should be involved. Most of us tend to rely on people or organizations we already know. That is a good starting point, but your project can go beyond being “just another event on the calendar” if it pulls together people and groups in new ways.

#### **Tips for Seeking Out Diversity for Your Project:**

- Don't be afraid to contact groups that do not have high visibility in the community.
- Contact minority-led organizations and groups representing low-income people and neighborhoods and people with disabilities.
- Your partnerships might reflect all segments of your community.

Effective community partnerships engage agencies, businesses, colleges, the faith community, government, the media, residents, schools, and young

people. By partnering with others, group projects involve more diverse groups of participants, avoid duplication of efforts, make better use of resources, and deal more effectively with the challenges communities face.

#### **Tips for Asking Groups to Participate:**

- Simple and personal requests are the most effective way to recruit partners.
- Explain who you are and the goals of the group you represent.
- Explain that you are looking for partners to help you plan and carry out a group volunteer project.
- Tell them why you want to partner.
- Explain the benefits that could result from participation in the group project.
- Ask for a commitment to partner on the volunteer project.
- Sign a partnership agreement that outlines partner roles and responsibilities.

## Types of Organizations and Groups Where You Can Find Planning Partners

### **Volunteer Centers**

The Volunteer Center National Network is a partner with the Points of Light Foundation. There are Volunteer Centers strengthening volunteerism in more than 500 local communities. Volunteer Centers are an excellent source of volunteer information. They can help you recruit, manage, and retain volunteers for your group project. To find a local Volunteer Center call 1-800-VOLUNTEER or go online to [www.1800VOLUNTEER.org](http://www.1800VOLUNTEER.org).

## Putting the Project Team to Work

### **Assign Roles and Responsibilities**

A. Matching the interests and experiences of team members with appropriate responsibilities is the first step toward engaging them in the group project. The best way to learn about interests and experiences is by talking with team members. Set up an informal interview with each

### **Potential Partners**

- Professional associations
- Labor unions
- Teachers, principals
- Retiree groups
- Police and fire departments
- Government agencies
- Student groups at schools, colleges and universities
- Sports teams (professional, semi-pro, amateur, and youth sports groups)
- Vocational/professional clubs
- Neighborhood and community groups
- Residents' councils
- Fraternities and sororities (student and alumni chapters)
- Scouting chapters
- Community libraries
- Connect America Partners
- National membership Organizations

one and find out:

- what skills they have to contribute;
- which experiences they will draw on;

- whether they prefer to lead or follow;
  - what interests them most about being a member of the project team.
  - the information you learn will then enable you to assign them to lead or be a member of a particular committee or handle particular tasks.
- B. The project team should get the momentum going, generate interest, and set the tone for the entire project.
- Make sure people have tasks and responsibilities as soon as they get involved.
  - Stay in touch with the team members and check in on their progress.
  - Look for creative ways to thank them and let them know that you and the community are counting on them.

## Possible Committees

Depending on the size of your project, you may need to create committees to tackle specific tasks and ask members of your project team to lead them. Some possibilities include:

- Resource Development
- Marketing
- Media/Public Relations
- Recruitment
- Volunteer Training/Orientation
- Transportation
- Volunteer Scheduling
- Budget
- Set-Up and Tear-Down

## Tips to Make the Team Work Smoothly

- 1) Work should be distributed equitably. Make sure no one person is doing everything. Encourage people to assume leadership roles in areas where they can apply their skills and interests.
- 2) In some cases, or at certain times, it may be helpful to have a committee or task force work within the project team. Then you can have committees focus on recruitment, media outreach, project accessibility, budget oversight, etc.
- 3) Set up a timeline of critical decisions. Include as many people as possible in creating this timeline. If committees are working on different aspects of project planning, pay particular attention to critical deadlines that affect multiple committees. For example, the publicity committee may need a list of all funders by a certain day in order to print brochures listing the funders.
- 4) Create a method of contact among team members outside the meeting environment. Provide everyone with a list of phone numbers and e-mail addresses for all team members.
- 5) Maximize the utility of the project team! These individuals are not just members of the team during meetings. Assign tasks or responsibilities, such as creating posters or flyers, contacting media outlets, making recruitment presentations, and searching for in-kind support.
- 6) Sometimes, having a central theme for each meeting allows for more in-depth discussion on the topic. Provide committee members with an agenda at least two weeks prior to the meeting, or establish the central topic at the closing of the previous meeting. Here are some sample agenda topics for your project team.
  - a) Recruitment—Team members come equipped with at least four groups/organizations that they know can recruit project volunteers. At the meeting, everyone shares these ideas and works together to set goal totals, a timeline, a “recruitment message,” and strategy including poster ideas, media outlets, etc.
  - b) Budgeting—Identify the financial resources you will need to carry out the project and brainstorm how you can meet your financial needs.
  - c) Media and public relations—Identify who in the group will be responsible for approaching the media about your project and what your “key messages” will be.

- d) Project selection – Team members share suggestions and ideas for the project. As they move about town for the two weeks prior to the meeting, team members should investigate the needs that exist in the community and identify innovative project ideas that everyone could do.
- e) Barrier busting – Team members spend a day together with other volunteers to survey the project sites that have been chosen and identify any possible barriers or other challenges that may exist for the event day.
- f) Preparation for the event – A final meeting to “walk through” the event is important to make sure all team members understand their responsibilities.
- g) Reflection and dialogue – Project team members brainstorm questions for surveys or focus groups to get feedback from partners or participants.

# Step Three – Selecting a Project

If your project is important to the community, you will find many people eager to be involved. Good group project ideas match real community needs with the interests and skill level of volunteer groups. With research and thought, you can locate needed projects that could not be done without the added energy and dedication of volunteers.

Each community is confronted with different social needs. Some project teams find it useful and more successful to focus on a few community issues and locate a few partners and sites that address these issues. Other planning teams prefer addressing multiple issues.

Choose projects and sites where the project volunteers can see and experience the impact of their work, such as clean-up, construction, and rehabilitation projects. Volunteers also enjoy working “people to people.” This can be anything from helping with a carnival for children to working with the residents of a senior home.

When deciding which needs to address within the community, agencies and organizations may already have identified service projects into which your group could fit. Coordinating your team’s efforts with Volunteer Centers or other local agencies leverages volunteer resources and ensures their efforts are spent on relevant projects. (See Appendix D).

## Issues Tip

If your group chooses to work on a variety of issues, you may want to partner with several agencies or organizations in the area. If your group prefers to focus on particular issues, try a more targeted approach and work with organizations and groups that address the issues of concern to your team.

The service projects you select should be:

- of significant benefit to the community;
- deemed important by members of the community and the organization;
- a learning experience for the volunteers.

## Outreach to Host Site Agencies/Organizations

There are two types of partnership building that happen when developing a group project. The first is building partnerships to develop the project planning team. The second one, which this section deals with, involves reaching out to an agency or organization

that will host your group project. This process is similar to the one referred to earlier for identifying the group project. First, identify the agencies that best meet the needs of your group project. Remember it may be a nonprofit organization, a community of faith, a government agency, or a neighborhood association. Keep an open mind and look for readiness and accountability in these agencies or organizations.

Second, identify and confirm the appropriate contact person. This will vary depending on the agency and its structure. Call the agency and ask for the appropriate contact for planning and participating in volunteer events. This usually will be the volunteer coordinator, the community relation's coordinator, the executive director, the pastor, etc. Set up a meeting with the contact person to discuss the agency's needs and the vision your team has for the project. You may need to interview several agencies to get a good fit. If an agency is very difficult to contact or does not return calls, choose another organization.

Third, work with agencies that have realistic expectations about what can

### Tips for Building Connections

- Learn and understand the organization's mission. Get to know the leadership, paid and volunteer.
- Work together to create a project where both partners have clearly defined, designated roles.
- Be considerate of their time and everyday issues – they can't (and shouldn't) drop everything to plan for a group project.
- Have a shared vision – neither the project team nor the organization imposes its views, ideals, and expectations on the other.
- Build open communication with the agency. The more communication between the agency and the project team, the more likely things will run smoothly.

be accomplished in the time allotted and that have experience working with volunteers. Look for agencies and organizations that want to build long-term relationships with your team.

### Desirable Qualities of Host Agencies and Organizations:

- **Strong ties to the community:** The organization maintains a continued positive presence in the community.
- **Flexible:** The organization has patience and realizes that planning a successful group project takes time.
- **Resourceful:** The organization has resources of its own to lend to the project—people, facilities, contacts, etc.
- **Generous:** The organization extends its resources to help build and enhance the project.
- **Experience with volunteers:** The organization has demonstrated its belief in the value of volunteer empowerment and leadership.
- **Partners:** The organization has experience in developing successful partnerships.



- **Staff support:** The staff has experience with group projects, is willing to be on hand to help with orientation, and will provide needed support.

## Consider Working With A Host Neighborhood

When considering a group volunteer project, short- or long-term, we encourage you to consider projects that have lasting impact on the lives of people in your community. Projects that create sustainable change and strengthen families and transform neighborhoods may hold the key to solving many current, underlying community problems.

Since 1996 the Points of Light Foundation, in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, has explored the role that volunteering plays in transforming distressed neighborhoods into communities that support families.

These best practices for working with Host Neighborhoods are based on the work done by the Points of Light Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation:

- Partner with neighborhood residents from the very beginning.
- Empower the communities to help themselves. Outsiders can not be “parachuted” into the community to rescue residents. Residents must be part of the planning and likely to be called “willing workers, block captains, community workers or leaders.”
- Volunteering happens through neighborhood associations, the faith community, and on an individual basis.
- Make sure projects are important to the lives of community members.
- Be respectful of all that community members have to offer.
- Provide resources to enable communities to be self-supportive.
- Understand the language and nature of volunteering in distressed communities. Volunteers are abundant in distressed neighborhood, but residents do not refer to themselves as “volunteers,” and they generally do not work for nonprofits. Volunteers are more likely to be called “willing workers, block captains, community workers or leaders.”
- Overcome barriers to volunteering. Barriers to residents volunteering in distressed neighborhoods include lack of time, financial resources, child care, and transportation as well as low self-esteem and confidence, negative perceptions of volunteering or of volunteer organizations, and cultural and language barriers.
- Cultivate community members’ skills and talents. Identify and use the gifts and talents of local residents. Many residents believe they have no skills to bring to the table.
- Strengthen existing community leadership. Organizations should identify existing leaders and develop new ones. Local leaders build community trust and ensure local perspectives and experiences are considered.
- Acknowledge that volunteering is an exchange. Volunteers need to be rewarded in ways that make sense and have meaning. In dis-

tressed communities, appropriate exchanges could include meals, services such as tutoring, child-care subsidies, or job opportunities.

- Ensure community readiness. Building relationships and involvement is a process that needs patience and flexibility. Communities may need help resolving conflicts that prevent residents' involvement.
- Promote family volunteering as a great way to empower families. Family volunteering shares values, encourages positive interaction, and reduces barriers. (See "Families as Volunteers".)

## **Identifying Community Needs**

There is more than one method to identify community needs. Remember to involve residents from the community in the selection and planning of a group project. You may also decide to build upon and help improve ongoing community projects. Some methods to identify your community's needs include:

### **Brainstorming**

- Call an easily accessible town meeting of community members and project team members. Brainstorm challenges facing the community and select one as the top priority.
- Explore the root causes of the problem identified in the brainstorming session. Investigate the effects on individuals and the community.

### **Use Surveys**

- Contact a local Volunteer Center for information on community needs.
- Contact the government or public policy program at a local university or college. Ask students to survey the local residents about their concerns.
- Check with the local Chamber of Commerce or City Planner's office for a community needs assessment survey.
- Conduct your own small survey of your partner organization's members. (See Step Three Appendix.)

### **Watch the News**

- Bring a week's worth of local newspapers to a team meeting and discuss the impact of community events.
- Cut out articles in the newspaper that create feelings of sadness, anger, or that inspire a need for change.
- Have team leaders make a similar list of stories from television news.

When you're finally ready to select a project, be flexible and choose a project that can easily be scaled up or down depending on the number of volunteers you are able to attract. Be sure to have a contingency plan which can deal with either low volunteer turnout, or excess volunteers. Set your goals and be realistic, but plan to accomplish something tangible. Volunteers feel good about giving time and resources when they see results. Finally, remember that quality counts more than quantity. An effective small service project that gets things done can be a more powerful experience than a poorly run, large-scale project.

## Social Issue Project Ideas

Does your group want to take on serious social issues that affect a cross-section of the community? What level of need will they be able to address? The following suggestions may be a good starting point for your brainstorming session.

### **Level I Daily Needs**

#### **Hunger or Housing**

- Help cook and serve meals at a soup kitchen
- Gather clothing and donate it to a local shelter
- Make kits with combs, toothbrushes, shampoo, etc. for homeless people

#### **Frail Elderly**

- Spend time with a senior citizen in your community
- Deliver meals to homebound individuals

#### **Education**

- Raise money for Braille or large print books for the visually impaired
- Plan a school supply drive and assemble "Back-to-School kits" for a local school

#### **Health**

- Participate in a local AIDS walk or breast cancer walk
- Volunteer to help at a Special Olympics event

### **Level II Consistent Needs**

- Make care packages with mittens, socks, T-shirts, long underwear, etc. for children at a homeless shelter
- Help repair a local homeless shelter

- Perform home repairs or yard work for senior citizens in need
- Hold a social event for your local nursing home

- Set up a buddy system for kids needing friends
- Bring toys to children in a hospital

- Hold a blood drive
- Help a local agency create health promotion kits

### **Level III Long-term Needs**

- Partner with Habitat for Humanity and help build a house

- Adopt a "grandfriend," making regular visits

- Read books or the newspaper on tape for visually impaired people
- Raise money to purchase and install new playground equipment at a school

- Host a health screening at local stores, libraries, or schools

## Level I Daily Needs

## Level II Consistent Needs

## Level III Long-term Needs

### Environment

- Set up a recycling system for a local school or retirement community
- Clean up a vacant lot or a river bank
- Read with students at a local elementary school during a lunch-hour
- Host a tutoring drive for a local school
- Host a book drive in which children are encouraged to donate
- Supply materials for a youth clean-up project
- Send volunteers to Boys & Girls Clubs, Head Start, or another club or teen center for an afternoon

- Raise funds to adopt an acre of rainforest or other habitat
- Clean up trash along a river or in a park
- Organize a team of volunteers to mentor children on an on-going basis through established programs like Big Brothers Big Sisters school-based mentoring program
- Host a youth volunteer fair
- Send volunteers to be bus stop monitors before and after school along school bus routes

- Partner with young people to design and paint a mural at a school or in a local park
- Adopt a local school and hold a kickoff celebration
- Organize a youth/adult committee to plan service activities
- Create a “safe zone” that includes a play/study area in the community for children

### Youth Development

### After School Activities

### Child & Family Health

### Skillsbuilding

- Distribute pamphlets on nutrition and/or health insurance to parents
- Conduct a food drive
- Give career presentations in school classrooms
- Raise funds for a local scholarship fund

- Host a children's free health insurance sign-up in partnership with a county health department
- Sponsor youth sport teams in your community
- Provide job-shadowing opportunities for students
- Provide academic skills, leadership or job-skills workshops in schools or job centers or homeless shelters

- Work with teens to develop an anti-drug/anti-smoking campaign
- Host a youth-fitness “Olympics” event in your community
- Create a program that provides job-skills training for a targeted group of students or residents

# Step Four – Planning the Project

Planning a successful group project might at first seem overwhelming. However, it can be done and can be an enjoyable, rewarding experience. The planning process can help bring members of your team together and create a sense of ownership and dedication to the project.

Before you begin, study the chart below for an overview of what your own planning process might look like. Remember, each project is different depending on size, scope, purpose, and length of time (e.g., one day event or an ongoing project). Design your project plan to meet your own needs.

## Questions

## Notes

### Organize

#### 1) Develop a plan by walking through the project from all angles.

- a) Brainstorm all the resources you have at your disposal to complete the project you have selected. What donations, skills, contacts, volunteers and other resources can you list?
- b) Rank the resources you still need beginning with most important and ending with least important. What are the necessary steps, actions, and tasks required to get the resources?
- c) What is your timeline for the entire project, including follow-up?
- d) Who is responsible for each step, task, and action?

#### 2) Assign people to handle tasks and develop material needs.

- a) What tasks will volunteers cover during the project?

- b) How many volunteers are needed for each task?
- c) Who will do the preparation work and when?
- d) If any paperwork or cleanup needs to be done, who will do it and when?
- e) Who will be responsible for organizing a reflection session?
- f) Who will handle recognition and celebration when the work is done?

### 3) Develop plans to collect materials and equipment.

- a) What materials are needed to complete the project?
- b) Who will supply the materials?
- c) How will you pay for the materials? Can you get the materials donated?
- d) Where will the materials be stored before and during the project?

### 4) Logistical needs

#### A) Transportation

- a) What transportation is needed? Is it easy to reach the project site from public transportation? What are other options for transportation (buses, vans, carpools, etc.)?
- b) Is there parking available? Is it free? If not, where will volunteers park?
- c) Is the site accessible to persons with disabilities?
- d) Is there clear access from the parking area to the project site for people with mobility needs? Are there clearly marked handicapped parking places? Are they close to the project site?

#### B) Communication

- e) Are nearby public phones wheelchair accessible? Are they text equipped (TTY or TDD)?
- f) What languages need to be spoken?

- g) Do you have on-site signs, directions, or instructions that need to be made accessible? What are some potential problems or hazard areas at the site for people with disabilities?

**C) Access**

- h) Do you have specific directions to the site? Consider providing site maps to participants.
- i) Is the registration/orientation desk easy to find from the parking area or from where people will be arriving?

**D) On-site**

- j) Is the project planned for inside or outside? What will volunteers do in inclement weather?
- k) Can the site handle enough workers for your project?
- l) Are city or county permits required to use the site?
- m) Will you need sound equipment for a group orientation or guest speaker? If needed, where can sign language interpreters be positioned?
- n) Will electricity be needed during the project? Is it available at the site? If not, how will you provide electricity?

**E) Comfort**

- o) Are there restrooms available? If so, where? If not, what accommodations will be made to provide restroom facilities?
- p) Are the restrooms, first aid, and tools and materials areas positioned in places that are accessible to people with various disabilities?
- q) Will water be available for volunteers? If not, how can water be transported to the site and kept fresh and cool?
- r) What meals or snacks, if any, will be provided? If food will be provided, who will provide it? Can you get it donated?
- s) Where will the food be located? What supplies will be needed to prepare and serve food?

- t) If volunteers are asked to bring their own food, how will you let them know that?

**F) Security**

- u) What security is needed at the project site?
- v) What type of security does the site require, e.g., badges to enter the area for all attendees; identifying badges or ribbons for staff and volunteers; security guards, metal detectors, etc.?
- w) Does the site's host organization have access to a security company to help you address special security needs?

**5) Protect Yourself and Others**

- A)** Responsible planning for a group project includes attention to preventing injury and issues of liability, insurance coverage, medical treatment authorization, and assumption of risk.
- a) What policies, practices, and insurance coverage are needed for the host and other partners?
  - b) What release and waiver of liability forms are required? Who will supervise their distribution and collection? Check with a lawyer.
  - c) Do you know a legal representative who can look over your release forms?
  - d) If you are working with children or potentially vulnerable populations do volunteers need to undergo background checks?
  - e) Do you know how to contact the local county and district court offices to get background check forms?
  - f) Does one of your partner organizations already do background checks and can they help you in this process?
  - g) Would one of your corporate sponsors be willing to fund the cost of



doing background checks through a private agency?

- B)** Medical treatment authorization and first aid are a priority.
  - a) Who will provide one or more first aid kits for the site?
  - b) Where will they be located?
  - c) Who is trained to provide first aid?
  - d) What is the chain of communication if someone is injured?
  - e) Where is the nearest hospital or medical center?

# Step Five – Recruiting Volunteers

Citizen participation is the lifeblood of communities. Volunteers help people change their lives and transform communities. Group projects give citizens a special opportunity to demonstrate caring and sharing and encourage more people to give their time and skills to the issues of their choice.

One of the most important jobs in organizing a group project is to recruit volunteers. Recruitment is the process of encouraging people to give their time and energy as volunteers. Recruiting volunteers for a group project must begin with enthusiasm. It is no secret that millions of Americans care enough about their communities to spend time supporting the causes and groups they care about. Volunteers and potential volunteers are out there – just ask them! (See Step Five Appendix).

## Who Do You Want to Involve in This Project?

Perhaps, you want to create a group project that has specific size constraints or that pulls volunteers from a specific group of people. Whether your project will be community-wide or membership driven, knowing how big the event will

be helps you decide what kind of steps you need to take to recruit.

### **Why People Volunteer:**

- They feel compassion for people in need.
- They feel needed.
- Volunteering gives them a new perspective on their communities.

Keep these reasons in mind as you create your recruiting program. How can you frame the group project in a way that lets volunteers know they will be helping those in need, doing something important, and finding out important things about their community?

Before you can begin recruiting, you will need to know:

- how many volunteers to recruit;
- what skills they will need, if any;
- what hours they will work.

To determine the number of volunteers your project will require, simply identify each volunteer task and the number of volunteers needed to do the task. Some tasks require only one volunteer and others need many – just add them up! This will give you an estimate of the minimum number of volunteers you need to recruit. Increase that number by 20% to cover your “no show” volunteers, and that’s your final recruiting target. Be sure to recruit enough volunteers to do all of the major tasks and get firm commitments from them in advance. “Walk in” volunteers should not be asked to fill important jobs. They are appropriate for last minute,

on-the-spot small tasks.

Use the networks of your partnering organizations to recruit volunteers. Part of the partnership agreement needs to include access to partner mailing lists, email lists, announcements in staff meetings, office intranets, or organizational newsletters. Potentially thousands of people can be reached just by efficiently using the resources represented by your group project team members.

**Hint: Always count on at least a 20% no-show. Recruit more than you need.**

If you need a large number of volunteers, reach out to the general public. Post recruiting flyers and make announcements advertising the project. Remember, potential volunteers are everywhere. They just need to know about the project and be ASKED to participate!

You don't have to recruit all of the volunteers on your own. Gather a core group from your project team and form a recruitment committee and let one of their jobs be to recruit other volunteers. Think strategically about where people go for information. Place flyers and posters where people would typically notice announcements, such as in:

- grocery stores
- movie theatres
- family restaurants
- daycare centers
- hospitals
- libraries
- amusement parks
- community bulletin boards
- schools/universities
- neighborhood shops and businesses

Create energy around the project by increasing your project team or public relations committee members' visibility in the community. Some recruiting promotion techniques include:

- Staff information booths in local malls, grocery stores, public buildings (city hall, libraries), eating places, and other high traffic areas. Make sign-up sheets

available at the tables. The public relations community-outreach representative, or store manager should be contacted to find out where and how these tables can be placed.

- Recruit through the Internet. According to Giving and Volunteering in the United States 2001 (Washington, D.C.), 10% of people with Internet access it to search for volunteer opportunities, learn about volunteer organizations or engage in other similar activities.
- Arrange to be a speaker at a local community group meeting (Lions, Kiwanis, etc.) to talk about the upcoming project and recruit volunteers from their members and families. Bring sign-up sheets and other materials with you.
- Request meetings with local businesses to encourage their employees to volunteer.

### **Who Should be Asked to Volunteer?**

Consider that volunteers can be any age and come from any background when they have the skills, the availabili-

ty, and the interest to participate. Volunteering may be an extension of a person's professional abilities, an opportunity to engage in an enjoyable activity, or a way to learn new skills or gain new perspectives. Think inclusively. Your project should be a reflection of your community. Try to attract a large and varied group of volunteers.

At any recruiting event you attend, it is critical to collect information from volunteers. Have potential volunteers fill out a sign-up sheet that includes their name, address, telephone and fax number, e-mail addresses, and a list of their skills. It is equally critical to follow-up with potential volunteers as soon as possible. Send out on-going communications to volunteers prior to the project. Use quick and inexpensive ways to stay-in-touch: e-mail, faxes, phone trees, or volunteers who make calls to those without e-mail. (See Step Five Appendix).

## What Groups Should You Consider?

### People:

- Community officials, including the mayor, city council members, county commissioners etc.
- Families
- Members of civic and fraternal organizations, such as fire or police departments
- Members of communities of faith
- Neighborhood association members
- New Americans
- People from minority backgrounds
- People in public housing or shelters
- People with disabilities
- Professionals
- Retired adults
- Students
- The homebound, the unemployed, veterans/members of service reserve organizations
- Young people

### Institutions:

- Business professional/networking groups
- Churches, synagogues, mosques
- Civic and fraternal organizations
- Community providers, advocacy

groups and nonprofits

- Corporations or local businesses
- Neighborhood and residents' associations
- Organizations led by or that serve the disability community
- Schools, universities and other educational outlets
- Senior citizen centers/retiree organizations
- National service groups including: AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, RSVP, Foster Grandparents, and Senior Companion programs (for more information, contact the Corporation for National Service, at 202-606-5000, [www.cns.gov](http://www.cns.gov)).

### Engaging Specific Populations

Much information is available on how to engage volunteers from specific populations. See the Volunteer Audiences portion of the book to learn more about Families, Young People, People with Disabilities, Corporate Employees, and Children.

# Step Six – Budgeting and Resource Development

## Budgeting

The project team or a committee likely will be responsible for creating a project budget and monitoring expenses. A well-organized budget is crucial to the success of any service project. Go back to Step 4, Plan the Project, page 3. Many of the questions have financial implications for your project. Which of the services, accommodations, and materials that you have identified could be donated? Which of these will you need to pay for? Begin creating a budget based on these identified needs.

As the project team begins its work, one of the first committees that should be formed is the Resource Development Committee. This committee is responsible for developing resources for your project by contacting foundations, corporate donors, other nonprofits, local merchants, and individuals with financial support or a service to offer. The earlier you can identify your resource needs for this committee, the greater chance it has for success.

Listed in the box on page 75 are some expense categories that you should consider when you are developing your project budget. You'll find a handy budget worksheet in the Step 6 Appendix.

### **The "Ask" Package**

A standard solicitation package can be developed that contains:

- a description of the project
- the community needs it will meet
- who the project partners are
- the specific request for financial support or in-kind donations
- the benefits to the donor (visibility, sponsorship of a project component, etc.).

Committee members should be given solicitation request forms to be used to follow up with the donor after asking for a contribution.

## **Resource Development**

Before asking for support, get permission. Some city, county, and state governments do not allow a group to ask for donations without first filing for a permit from a local governmental agency. Check with your city, county, and state comptroller offices for information. One of your project planning partners may already have a permit. This would be something to ask when recruiting planning partners.

The most effective way to develop resources for a project is to have a plan, which your Resource Development Committee will create. Once the project budget has been developed and all of the financial sup-

port and required materials have been identified, the committee will determine which corporations, foundations, businesses, and individuals are the solicitation targets for each item. This helps to avoid duplication of solicitation efforts and coordinates all solicitations. The committee will decide which committee member or project team member is most appropriate to solicit each target. The best person is usually someone who has a contact at the target organization or knows an individual personally. The most successful “ask” is the one based on personal knowledge of the organization or individual.

### **Sample Expense Categories:**

**Staff/Consultant:** hiring trainers, group facilitators, writers or designers for publications, marketing materials, etc.

**Equipment:** computers, faxes, phones; sports equipment, sound systems, tables, chairs, etc.

**Printing/Copying:** marketing materials, on-site maps, signs, posters, sign-up sheets, surveys, etc.

**Postage/Mail Lists:** bulk mailing costs for flyers; Federal Express or UPS; purchased mail lists to help expand your recruiting pool.

**Marketing:** newspaper ads, television promotion spots, billboards, etc.

**Transportation:** bus drivers, taxis for volunteers, shuttle service, etc.

**Insurance:** event insurance for volunteers; liability insurance for event; insurance for transportation providers, etc.

**Telephone/Fax:** conference calls; long-distance; installing a phone line, etc.

**Space Rental/Permits:** permits to erect a tent, have a parade, raise money, serve food, etc.

**Food/Drink:** planning team snacks, meals during the event, celebration items, etc.

**Recognition:** certificates, gifts, giveaways, t-shirts, etc.

**Miscellaneous:** A note about your budget: engaging families, young people, corporate employees, people with disabilities or other specialized populations may require you to think more creatively about your budget needs and allocations. For example, the need for sign language interpreters, alternative formats for your materials, construction items, additional staff, and accessible transportation may be among the issues you will have to address in your budget. Transportation for youth may also be an issue. Consult your community partners, planning group, and other resources to find answers for your accommodation-related questions. (See Volunteer Audiences section.)

# Step Seven – Engaging the Media

## Get the Word Out

Creating publicity and generating excitement is as essential to the success of a group project as good planning and on-site management. Group projects can make a big difference in your community and can send a powerful signal for positive change. The good news is that publicity for your group project is relatively easy to obtain and quite often free. By making an investment of time in publicity, working with the media, and public relations, you can spread the word that volunteering helps solve serious social problems and builds communities. Your Volunteer Center may be able to play a role in promoting the project. Call 1-800-VOLUNTEER, or visit [www.1800VOLUNTEER.org](http://www.1800VOLUNTEER.org) to locate the Volunteer Center in your area.

## Publicize Your Project

There are many reasons you want to publicize your project, including:

- to make it easier to recruit volunteers;
- to increase public awareness and appreciation of your efforts;
- to help in the search for money, materials, and supplies;
- to recognize your hard-working volunteers; and
- to develop media relations that will help with future projects.

Some additional ideas for publicity include:

- Partner with a local school and sponsor a poster, poem or song contest. Provide prizes to the student or classroom that best promotes your upcoming project and the community issue that is being addressed. Select the winners and incorporate them into your publicity.
- Place posters, flyers, tent cards, and save-the-date announcements in high traffic areas, including libraries, schools, malls, coffee-houses, restaurants, senior citizen centers, and community centers. Always ask permission before distributing any materials.
- Reach out to the faith community – put notices of your project in newsletters and bulletins. Share information about the project during the announcements period during services.
- Ask schools in the area to send notices home with students, or put information in school publications.
- Partner with a local company and put notices of your project in employee newsletters, internal mail, employee bulletin boards, and as bill stuffers in monthly payment notices to customers.

## Develop a Media Committee

The media does not know you are there until you tell them. Before your group project can appear in the media, you must let them know it is happening. The best way to accomplish this is by creating a Media Committee for your project. Select a committee leader and committee members by contacting local business/professional organizations of journalists, writers, public relations professionals or students. You can also look for people on your project team or recruit volunteers with media experience or connections to coordinate media outreach for your project. Involve local business people who are successful at getting publicity for their business. If no one with a media background is available, select enthusiastic committee members who have an interest in working with the media.

## Compile a Media Contact List

Compile an accurate media list of every news organization, reporter and editor who is most likely to use the materials you send. Other local nonprofits in your

area may already have a media list and may be willing to share it with your group. Most libraries also have media directories that you can use. You can also go online to media outlet web sites for staff directories and submission information. A comprehensive list of newspapers can be found on state press association web sites. The news field has a high turnover rate. Always double-check your media lists, no matter the source of information.

In addition to mailing addresses, your list should include phone and fax numbers, email addresses and room for notes. Identify reporters who cover social and community issues or columnists who might be interested in your project. You will have different contacts for radio, television, and newspapers. Streamline the mailing process and ask a volunteer to put the entire list on labels (without phone numbers) or in a database that can be sent by fax, so there is always a set ready to mail or fax. Your media list should include:

- city or regional magazines, publications;

- college papers, and community sections;
- corporate and community newsletters;
- daily and weekly newspapers;
- local television, and cable access outlets;
- radio stations;
- special-interest media such as ethnic publications;
- wire services such as Associated Press and Reuters.

## Develop a Pitch

Think about a succinct message or “pitch” – a few words that will convince the media that your story is interesting and important. Create three or four message points – the main ideas you want the media to convey about your project, the volunteers, and the community issue being addressed by your project. Message points keep spokespeople focused when delivering the story. Message points should be reinforced in media advisories, media releases, or other written materials. Any contact with a reporter should be seen as a chance to pitch your message



points. The media is interested in “putting a face” on your story. In some cases, the volunteers may be more interesting than the project; e.g., a group of grandmothers who volunteer at a local children’s hospital or a group of school children who are collecting supplies for American troops.

## Select a Spokesperson

Identify one or two individuals to articulate your message to the press. Having a specific spokesperson helps ensure that the message points are delivered consistently and accurately. It also ensures timeliness because media representatives have a clear point of contact. Your project spokesperson will be responsible for:

- speaking in public and in front of the media (if possible while he/she is volunteering);
- having an understanding of (or a willingness to learn about) the benefits, goals and messages of your project, volunteerism, and the community issue being addressed;

- participating in media interviews that could be conducted over the phone, at the project site, or in a studio;
- delivering the message points in print and broadcast media interviews.

## Locate Celebrities

Your first and most impressive celebrities are the volunteers who show up and give their time. Do not hesitate to look within your core group of dedicated volunteers for a spokesperson. You may wish to select two spokespeople: one a volunteer, who can commit to being available for media inquiries, and a second celebrity spokesperson, to participate in a volunteer activity.

Group projects provide an opportunity to invite a well-known local person to participate and help spread the word. You are more likely to get media attention if you involve local personalities in the project. A local celebrity can help raise awareness about your project, conduct media interviews, solicit support from other segments of the com-

munity and cheerlead the benefits of volunteering in a group project. A celebrity spokesperson can give your project widespread appeal, visibility, and credibility. Some potential celebrities include:

- mayors or other well-known elected officials;
- sports figures (high school or college athletes, NFL, MLB or NBA players);
- civic/community/business leaders;
- entertainers;
- media personalities (be mindful that you may reduce your media coverage by choosing competitors).

## Create Media Relationships

Get to know key members of the media in your area. The best coverage comes from your media committee members making personal contacts and developing relationships with editors and reporters. These relationships are developed over time. Contact the editor or ask for the reporter who covers community service, volunteerism, and

local community issues. Ask if there is time for you to meet personally to discuss your upcoming project. Bring written materials, such as your media kit to the meeting.

Media kits are packets of information provided to members of the media before or at the event. They include background information about the event, sponsors, and project partners. Media kits make a reporter's job easier and allow your project team to focus their attention on the elements of the event you think are most significant. When providing information, use the term "media" to refer to print media, radio, and television. Radio and television people are sometimes annoyed when they are referred to as "the press" or receive "press kits" rather than "media kits." Remember, these are suggested guidelines. Check with individual media outlets for specific instructions. (See "Media Kits" below for more information on compiling a media kit.)

## **Distribute Your Message**

Once you have created your message points, compiled your media list, put together your media kit, and started working on relationships with important members of your local media, you are ready to distribute your news. Some of the common methods of distribution include:

### **Public Service Announcements (PSA's)**

Public Service Announcements run at no cost to the project team. Contact the public affairs or community relations directors at your local newspaper and TV station and ask for guidelines to submit PSA's. (See Step Five Appendix)

### **News Releases**

News releases should be distributed weeks before your event and convey the "who, what, when, where, why, and how" of your project. This media relations tool gives reporters the basic information to write their own story. Think of this document as an inverted triangle. Tell the most important information about the project first, and then add details about the volunteers, sponsors,

project statistics, partners, and your organization. The news business is a 24-hour operation, so be sure to include a telephone number where you can be reached at all times.

### **Media Advisories**

A media advisory follows a news release (usually one or two days before your event), and it gives specific details about your project. Be sure to confirm media contact information and delivery preferences (fax or email) before distributing the advisory. Also send media advisories to wire service "day-books," the daily event calendars of reporters.

### **Photo-Ops**

Media representatives like "photo-ops" – opportunities for taking pictures that feature interesting action and people. Good photos can make the difference between getting media coverage or not. Amateur volunteer photographers can help. You can send your own photos to media outlets. Photos should be delivered on the day of the event for daily papers, within two days for weeklies. Caption photos by identifying each person, describing the action, and giving

the day and location of the event.

Everyone who is photographed should sign a release form. When you are compiling your media contact list, find out if the media outlet will accept photos from events.

### Letters to the Editor

Write, or better yet, ask a volunteer to write a short letter (250-500 words) about the impact of your project on the community. Check the editorial section of your newspaper for submission directions.

### Media Kits

Media kits are folders that contain media releases, the day's agenda, fact sheets on the project and organizations involved, information from sponsors and partners, background on the needs addressed by the project, biographical sketches of the spokesperson, and contact information. Send your media kits to local and regional media outlets and have plenty on hand the day of the project for the media representatives present. Consider putting the most important information about the project on the right side of the opened folder, from the front to the back.

### Work the Phones

Make calls to local media to reinforce the information you have already sent and to fill in any gaps. Be mindful of the reporter's deadlines – confirm that you are calling at a good time when you talk to them. Ask for the city desk or assignment editor at newspapers and for the assignment editor at radio and television stations. Point out photos and arrange times for photographers. Suggest interviews of "newsworthy" volunteers.

### Develop a Timeline

The timing of your media effort depends in large part on the results you want to achieve.

### Meet the Deadlines

Timing is everything when it comes to attracting media coverage. Reporters and editors work under tight deadlines. Learn what those deadlines are so that you may contact them to discuss or cover your project at their convenience. Most reporters plan schedules much in advance. If you want your project to be considered, you must plan ahead. Deadlines vary depending on local cus-

## Basic Media Timeline

- 4 to 6 weeks in advance – community calendar entries and PSA's should be sent or delivered
- 2 to 4 weeks in advance – TV and radio stations who distribute news releases usually need several weeks of lead-time to schedule an appearance on a talk show
- 1 week to 2 days in advance – fax or email (as required by media outlet) your media advisory to everyone on your media list
- Day of the project:
  - Have Media Committee members make a final round of calls to media contacts the morning of the event.
  - Greet the media on site if possible.
  - Set-up a separate sign-in table for reporters and media representatives.
  - Provide media kits and introduce reporters to the event spokesperson.

tom and policies, here are some general media outlets to consider:

- morning, evening, Sunday newspapers,
- weeklies & bi-weeklies,
- magazines,
- wire services,
- television,
- radio.

### **Build a Media File**

Create a media file of coverage given to your project. Photo copy all newspaper or magazine stories and record any television coverage. Check local Internet information boards or web versions of local papers, which may contain different stories from the print version. Collecting these materials will help you recruit for the next group project; provide confirmation to donors and collaborating partners that their efforts were appreciated, and can be used when you seek donations and media support for next year's project.

### **Thank the Media**

Thank reporters and other media representatives for covering your event. News people appreciate having their efforts recognized. Write a letter to the publisher, a state or national media association or media owner pointing out a reporter's efforts. You can locate the address of your state's National Broadcaster's affiliate by contacting the National Association of Broadcasters at 1771 N St., NW, Washington, DC 20036, 202-429-5300 or at nab@nab.org. These groups are always eager to hear what their members are doing to serve the community.

# Step Eight – Implementing the Big Day

After the planning and hard work, your team will want the project to run smoothly. There are many details that will need attention. The key to success on this day is good management and good planning. The more people who know what is going on, the more likely it is that things will go well. Organizers and team leaders should wear special hats, badges, sashes, or T-shirts to make it easier for volunteers to find them in a crowd. If your project is very large and complex, consider renting or borrowing walkie-talkies or cell phones to facilitate communication among team members.

## Make Checklists

Checklists and written instructions are a must. Written instructions for registration, transportation, supplies, and other areas will help area leaders keep track of the day's progress and will ease communication with volunteers and participants.

## Designate Decision Makers

Be sure to designate one or more persons to make key decisions on the project day and ensure that they are available to organizers, team leaders, and other key team members. These "decision makers" need to be near a phone located at a central location or have access to a cell phone, walkie-talkie, etc.

### **Major Elements**

If your event is large, you may want to designate a person to oversee major project elements such as:

- registration;
- the kick-off presentation;
- transportation;
- distribution of supplies and materials;
- trouble-shooting;
- media liaison;
- coordinating volunteer team leaders.

## Create a Schedule and Assign Tasks for the Day

Set up a day-of-project schedule that lists all elements of the project. Distribute copies of the schedule to everyone involved, including volunteers, well in advance of the project day. Be sure to have extra copies available at the registration area.

# Sample Schedule

**(in this scenario people arrive at a central location and all volunteers work at one site)**

## 8:15 – 9:00 am

Volunteers register, receive T-shirts or other items, and enjoy a light breakfast snack.

## 9:00 – 9:20 am

Welcome and kick-off ceremony featuring remarks by project organizers and an overview of the day's activities.

## 9:20 – 9:30 am

Motivational "speech" explains to volunteers the impact their day's work will have.

## 9:30 – 10:00 am

Volunteers break into groups by tasks or positions and receive site orientation; materials and supplies are distributed.

## 10:00 am – Noon

Volunteers get to work. Site supervisors and lead volunteers monitor work, provide assistance and encouragement, and call for breaks.

## Noon – 1:00pm

Lunch break – a good time for reflection, performances by local groups, and much needed rest and relaxation.

## 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Volunteers resume work.

## 3:00 – 4:00 pm

Site clean-up occurs; return materials and supplies to designated areas.

## 4:00 – 4:30 pm

Take time for reflection. Divide volunteers into small groups for reflection and evaluation.

## 4:30 – 4:45 pm

Volunteers evaluate their project experience.

## 4:45 – 5:45 pm

Closing ceremony and recognition.

## 5:45 pm - Close

Organizers, supervisors, and team leaders make sure clean-up is complete at the site.

## Welcome Volunteers and Make Them Feel Comfortable

Have someone at the registration area at least 45 minutes before registration is scheduled to open. Some volunteers are eager and will arrive early. Ask all volunteers to sign in and complete the top portion of the “Volunteer Registration/Evaluation Form.” (See Step Eight Appendix) Distribute nametags for all volunteers, team leaders and members, and partners. Point out the location of refreshments, water, and restrooms and distribute maps of the event area, if appropriate, to help people find their way around.

### Kick-Off

The kick-off is an opportunity to create the spirit of the project. The site of the kick-off should have the look and feel of a celebration. Arrange for a school musical group, band, or choir to be there or have recorded music available to set the tone and create a sense of excitement. Decorate with banners, balloons, and streamers. Inviting local dignitaries and personalities to the kick-

off adds a special sense to the project and creates an opportunity for different parts of the community to interact. It also has the added benefit of attracting media.

The kick-off should be short, start on time, and not run overtime. The volunteers should be fired-up and ready to work when the kick-off ends.

### Orientation for Volunteers

Orientations can occur on or before the Big Day. They are critical elements in a smooth running project. Orientations work better when they are short—30 to 45 minutes. It can be divided into three major parts:

#### **1. Project Introduction:**

- Provide volunteers with brief information on the history and objective of the project and goals of their work.
- An outline submitted in advance to orientation leaders ensures that the information provided to volunteers is consistent.
- Distribute volunteer orientation

packets that include volunteer job descriptions, the day’s schedule, logistical information, contact names for specific areas (e.g., registration, first aid, volunteer coordination, etc.), a site map, emergency numbers, a list of nearby eating places, and a sign-up form for future volunteer opportunities.

#### **2. Background information on the site and related issues.**

- Ask a designated representative of the host site to provide this part of the orientation.
- This is a good time for the site representative to give brief background on the host organization and insights into the community issues the host organization addresses.
- Encourage host facilitators to discuss their ongoing volunteer opportunities and needs. This is a first step in turning an episodic volunteer into an ongoing resource.

### 3. Walk-through the day and issue specific project-related instructions.

- Let volunteers know who to contact and what to do in case of an emergency or question.
- Issue site maps and instructions on how to find restrooms, water, and first-aid stations.
- Distribute volunteer job descriptions and give everyone 5 to 10 minutes to review their description. Then answer their questions individually or with small groups of volunteers who are doing the same job.
- Volunteers should also be informed about lunch plans and transportation logistics.

During orientation you will want to ask all volunteers to sign the volunteer release and waiver of liability form.” (See a lawyer for specific language.)

#### Transportation

If there is more than one site for your group project, you may need to provide transportation, which can be a logistical challenge. A detail-oriented person

must be in charge of transportation. If volunteers are to provide their own transportation to the sites, this information needs to be communicated clearly in writing before the day of the event. Clearly written driving or public transportation directions should be provided to all volunteers. If project organizers are providing transportation, they will have pre-event, day of- and post-event responsibilities. The transportation coordinator or committee should check with city and/or county officials to see if any other events are planned for the day of your project or if construction on the roads is scheduled during the time of the event.

If your team wants to hire a bus service, the coordinator will need to negotiate a contract and give an estimate of the number of riders to allow the company to send the correct number of buses. Loading, unloading, and transportation time needs to be calculated into the day’s schedule. The route used by the buses should be planned well before the day of the event. Contingency routes should be developed in case of traffic emergencies.

If volunteers will be providing transportation to the project site, the transportation coordinator should research local and state liability regulations. It may be necessary to buy event insurance to cover volunteer drivers. The transportation coordinator should ensure that drivers have detailed instructions and directions in writing. Drivers must possess a valid driver’s license for your state, and a review of insurance coverage should be required of all volunteer drivers.

Determining transportation for volunteers will depend on:

- your budget;
- where volunteers are coming from and going to;
- and the resources available in your community.

Groups often use:

- school buses;
- public transportation;
- borrowed vans (from other non-profits, faith groups or businesses);
- carpools;
- chartered buses.



## Food and Fun

It's important to have refreshments on hand during the project. Food breaks provide a good time for volunteers to get to know each other, reflect on their experiences, and take a much-needed break. The timing of the food breaks will depend on your project schedule. Try to provide a pre-event food break for volunteers and a break mid-way through the project.

Before asking for donations of food from local merchants, get to know their donation cycle. Many chain grocery stores and restaurants actually donate on a "funding cycle" that may be set up to a year in advance. Planning for food and supply donations may require volunteers to start calling merchants several weeks or months prior to the event. If you can reassure local merchants that they will not be held accountable for any spoilage that might occur and provide them with the appropriate forms, you may increase donations. Checking with the local health department about its regulations regarding food donations may help smooth the way. There

may be forms you and the merchant have to fill out to release merchants from any liability regarding their donations. Give yourself plenty of time to complete this process, and do your homework before soliciting food donations.

### **Dietary Issues**

Don't forget—not everyone is a meat and potatoes eater. Many volunteers have dietary restrictions based on allergies, religious or philosophical beliefs, or health concerns. Plan to have a variety of foodstuffs available.

You can ask for donations of food from local restaurants, delis, or supermarkets. Identify establishments that have donated before and take advantage of their experience. A restaurant or store that delivers provides an added bonus. Be sure to have a spot in your marketing materials to publish the names of restaurants or outlets that donate food.

If possible, display their names at the event on posters or signs and mention them during the kick-off. If you cannot provide meals, volunteers should be told before the event and encouraged to bring their own food. It is also helpful to provide a listing of local restaurants in the volunteer orientation packet for those who may want to go off-site to eat. You might even want to approach local merchants to provide discount coupons for the orientation packet.

## Preparing for Potential Problems

Safety and health protection are important issues for volunteers.

It is important to know and follow the policies of the groups and organizations with which you are partnering. Once these guidelines are developed, all volunteers need to be informed about emergency procedures and any relevant liability issues. Emergency procedures should be in writing and distributed to project leaders and to volunteers in orientation packets.

## Liability Concerns

Responsible group project planning includes:

- careful attention to preventing harm and injury;
- addressing issues of liability, insurance, medical treatment authorization;
- and assumption of risk.

## Risk Management

According to the Nonprofit Risk Management Center (Washington, D.C.), three keys to an effective risk management plan are commitment, communication, and consistency –

- commit to protecting the rights and safety of those involved in your project;
- communicate that commitment to the community;
- and be consistent in following through with an effective risk management plan for your project.

A few suggestions for effective risk management planning include:

- Review the insurance coverage of your group or organization and other partnering groups and update if necessary.
- Review your state's restrictions and regulations regarding children, youth, or vulnerable populations.
- Establish screening procedures for all volunteers.
- Establish effective supervision procedures for all volunteers.
- Train volunteers before the project begins.
- Consult an insurance agent and lawyer when developing your risk management plan.
- It is also important to evaluate your plan and make changes when developing each new group project, when working with new partners, and when selecting project sites.

## Unsnarling Snags

### Snag: A low turnout of volunteers.

You expected a certain number of volunteers and planned for the project to be completed by that number. When you don't have enough volunteers, it could mean the project's cancellation, affect transportation arrangements, result in wasted food, or impact other critical details.

**Solution:** Make contingency plans – decide what you'll do if you have fewer volunteers than expected. Determine ahead of time which parts of the project or which sites will be cut if necessary. Even with pre-registration, it can be very difficult to estimate volunteer turnout. Rule of thumb: assume you will have a 80% volunteer turnout and recruit 20% more volunteers than needed.

### Snag: Bad weather hits.

Few volunteers want to work in the rain or snow or stand outside in the cold to hear a speech! Parents with concerns about their children's health or safety

may pull them from the event.

**Solution:** You can't control the weather, so make sure that all information details your contingency plans in the event of rain, snow, sleet, extreme heat, etc. Be sure that all presenters, organizers, and team leaders know well in advance if an alternate site will be used. (Large trash bags can be used as emergency rainwear for volunteers, as groundcover, to store materials, etc.) If outdoor activities have been scheduled that cannot be completed in severe weather, have a secondary plan and a rain date for volunteers. This should be discussed in advance and a communication plan developed so that all volunteers can be contacted in the event of a cancellation or move to a secondary site.

**Snag: The project is not finished at the end of the day.**

This is a serious concern, because the projects undertaken by groups are often major projects that cannot be finished without a group of dedicated volunteers.

**Solution:** Be realistic about what can be finished in the time scheduled. Ensure that the project team knows what needs to be done by the end of the project. Make sure the necessary equipment is already available at the site or arrange for it to be delivered early. Be on time and on task. If work is not finished, problem solve with organizers, staff members, and volunteers at the site. Develop a solution that meets critical needs. Volunteers could agree to come back another day or to recruit another team to finish the project. Do not leave a project without a plan for completion. If you are worried about meeting the demands of ongoing projects, work with organizers to ensure that volunteers have rewarding experiences and are welcomed each time they work.

**Snag: Volunteers are tardy.**

Site personnel often arrange their schedule around volunteer commitments. Lateness causes unnecessary disruption and threatens a project's completion.

**Solution:** In all communications, written or verbal, impress on volunteers the need to be on time. Clarify exactly when the project will begin and end. Model appropriate behavior by starting registration on time, meeting all media deadlines, and providing meals at scheduled times. Assign someone to be the "timekeeper" who insures that things run on schedule. Prior to the event, conduct a walk-through and secure the details regarding transportation, including public transit schedules and detailed maps and instructions for drivers.

**Snag: There is little one-on-one interaction.**

Generally, volunteers want to work directly with people, but many one-day service projects do not require or allow for one-to-one interactions.

**Solution:** From the beginning, let volunteers know they are unlikely to have contact with the final beneficiary of their labor during a one-day service project and explain the reasons why. For example, many agencies have strict screening and training processes for

“regular” volunteers to ensure the safety, well being, and confidentiality of those being served. Also, volunteers who are part of a one-time group project might inadvertently build false expectations for clients that cannot be accommodated. Impress upon volunteers how needed project is and how this project is helping to change lives and address critical social issues. Offer opportunities to transition from one-time to on-going volunteering. Provide information on how volunteers can sign-up with the host agency to offer more intensive assistance.

### **Snag: Volunteers aren't happy with their assignments.**

Assigning volunteers is one of the most challenging parts of aspects of organizing one-day service projects. Some volunteers want to work together with friends, co-workers, or with members of their civic group. Others may want to split up and meet new people. Some may believe they are qualified to do a certain job, but once they begin it they discover they are unable to perform the task adequately.

**Solution:** It is important to define each of the volunteer jobs for the project. Screening volunteers and collecting information through pre-registration can assist in making sure volunteers are assigned to tasks appropriate for their skill level, abilities, and knowledge. To deal with bonding issues, consider alternative ways of assigning volunteers. First, team leaders can be assigned to teams or responsible for recruiting their own teams of volunteers. Start by selecting sites, defining volunteer jobs, and discussing the breakdowns with team leaders and host representatives, if possible. Make sure volunteers know how to find their team leaders at all times during the project. Alternatively, consider having a pre-arranged meeting place for volunteers to connect with their team leaders.

For volunteers participating in ongoing group projects, check in every time the group provides service, and stay in contact with host site personnel to make sure their needs are being met. It is important that any problems are addressed efficiently.

## **Take Time for Reflection**

One of the most interesting and productive aspects of volunteering is the opportunity for reflection following the completion of a project. This practice has been demonstrated to have significant impact on the volunteer experiences of young people. The Points of Light Foundation's experience suggests that it works equally well with adults and particularly well as a method for groups to examine and learn from volunteering. Reflection provides volunteers with the time to assimilate the values of volunteering. They may have experiences during your project that are new to them. It is important to provide time for them to share their thoughts and feelings. (See Step Eight Appendix).

## **Clean-Up**

Do you recycle? What happens to the extra food? How do you dispose of trash? You would be amazed at the number of people who will ask these questions. Clean-up activities to check on include:

- whether the site host recycles;
- the options for city or local garbage pick-up;
- donation requirements by local homeless shelters, in case you have food left over from your event;
- trash pick-up schedules and regulations at the site.

## Evaluation

Before volunteers leave the project site, ask them to fill out an evaluation form. (Make sure there are enough pens, pencils, and collection boxes available at the site.) Motivate them to complete it by giving them a certificate of participation or other recognition item when they hand in their evaluation form. The evaluation form collects the necessary information for your post-project reporting and your planning for the next project. (See Step Eight Appendix.)

## Celebrate Success! Recognition and Thanks

Volunteers enjoy seeing the results of their work when they give their time to group projects. The impact on a single person, family, park, nature trail, schools, or on the work done by a community organization, all provide recognition for volunteer efforts. Volunteers work to “make a difference.” Part of the responsibility of project planners is to design assignments and opportunities so that volunteers can feel proud of their accomplishments.

The most important way to recognize volunteers is to treat them with respect and give them support and praise throughout the project. It is also important to find a way to celebrate the group’s success and thank the volunteers when the work is done. Recognition should be inclusive – remember to thank partners, sponsors, agency staff members, and the media. Gratitude should be expressed to anyone and everyone who helped to make the project a success.

## Tips for On-site Recognition and Celebration

- Make volunteers feel appreciated by saying THANK YOU! Invite a local celebrity or elected official to come to the site and personally thank the group. Arrange for someone from the community or organization being helped to come on-site to say thank you.
- Complete the day with a picnic (indoor or outdoor) or have everyone enjoy refreshments together.
- Have a pep rally, complete with cheerleaders from a local school, college, or local sports team; or recruit some “pep leaders” from within the group.
- Sing a song together. Select something that everybody knows, or have the words available.
- Have someone take pictures with an “instant” camera and distribute pictures to the volunteers at the end of the day.
- Present pins, certificates, hats, bumper stickers, notepads, cups, or other mementos of the project.
- Give goody bags filled with

donated items from local merchants or other groups.

- Give away tickets to movies or other events.
- Give donated discount coupons from local restaurants, car washes, or other services.

## Closing Ceremony

Most organizers choose to end the day with an event that enables volunteers to share their experiences, relax, and have fun. Many closing events feature food and music. Closing ceremonies should provide a feeling of accomplishment, triumph, and a celebratory atmosphere. The closing ceremony provides a perfect setting to recognize volunteers, sponsors, and partners formally.

## After the Project is Complete

It is important to recognize volunteers, partners, and sponsors after the project's completion. Recognition is a reminder of the purpose of the project, and it sends a message to the volunteers that their efforts are valued.

Some post-event recognition suggestions include:

- a letter of commendation or personalized note of appreciation;
- a special recognition event for all groups, volunteers, partners, etc.
- holiday cards;
- recognizing volunteers at their places of worship, work, school, or civic involvement;
- providing photos with names to newspapers, newsletters, community bulletin boards, and radio/television for "Citizen of the Day" prizes;
- nominating the group for the Daily Points of Light Award, President's Service Awards, Jefferson Award, Governor's Volunteer Awards or other national or local awards. (See Appendix C.);
- ask the organization you helped to write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper, thanking the volunteers.

# Step Nine – Sustaining Service

The project is complete, and it is all over. Or is it? You have planned, organized, and conducted a successful event that engaged people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives and utilized their many abilities and experiences. You have taken the time to reflect on that success and think about the ways that you have grown and the things that you have learned through the experience.

## Now you have three options:

1. Your group project team may find that its current success is just right. You have met the goals of your group project, and it is time to disband and go back to your other obligations. At this point you can celebrate what you have done and reflect on what you have learned!
2. Your group project team may want to continue as a group and to work on other projects together. In that case, reflect on what you have learned and then begin to take the next steps to transform into an on-going project team.
3. Your group project team or volunteers at the event may find that your current group project success has inspired them to continue vol-

unteering on an individual basis. You can help them through the process of becoming an on-going volunteer by providing reflection questions, tips, and steps to take. A sample flyer, which you can hand out at the end of your group project to volunteers interested in on-going opportunities, is available in the Step Nine Appendix.

## Project Team Reflection Questions:

- What did we want to get done? How can you quantify your accomplishments? How many volunteers did you recruit? What did you do at the event?
- Were all the segments of the community that needed to be at your event represented there?

- What feedback did participants give in post evaluations from the service day?
- What worked well in the planning?
- What changes would you recommend for the next event?
- Are there things you have learned from planning and implementing this event you could share with others? Would you be willing to write a report or develop a tip sheet? To whom would you provide this information?
- How will you continue to foster the relationships you have created?

## Transforming Into An On-Going Project Team

Service can be a bond for members of the community and the project team. Team members may decide that they want to transform into an on-going group project team which would develop an annual event or other types of on-going volunteer opportunities. If your team wants to continue working together, here are some suggestions:

- If you or other team members are part of an organization that offers on-going volunteer opportunities, stress your interest in having team members join you in that service.
  - Find existing organizations that match the team's interests that could be called on for support.
  - Follow-up with volunteers who participated in the project and those that showed interest, but were not available at the time.
  - Let them know they can get involved in the new project or projects.
  - Find other volunteer opportunities in your community through the local Volunteer Center. ( You can find yours at [www.1800VOLUNTEER.org](http://www.1800VOLUNTEER.org) or 1-800-Volunteer, or search for service activities by zip code at [www.SERVE.net.org](http://www.SERVE.net.org).)
- Help volunteers become planners. Bring them into the planning team to learn how to organize events or projects. Share your experience with them and the resources that helped you make the event successful. Share this book with them.
  - Find out if your team members want to continue meeting regularly and how often they want to meet.
  - Discuss if it would help to have a regular structure to the team meetings.
  - Use your event evaluations. Based on your evaluation of the event, does your current team represent all community stakeholders? Can better representation be achieved?
  - Ask the tough questions. Do current project team leaders want to continue in that position? How will you plan for project team turnover?
  - Find out ways your team can generate project ideas that match the interests of the volunteers and meet the needs of the community.
- If you have other questions about creating on-going volunteer opportunities, please check Appendix C and contact the appropriate Points of Light Foundation department for information.



# Volunteer Audiences

As you work to create a group project team or to draw in volunteers to work on your project, keep in mind the diversity of audiences who may respond to your message. We've collected information about some of these audiences in this section: families, young people, businesses, and people with disabilities. These are just a few of the groups of people who have demonstrated over time that they are willing and able to participate in episodic (one-time) volunteering projects if only they are asked.

## Families As Volunteers

Family volunteering has wide popularity. As early as 1987, a survey by the J.C. Penney Company, Inc. revealed that 55% of non-volunteers felt that involving their families would be an important incentive to getting them to volunteer. Thus, project team members who are looking to diversify or increase their volunteer pool would do well to see how their group project could be adapted to involved families.

According to a George H. Gallup International Institute's survey on family volunteering, the most common family type involved in volunteering is the nuclear family (60%). The next most common is adults without any children in the household (25%). Nine percent

of family volunteering groups are one parent families and 5% are families with several adults with one or more children.

### Volunteer Pairings

The most common partnership is between husband and wife (60%). Sixty-six percent say they volunteer with a another family member. Volunteering with another adult family member is especially common among younger people; 75% of 18-24 year olds volunteer with an adult not their spouse. Which could mean that advertising family or group volunteering opportunities on a college campus or other youth-oriented environment could pay big recruiting benefits.

The key element of "families" is that families define themselves. Volunteering together as part of a group project provides one of the things most families are seeking: quality time together. Family volunteering provides the comfort of engaging in a project with someone familiar and who will likely benefit from the experience. Family members can observe each other from a new perspective, and discover hidden talents and common interests.

Family volunteering includes the following configurations:

- a nuclear family: parents and children;
- an extended family including aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.;
- an adult with his/her senior parents;

- a husband and wife;
- a retired couple;
- an adult guardian and child;
- foster families;
- a non custodial parent and child;
- a single parent and children;
- adult siblings;
- children and grandparents;
- a group unrelated by blood who is living together;
- multiple children from the same family.

A way to “sell” your group project’s family volunteering idea is to emphasize the benefits to both families and the community of this type of volunteering. For example through volunteer activities, families enrich and strengthen their relationships with one another, gaining insights into the challenges of other human beings.

Volunteering together as a family provides quality family time, strengthens family communication, and provides opportunities for family members to be role models, while simultaneously allowing families to make significant contributions to their communities.

### Family Volunteer Events

When planning family volunteer events choose activities that:

- are fun, active, and hands-on;
- allow for a range of experience, talent, strength;
- introduce families to new experiences and environments;
- allow families to reflect upon their feeling sand learning;
- offer flexibility in schedule and worksite;
- have an educational component added for young.

The Points of Light Foundation considers family volunteering to be essential to the realm of community service. A volunteering family—regardless of how it is configured—benefits itself, the community, and the nation at large. For families with children, volunteering together provides parents an opportunity to demonstrate important family values about helping others and sharing time and talents with the community. Involving families in your group project can help to create life-long volunteers and a legacy of volunteering for the

next generation.

### Simple Ways to Recruit Families as Volunteers

- Ask prospective volunteers if they are interested in volunteering with their families.
- Advertise the project as a “Family Involvement Day.”
- Prominently list family opportunities in flyers and show families volunteering.
- Feature the concept of family involvement in talks to community groups.
- Create a Speakers’ Bureau of family members to talk about family involvement.
- Ask corporate volunteer programs to expand involvement to employee families.
- List family volunteer opportunities with the local Volunteer Center.

### National Family Volunteer Day

National Family Volunteer Day is designed to showcase the benefits of families working together, provide a great way to introduce community service, and encourage those who haven’t yet made the commitment to volunteer

as a family to begin doing so.

National Family Volunteer Day is held on the Saturday before Thanksgiving to kick off National Family Week, in conjunction with the Alliance for Children and Families.

By combining the focus of a group project and the publicity around National Family Volunteer Day and Week, volunteer managers have an opportunity increase the number of families volunteering within their organization. The synergy created by a group project designed with family volunteering in mind has the added benefit of allowing community groups to discover how nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, faith communities, and corporations can work together to address community needs.

Be sure to offer age-appropriate volunteer activities for children. (See listing on page 50). By emphasizing the inclusive aspects of your group project—e.g. developmentally appropriate activities—in promotional materials you can increase your volunteer pool and your

community resources. (See Appendix C, Have Questions.)

For more ideas on family volunteering or National Family Volunteering Day, contact the Points of Light Foundation and the Volunteer Center National Network or your local Volunteer Center.

## Ideas for Developmentally-Appropriate Activities

Projects mentioned at the younger ages are also appropriate for older children.

### **AGES 1 - 4**

- Play with other children.
- Visit a nursing home with other family members.
- Join with an older family member to read books at the library or community center.
- Go along for the delivery of meals prepared for those who are home-bound or hungry.

### **AGES 5 - 7**

- Sort/Pack bags of food at food bank.
- Work in a community garden—till soil, plant bulbs, or maintain a family garden and share the bounty.
- Bake sweets and deliver them to a place where they will be enjoyed.
- Enjoy a fundraising walk for a cause the family cares about.
- Make sandwiches for homeless.

- Harvest vegetables.
- Have a puppet show for shelter children.

### **AGES 8 - 10**

- Help set tables, serve food at a soup kitchen.
- Tell about their family volunteer experience at community events or in newsletters.
- Collect clothing or school supplies in the community for others in need.
- If you have a pet, volunteer to take it to an adult day-care center for a visit.
- Paint local schools or nonprofit agencies.
- Walk dogs at the animal shelter.

### **AGES 11 - 12**

- Mentor younger children through a family-to-family mentoring program.
- Suggest and choose family volunteer activities with other family members.
- Call other friend's families to become family volunteers.
- Join a gleaning project—pick fruit

or vegetables at local farms and give the “fruits” of your labor to a soup kitchen.

### **All ages can participate at some level**

- Visit seniors in rest homes.
- Clean up beaches or parks; beautify neighborhoods.
- Provide foster home for pets.
- Raise money to buy books for a literacy program.
- Create cards for hospitalized children, older neighbors and nursing home residents.

# Young People As Volunteers

## Young People As Volunteers

Volunteer service is a powerful tool for connecting young people to their communities and a win-win opportunity for young people, agencies, and communities. Throughout history the young have spearheaded volunteer and community-building efforts. Schoolchildren raised the funds to erect the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty and supported the efforts of U.S. troops in two world wars by selling defense bonds, collecting scrap metal, and growing Victory Gardens. Students risked their lives to integrate Little Rock High School.

As a project coordinator you will see first-hand how group projects help young people bring out the best in themselves. Young people have an abundance of energy, curiosity, and keen interest in what is happening around them. They want to be challenged as problem solvers and community builders. In promotional materials emphasize the positive contributions young people will bring to the project and the opportunities they will have.

Group projects provide a wealth of benefits for young people including:

- making important decisions about problems affecting their communities;
- developing leadership, communi-

cation and organizing skills;

- earning respect for what young people know and how it can improve their communities;
- providing an opportunity for them to do something good for others.

Involve young people from the beginning on your project-planning team as well as in the volunteer activities. This builds ownership and dedication to the project. Young people and adults can and do work successfully together on projects. When the two generations get together on behalf of the community, the best of both worlds are brought together through their insights and expertise.

## Where you can find young people

Many local **Volunteer Centers** have youth-driven volunteer programs.

Volunteer Centers also have partnerships with schools, community centers and other youth serving organizations.

They can help you to recruit young people for your project. Call 1-800-VOLUNTEER for your closest Volunteer Center.

Do your local **schools** have a community service requirement? Involve students who are required to do service in your project. Many schools have service-learning coordinators and coaches; others maintain a list of service opportunities for youth through the guidance

counselor's offices. Also, contact teachers and teachers associations, parents and PTAs, or other similar associations.

Recruit students from Key Clubs, community service groups, honor society members, athletic teams, and band members. Do not limit your outreach to only popular and active students. Many young people who are not involved in other school activities will bring the most time and dedication to your service project. Remember service is the great equalizer. Every student has something to give to a project and to the community.

**Youth development organizations** are also a good source of dedicated young people. Look for volunteers in 4-H Clubs, YMCA programs, and scouting groups.

## DOs and DON'Ts for Adults Working With Young People

- **DO** involve young people from the very beginning, so they can be part of the planning process.
- **DO** act as a responsible role model, because young people will reflect what you teach them.
- **DO** take the input of young people seriously and be willing to learn from them.
- **DO** be honest and stick to any promises you make.
- **DO** think of issues young people might have that adults wouldn't have (transportation, after-school activities, school conflicts, etc.).
- **DO** share yourself with young people. They don't expect you to be perfect.
- **DO** keep the lines of communication open. Ask questions and really listen to their answers.
- **DON'T** forget to show them the steps they need to know in order to do the job or task.
- **DON'T** mislead youths into thinking you can do something that you can't.
- **DON'T** set meetings at times when young people can't attend (during school, late at night, etc.).
- **DON'T** use young people as "stamps of approval" (showing them a completed project and asking them to tell you they like it).
- **DON'T** withhold information or knowledge you have. Your project represents a partnership and it won't succeed if there isn't clear communication.
- **DON'T blame all young people for the actions a few.**

# People with Disabilities As Volunteers

Realize when recruiting people with disabilities that they are represented throughout the community. There are people with disabilities attending worship services, schools, involved in clubs, participating in civic activities, and engaged in community life. People with differing abilities or physical, mental, or emotional challenges will be in the audience when you present at schools, churches, and clubs. Your recruitment message should include information which lets people with disabilities know they are encouraged to volunteer and that you are eager and prepared to work with them.

Before you can do this, you need to clarify what resources, expectations, and goals you have for recruiting participants with disabilities. You can then establish an effective recruitment strategy:

- Consult with or involve people with disabilities in the development of the project recruitment plan, and in the delivery of the message for the service event.
- Check out resources to create accessible promotional material—audiotapes, Braille materials, large print, text-reader friendly copies, sign language interpreters on PSAs, etc.

As you begin recruiting, simply incorporate language or symbols within promotional materials you have already created (i.e., presentations, volunteer response forms, TV, radio, newsletters, and web) that indicates your service opportunities are accessible and inclusive of all volunteers

Avoid creating volunteer events exclusively for people with disabilities. This can perpetuate the misconception that people with disabilities are not able to participate fully in overall volunteer efforts and should be isolated from other volunteers. When sharing projects or activities available for the day of service, focus on sharing the skills required for these tasks. Don't be afraid

to ask potential volunteers how they see themselves participating.

Some people with disabilities use community service providers. There are numerous nonprofits that exist as advocacy organizations that might be able to help you as you develop your messages and reach out to the broader community. You can work with these providers or affiliate members in your local community to specifically recruit people with disabilities to volunteer. One place to start is with your local telephone directory. Look for listings of agencies associated with disability services.

### Potential Partners:

- Compeer, Inc.;
- Volunteers of America;
- Best Buddies;
- UCPARC;
- local/regional mental health agencies;
- mental retardation centers;
- Easter Seals;
- independent living centers;
- colleges and universities.

You can help your group simplify the process of providing accommodations by offering a pre-registration service for volunteers. On your forms and in your publicity, simply request that volunteers needing accommodations contact your project team in advance. This will help you plan for the day and budget for any expenses that might arise. See the project planning worksheet on page (3) for more accessibility questions to consider.

### Resources for promoting accessibility and education on disability issues

The resources listed below are just a few of the many that exist today. In

addition to accessing this information, seek out organizations in your community that advocate for and support people with disabilities, talk to community leaders or search the Internet.

### Books/Guides

*Disability Etiquette: Tips on Interacting with People with Disabilities.* For additional information contact Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association at 1-800-444-0120 or [www.epva.org](http://www.epva.org).

*Effective Practices Guide To Creating Inclusive and Accessible Days of Service.* Written in collaboration by City Cares, Youth Service America, and the Points of Light Foundation. For a copy, contact Points of Light Foundation at 202-729-8000 or [www.PointsofLight.org](http://www.PointsofLight.org).

### Online

- Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) works to make web page formats and protocols accessible to people with disabilities so that web

page creators can build in usability for people with disabilities. Visit [www.w3.org/WAI](http://www.w3.org/WAI).

- Bobby is a tool that helps identify changes to web pages needed so users with disabilities can more easily use a web site. Visit [www.cast.org/Bobby](http://www.cast.org/Bobby) EPICenter, an online database of effective program practices, sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service. Key word: Disabilities at [www.nationalser-vice.org/resources/epicenter](http://www.nationalser-vice.org/resources/epicenter).

### Organizations

- State Commissions of Volunteerism and Community Service—most state commission offices have a disability coordinator that specializes in supporting community service organizations in engaging persons with disabilities in their work. These coordinators have information on best practices and successful programs in your state that can help you. [www.cns.gov/stateprofiles/index.html](http://www.cns.gov/stateprofiles/index.html).



- The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) in a toll-free consulting service that provides information on job accommodation and the employability of people with disabilities. JAN offers instant access to the most comprehensive and up-to-date information about methods, devices, and strategies that can help people with disabilities in seeking volunteerism opportunities. Contact 800 526-7234 or [jan@jan.icdi.wvu.edu](mailto:jan@jan.icdi.wvu.edu). Visit <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu>
- The National Organization on Disabilities promotes the full and equal participation of America's 54 million men, women, and children with disabilities in all aspects of life. NOD is the only national disability network organization concerned with all disabilities, age groups, and disability issues. Visit [www.nod.org](http://www.nod.org) for the latest statistics, educational materials, and resource lists.
- The U.S. Justice Department offers technical assistance on the ADA

Standards for Accessible Design and other ADA provisions applying to businesses, nonprofit service agencies, and state and local government programs. For more information contact 800-514-0301 or [www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm) (Interacting with Persons with Disabilities).

### Working with Persons with Disabilities

It is important to be conscious of people with disabilities and prepared to interact with them as naturally as any one else. Whatever you do, don't let fear of saying or doing something "wrong" prevent you from getting to know someone who has a disability. If you are unsure of what to say when you first meet, just say "Hello."

Here are some more tips:

- First and most important, people with disabilities—like everyone else—deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. People with disabilities have their own preferences about how to do things. To

find out what someone prefers, ask.

- When you meet someone with a disability, it is appropriate to shake hands, even if a person has limited hand use or artificial limbs. Simply touch hands (or the person's prosthesis) to acknowledge his or her presence. Shaking the left hand is also fine.
- Always ask before you assist a person with a disability, and then listen carefully to any instructions. Do not interfere with a person's full control over his or her own assistive devices.
- People with disabilities usually do not want to make the origin or details of their disability the first topic of conversation. In general, it's best not to ask personal questions until you've become friends.
- Be considerate of the extra time it might take a person with a disability to get certain things done.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability rather than to a companion or sign language interpreter who may be along.
- Don't be embarrassed to use com-

mon expressions such as "I've got to run now," "See you later," or "Have you heard about..." even if the person doesn't run, see, or hear well.

- Use Person-First Language. Some terms such as "crippled," "deaf and dumb," and "wheelchair-bound" are no longer accepted by people with disabilities. Instead use language that focuses on the person first, and their physical, mental or developmental challenge afterwards.
- Avoid excessive praise when people with disabilities accomplish normal tasks. Living with a disability does not require exaggerated compliments.
- Don't lean on a person's wheelchair; it is considered an extension of personal space.
- When you talk to a person in a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, try to sit down so that you will be at eye level with that person.
- Give unhurried attention to a person who has difficulty speaking. Don't pretend to understand when

you don't; ask the person to repeat the message.

- Speak calmly, slowly, and directly to a person who is hard of hearing. Don't shout or speak in the person's ear. Your facial expressions, gestures, and body movements help in understanding. If you're not certain that you've been understood, write your message.
- Greet a person who is visually impaired by telling her your name and where you are. When you offer walking assistance, let her take your arm and then tell her when you are approaching inclines or steps or are turning.

Be aware that there are many people with disabilities that are not apparent. Because you cannot see a disability does not mean it doesn't exist.

# Engaging Businesses in Group Projects

## Involving Businesses in Group Projects

Group projects are a great way to involve local businesses and help them leverage their resources to build communities and address community needs. Group projects also provide opportunities for employees to work together in a team-building activity. There are many ways to involve employees, their families, and retirees in projects. In addition to providing volunteers for the day of a project, local businesses could donate their resources and expertise to design and print flyers, contribute supplies, food, and recognition items.

### **Benefits to Your Group Project:**

Partnering with businesses can offer a wealth of benefits such as:

- networking opportunities with businesses, community leaders and other groups;
- in-kind or monetary donations, grants, or other revenues directed to support your project;
- complimentary use of business facilities or meeting rooms for your team planning meetings;
- pro-bono and In-kind contributions to support your projects (e.g. public relations, financial, or legal assistance).

### **Benefits to Business:**

Businesses gain many benefits from engaging their employee volunteer program in community service projects.

These may include:

- stronger communities for a healthier environment in which to do business where their employees work and live;
- greater visibility and ability to network in the community;
- enhanced employee satisfaction and improved morale;
- customer loyalty stemming from the positive image brought about by businesses being involved in community service.

### **Benefits to Employees:**

Employee volunteer programs benefit employees by:

- nurturing professional development among staff;
- building positive communications, organizational and time management skills, and feelings of accountability;
- developing employee respect for and understanding of diversity;
- increasing teamwork activity and encouraging relationship-building among employees;
- fosters employee loyalty and connection with their company;
- providing opportunities to give back to their community with the

support of their employer.

### The CVC Role

A CVC is a coalition of local businesses and corporations who either have active employee or retiree volunteer involvement programs, or are interested in initiating such programs. CVCs are known as Corporate Volunteer Councils, Corporate Volunteerism Councils, and Business Volunteer Councils (BVC), among other names.

The CVC members challenge themselves to address community needs in order to improve the communities in which they live and work. Like many independent 501(c)(3) groups, they plan projects to benefit the community. CVCs categorize their projects in two different ways.

### Signature Projects

A signature project is a large-scale project involving the majority, if not all of the CVC membership. It is planned with a local nonprofit agency and occurs in one of several locations throughout the city. Most important, the same project is done every year, thus

### Finding Local Partners

Contact your local Volunteer Center at 1-800-VOLUNTEER to find your nearest CVC or e-mail [cvc@PointsofLight.org](mailto:cvc@PointsofLight.org) for more information on how your team can involve the local CVC in the planning of your next group project.

- Identify potential volunteers and partners for your project by building on existing business relationships and those your project team members may have with other business vendors. The list of contacts could include other businesses your team wants to develop relationships with such as banks, law firms, insur-

ance offices, grocery stores, utility providers, and others with whom you and members of your planning team do business.

- Research possible business partners. Contact your local Volunteers Centers, Corporate Volunteer Councils, and local nonprofit organizations for partners with similar community interests. Business web sites are also a good source of information on their missions, values, goals, and community relations activities.

becoming the signature project of the CVC in the community.

### Joint Projects

CVC member companies collaborate together to conduct activities and events that are directed at a serious problem that requires a concentrated community-wide strategy. In addition to address-

ing serious issues, joint projects among CVCs are also conducted around the Seasons of Service. This is an especially strong strategy for small and medium corporations or businesses that do not have the resources to accomplish this on their own.

## Employee Volunteer Programs

Businesses nationwide are developing and managing effective employee volunteer programs (EVP) to advance strategic business goals and integrate corporate philosophy and values with community needs and employee interests. An EVP is a company-supported effort to leverage organizational resources and engage employees in projects that target community needs.

Engaging a business with an employee/retiree volunteer program can help your project planning team recruit employee volunteers and potentially in-kind support and services. Other EVP resources may also be available depending on the structure of the EVP programs.

To identify managers of corporate volunteer programs, contact human resources, public relations, community relations or communications department. Also, visit the community relations page of business web sites, if they are accessible.

## Don't Forget That Small Businesses Have Much to Offer

Small businesses and corporations represent the majority of the new jobs in the U.S. economy. Engaging small businesses in group projects helps facilitate small business involvement in volunteer activities. Small businesses are often family-owned or run and are a good way to recruit families as volunteers.

Small businesses look to other organizations such as CVCs or individual nonprofits to help them accomplish their volunteer efforts because they may not have the resources to accomplish this on their own.

Contact the owner or manager of a small business and leave recruitment and/or partnering materials to solicit their interest for your group project.

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# Project Planning Timeline

### Week 1

Familiarize yourself with the How to Create a Group Project Tool Kit. Define your goals for the project.

### Week 2

Recruit your Group Project Team members.

### Week 3

Host your first meeting. Include some team-building activities in case there are individuals in the group who do not know each other. Discuss the community needs and determine with the team the goals of the service project. Begin brainstorming ideas for the project.

### Week 4

Assess your team's resources, skills, and interests. Contact your local Volunteer Center to get additional ideas and more information about community needs. Determine the scope of your project based on your experience with planning service projects; the time you and your team have to develop the projects and, the resources you have available to implement the project (money, supplies, volunteers etc.) Contact community organizations you want to work with on the project.

### Week 5

Make some decisions about the details of the project. Begin to think about how you want to recognize your volunteers, community organizations, associates, business leaders, etc.

### Week 6

Develop a detailed action plan assigning tasks to individuals with specific due dates.

### Week 7

Display posters and flyers announcing the Group Project. Make sure your team members publicize the event through their networks.

### Week 8

Distribute letters to local newspapers and through team member networks encouraging community members and their families to volunteer.

### Week 9

Hold first general Volunteer Sign-up for community members to sign up for the event. Encourage them to bring family members, friends and others. Begin to match skills with tasks. The sign-up events can happen within different team member networks such as a church group sign-up after services or a table set up during lunch hour at a business partner cafeteria.

### Week 10

Put publicity plan in motion using materials provided in the Tool Kit.

### Week 11

Implement plans for organizing and carrying out logistics of the event (supplies, transportation, volunteer supervision, training, etc.)

### Week 12

Work on evaluations.

# Sample Task Worksheet

<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Person</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>\$ Needed</b>	<b>Material Needed</b>



# Bibliography

Editors of this book wish to recognize these vital organizations whose literature we have drawn upon to create this publication:

### **Corporation for National and Community Service**

1201 New York Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20525  
202-606-5000; TTY: 202-565-2799  
[www.cns.gov](http://www.cns.gov); [www.nationalservice.org](http://www.nationalservice.org)

#### **Publications:**

Martin Luther King Day Planning Book

### **The Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management**

320 Park Ave, 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10022 USA  
212-224-1174; fax: 212-224-2508  
[www.drucker.org](http://www.drucker.org)

#### **Publications:**

Meeting the Collaboration Challenge

### **Independent Sector**

1200 18th St., NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-467-6100; fax 202-467-6101  
[www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org)

#### **Publications:**

Giving And Volunteering, 1996

### **America's Fraternal Benefit Societies National Fraternal Congress of America**

#### **Join Hands Day Initiative**

1240 Iroquois Drive, Suite 300  
Naperville, IL 60563-8538  
630-355-6633; fax 630-355-0042  
[www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org)

#### **Publications:**

Join Hands Day Tool Kit

### **Points of Light Foundation**

1400 I St., NW Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-729-8000; fax 202-729-8105  
[www.PointsofLight.org](http://www.PointsofLight.org)

#### **Publications:**

Family-Friendly Volunteering, A Guide for Agencies

Family Volunteering Day Guide Book

Youth Outreach Tip Sheets

Join Hands Day Planning Kit

Make A Difference Day

Martin Luther King Day Book

Developing and Strengthening a Corporate Volunteer Council

International Year of the Volunteer Planning Booklet

National Volunteer Week Kit

### **USA Weekend**

7950 Jones Branch Drive  
McLean, VA 22107  
800-416-3824  
[www.makeadifferenceday.com](http://www.makeadifferenceday.com)

#### **Publications:**

Make A Difference Day Project Book

### **Youth Service America**

1101 15th St., Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-296-2992; fax 202-296-4030  
[www.ysa.org/nysd](http://www.ysa.org/nysd)

#### **Publications:**

National Youth Service Day Tool Kit

# Have Questions?

**Have more questions on:**

## Additional Copies or Alternative Formats?

Points of Light Foundation  
And Volunteer Center National Network  
1400 I St. NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-729-8000  
www.PointsofLight.org  
1-800-VOLUNTEERS  
www.1800VOLUNTEER.org  
Ask for: Product Development,  
202-729-8000  
or info@PointsofLight.org.

## A List of Corporate Volunteer Councils?

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Corporate Volunteer Development,  
202-729-8000  
or cvc@PointsofLight.org

## Connect America?

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Connect America, 202-729-8000  
or info@PointsofLight.org

## Engaging community members?

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Annie E. Casey Project,  
202-729-8000  
or info@PointsofLight.org

## Engaging Communities of Faith?

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Interfaith Project, 202-729-8000  
or info@PointsofLight.org

## Engaging Corporate Volunteer Councils?

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for the “Developing and Strengthening  
a Corporate Volunteer Council” book  
Ask for: Corporate Volunteer Development,  
202-729-8000  
or info@PointsofLight.org

## Engaging Corporations or corporate employees?

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Corporate Volunteer Development,

202-729-8000  
or info@PointsofLight.org

## Engaging families?

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Family Matters, 202-729-8000  
or info@PointsofLight.org

## Engaging people with disabilities?

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Volunteer Center Development,  
202-729-8000  
or info@PointsofLight.org

## Engaging young people?

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Youth Outreach, 202-729-8000  
or info@PointsofLight.org

## **Fundraising?**

Youth Service America  
National Youth Service Day Tool Kit,  
Available at [www.ysa.org/nysd](http://www.ysa.org/nysd)  
or write  
1101 15th St., NW, Suite 200,  
Washington, DC 20005.

## **Media Involvement?**

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Communications, 202-729-8000  
or [info@PointsofLight.org](mailto:info@PointsofLight.org)

## **National Conference?**

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Conference and Meetings,  
202-729-8000  
or [2002NC@PointsofLight.org](mailto:2002NC@PointsofLight.org);  
[www.PointsofLight.org/2002NC](http://www.PointsofLight.org/2002NC)

## **National Partnerships?**

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: National Partnerships,  
202-729-8000  
or [info@PointsofLight.org](mailto:info@PointsofLight.org)

## **National Volunteer Week**

Ask for Product Development,  
202-729-3224  
Or [volunteerweek@PointsofLight.org](mailto:volunteerweek@PointsofLight.org)

## **Recognition Ideas?**

Points of Light Foundation  
Award Nominations  
Ask for: Recognition, 202-729-8000  
or [info@PointsofLight.org](mailto:info@PointsofLight.org)

## **Recognition Items?**

Points of Light Foundation  
Volunteer Marketplace Catalog  
Ask for: Recognition Items, 1-800-272-  
8306 or [marketplace@PointsofLight.org](mailto:marketplace@PointsofLight.org).

## **Reflection?**

Points of Light Foundation  
Request the Reflection Resource Packet.  
Ask for: Youth Outreach, 202-729-8000  
or [info@PointsofLight.org](mailto:info@PointsofLight.org)

## **Seasons of Service?**

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Seasons of Service,  
202-729-8000  
or [seasons@PointsofLight.org](mailto:seasons@PointsofLight.org)

## **Training & Consulting**

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Training and Consulting,  
202-729-8000  
or [training@PointsofLight.org](mailto:training@PointsofLight.org)

## **Turning Episodic Volunteers into Ongoing Volunteers?**

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Seasons of Service,  
202-729-8000  
or [seasons@PointsofLight.org](mailto:seasons@PointsofLight.org)

## **Volunteer Marketplace Catalog**

Ask for: Publications or Recognition Items,  
1-800-272-8306

## **Volunteer Statistics?**

Independent Sector  
1200 18th St., NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-467-6100  
[www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org)

## **Working with local affiliates of National organizations?**

Points of Light Foundation  
Ask for: Connect America, Volunteer  
Center Development,  
or National Partnerships, 202-729-8000  
or [info@PointsofLight.org](mailto:info@PointsofLight.org)

## Organizations with Local Affiliates:

Alliance for Children and Families  
11700 W. Lake Park Drive  
Milwaukee, WI 53224-3099  
(800) 221-3726  
[www.alliance1.org](http://www.alliance1.org)

American Red Cross  
Attn: Public Inquiry Office  
431 18th St., NW  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
202-639-3520  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

The Association of Junior Leagues  
International, Inc.  
132 West 31st St.,  
11th Floor  
New York, NY 10001-3406  
212-951-8300  
[www.ajli.org](http://www.ajli.org)

Boys and Girls Clubs  
1230 W. Peachtree Street, NW  
Atlanta, GA 30309  
404-815-5700  
[www.boysandgirlsclubs.org](http://www.boysandgirlsclubs.org)

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America  
230 North 13th St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
215-567-7000  
[www.bbbsa.org](http://www.bbbsa.org)

The Salvation Army  
[www.salvationarmy.org](http://www.salvationarmy.org)

United Way of America  
701 N. Fairfax St.  
Alexandria, VA 22314-2045  
800-411-UWAY  
[www.unitedway.org](http://www.unitedway.org)

## **Working with Member or Fraternal Organizations?**

Points of Light Foundation  
Contact: Volunteer Center  
Development/Join Hands Day,  
202-729-8000  
or [info@PointsofLight.org](mailto:info@PointsofLight.org)

## **Working with Volunteer Centers?**

Points of Light Foundation  
Contact: Volunteer Center Development,  
202-729-8000  
or [info@PointsofLight.org](mailto:info@PointsofLight.org)

# Seasons of Service

Seasons of Service are special national dates of service to which you may want to tie your group project. Seasons of Service, sponsored and promoted by the Points of Light Foundation, the Volunteer Center National Network, and the Connect America National Partnership, is a portfolio of national opportunities for people to volunteer their time and talents to service projects and activities throughout the year. More than 20 million people volunteer each year as part of the Seasons of Service initiative. The Foundation, through various initiatives, utilized the Seasons of Service to achieve a shared vision of connecting America through volunteering. If you require further information or have suggestions as to how we can better serve you through Seasons of Service projects, visit our web site at [www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org) or call 202-729-8015.

**Future Seasons of Service Dates:**

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

- Jan. 21, 2002
- Jan. 20, 2003
- Jan. 19, 2004
- Jan. 17, 2005

**National Volunteer Week**

- April 21-27, 2002
- April 27-May 3, 2003
- April 18-24, 2004
- April 17-23, 2005

**National Youth Service Days**

- April 26-28, 2002

**Global National Youth Service Day**

- April 26-28, 2002

**The Big Help – no specific date**

**Join Hands Day**

- June 15, 2002
- June 21, 2003
- June 19, 2004
- June 18, 2005

**Make A Difference Day**

- Oct. 26, 2002
- Oct. 25, 2003
- Oct. 23, 2004
- Oct. 22, 2005

**National Family Volunteer Day**

- Nov. 23, 2002
- Nov. 22, 2003
- Nov. 20, 2004
- Nov. 19, 2005

## Overview of each day

### **MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY**

**Jan. 21, 2002—A day on... not a day off!**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. believed that people's worth should not be measured by color, culture, or class but rather by a commitment to making a better life for all. Each year, The Corporation for National Service, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change, Inc., the Points of Light Foundation, United Way of America, Habitat for Humanity International, Youth Service America, America's Promise, Do Something, Best Buy and First Book work together to make service to others the common expectation of all Americans during this national holiday. For more information, contact: The Corporation for National Service; 1201 New York Ave. NW, 8th Floor; Washington, DC 20525; (202) 606-5000; e-mail: [mlkday@cns.gov](mailto:mlkday@cns.gov); [www.mlkday.org](http://www.mlkday.org)

### **NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY**

**April 26–28, 2002—The Power of Youth Serving Youth**

National Youth Service Day has three primary goals: to recognize the year-round service and volunteering efforts of millions of young people nationwide; to recruit participants and supporters of youth service organizations; and to promote young people as resources rather than problems in their communities. Since 1998, NSYD has grown to include more than 38 national partners and millions of young people nationwide. For more information, contact: Youth Service America; 1101 15th Street NW, Suite 200; Washington, DC 20005; 202-296-2992; e-mail: [info@ysa.org](mailto:info@ysa.org); [www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org); [www.servenet.org](http://www.servenet.org)

### **THE BIG HELP**

**Every Day!**

The Big Help is Nickelodeon's grassroots campaign designed to encourage and empower kids to volunteer in their communities. Since 1994, some 33 million kids have pledged over 383 million volunteer hours. With the help of adults, schools, and 27 national community based partners, kids across

America continue to benefit themselves and their communities each year through The Big Help! For more information contact: Nickelodeon's The Big Help; PO Box 929; New York, NY 10108; 212-846-4333; [www.nick.com](http://www.nick.com)

### **NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK**

**April 21-27, 2002 – Celebrate the American Spirit – VOLUNTEER!**

National Volunteer Week began in 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed an executive order establishing the week as an annual celebration of volunteering. Sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation and the Volunteer Center National Network, National Volunteer Week has become the official time to recognize and celebrate the efforts of volunteers at the local, state and national levels. For more information, contact: The Points of Light Foundation; 1400 I St., NW, Suite 800; Washington, DC 20005; 202-729-8168; e-mail: [VolunteerWeek@PointsofLight.org](mailto:VolunteerWeek@PointsofLight.org); [www.PointsofLight.org/nvw](http://www.PointsofLight.org/nvw); 1-800 VOLUNTEER.

## JOIN HANDS DAY

### June 15, 2002—Youth and Adults Volunteering Together

The goal of Join Hands Day is to begin making connections and friendships across generations through neighborhood volunteering. Join Hands Day is sponsored by America's Fraternal Benefit Societies in partnership with the Points of Light Foundation and the Volunteer Center National Network. For more information contact: Join Hands Day Action Center; P.O. Box 3213; Naperville, IL 60566-7213; 1-(877) OUR-1DAY; [www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org)

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY

### Oct. 26, 2002—A National Day to Help Others

Make A Difference Day attracts more than one million citizens who are committed to spending the day making a difference within their communities through service projects and activities. Make A Difference Day is cosponsored by USA Weekend magazine and the Points of Light Foundation with the support of Newman's Own and Wal-Mart in collaboration with celebrities, government, nonprofits and businesses. For

more information, contact: 1-800-416-3824; e-mail: [diffday@usaweekend.com](mailto:diffday@usaweekend.com); [www.makeadifferenceday.com](http://www.makeadifferenceday.com)

## NATIONAL FAMILY VOLUNTEER DAY

### Nov. 23, 2002—My Family Matters— We VOLUNTEER!

The Points of Light Foundation launched the Family Matters initiative to encourage and engage families in community-oriented projects. National Family Volunteer Day kicks off National Family Week (Nov. 23–30, 2002) as part of an annual public awareness campaign spear-headed by The Points of Light Foundation and the Alliance for Children and Families. For more information, contact: e-mail: [FamilyMatters@PointsofLight.org](mailto:FamilyMatters@PointsofLight.org); [www.1800Volunteer.org](http://www.1800Volunteer.org); [www.alliance1.org](http://www.alliance1.org); 1-(800)-VOLUNTEER.

## Seasons of Service Online

Share the outcomes of your project through a new initiative—the Seasons of Service Interface.SOSI is an online project registration system that allows you to tell us about the outcome of your organization's event after each Day of

Service in which you participate. [www.PointsofLight.org](http://www.PointsofLight.org).

## Why Register?

- **Potential Award Recognition:** For example, National Family Volunteer Day registrants will be automatically nominated to receive the Family Volunteer Awards announced at the National Conference on Community Volunteering and National Service in June. More award recognition for Seasons of Service are coming in the future.
- **Publicity:** Projects will be selected and featured as best practice examples not only in Points of Light Foundation publications but also in a local or national media stories, providing your organization with free and extensive media coverage.
- **A Bigger Picture:** Doing your project on a national day of service connects you to thousands of others who are also doing service on this day. Your event will be added to a database of projects that determines the scope and

impact of the day nationwide.

- **Future resources:** By viewing the bigger picture, national trends can be determined which will provide you with better planning, funding and resource development. Greater participation numbers can lead to many exciting possibilities for volunteerism, including potential funding opportunities for projects or programs and research on volunteering.

Visit [www.pointsoflight.org/registration](http://www.pointsoflight.org/registration). Names and addresses are kept confidential and will not be used for marketing purposes. Photos and project descriptions may be used in POLF publications. Comprehensive reports of participation for each day will be distributed.



# Service Interest Survey

In order to plan projects that meet your interests, we need to know what they are! Please complete this survey and return to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

1. Do you currently volunteer?  Yes  No If so, please indicate:

Name of Organization	Type of Activity
----------------------	------------------

2. When are you available to volunteer?

- Days (Monday – Friday)
- Evenings (Monday – Friday)
- Weekends

3. How often are you interested in volunteering?

4. Please indicate the types of activities and organizations for which you have an interest:

A. Activities (Check all that apply)

- Short-term projects or one-time events (walk-a-thons, neighborhood clean-ups, fund-raising events, etc.)
- Long-term, ongoing activities (mentoring, tutoring, Junior Achievement, etc. – fill in more here)
- Regularly scheduled activities of moderate time commitment (serving meals at a soup kitchen, \_\_\_\_\_)
- Business/School partnerships
- Service on nonprofit boards
- No preference

5. Organizations (Check all that apply)

- Arts  Environmental
- Civic  Health/Human Services
- Children/Education  Employment
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- No Preference

6. I would like to volunteer (Check all that apply)

- By myself
- With my co-workers
- With my friends
- With my family
- Other

7. I would prefer to volunteer:

- Close to my home; please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Close to work
- No preference

Comments:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- Please contact me to discuss specific accessibility accommodations I will require in order to participate as a volunteer.

## Step Five Appendix

### Recruitment Letter

Local contact  
Enclosures  
Recruitment Letter for Groups

Date

Name of group/organization

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Name:

As one of (name of city) most civic-minded organizations, we don't want you to miss the opportunity for your (members, employees residents etc.) to participate in an upcoming group project on (day, month, date, year).

As a distinguished member of our community, we invite your participation and support, not in the traditional dollars-and-cents way, but in a human way. We need your group's involvement in this important effort, and here's how:

Commit to signing up 5 to 10 of your members and/or their families to volunteer at this community project.

It's simple. We need volunteers. You have the volunteers we need! Not only will the community benefit from your members efforts that day, but also you will enhance morale and pride in your group. This may be especially helpful if we successfully interest local radio, TV, and newspaper reporters to cover this event. Media coverage is one of our primary strategic goals. Picture your members in T-shirts spending a few hours enhancing the community and spending valuable time together.

Enclosed you will find materials describing the project. We have enclosed a fax-back sheet to provide us with a quick response regarding your group's decision.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and for taking the time to learn about this important service project. I will call you in a few days to talk more about this opportunity and see if you have any questions.

We sincerely hope (name of group or company) will join us in making this project a major success in (name of city).

Sincerely,

Signature  
Enclosures

Enclose the following with this letter:  
Recruitment letter fax-back  
Sign-up form  
Description of project  
Fact sheet or flyer

### Recruitment Letter Fax-Back

(Your organization) Name  
wants you to join in helping to change the community

(Name, Title)  
(Group or company)  
(Address)  
City, ST, ZIP

Please fax back to: (Local contact at XXX-XXXX)

We hope you will join us (day, month, date, year), as we Celebrate the American Spirit by volunteering and offering (name of city) residents the opportunity to give back to our community. Your group can directly benefit through a feeling of doing something positive and being included as a sponsor of the event.

Please include how you can help by checking the appropriate boxes and faxing this form back to us. Thanks for your time!

YES! Our group will recruit 5 to 10 members and their families and commit to volunteer at the community project on (day, month, date, year).

We will:

- Endorse this project. Please feel free to add our name to your list of organizations and companies that support this worthwhile effort.
- Designate an organizational coordinator to serve as liaison between the group project's organizers and our participating members.
- Include an article in our organizational newsletter.
- Provide registration forms and information to our members.
- Post flyers on area bulletin boards.
- Other:

Sorry, this isn't the year for us. Please let us have a first crack at your next service project.

## Step Five Appendix

### Public Service Announcements Sample Local Radio PSAs

(\*These short paragraphs may help spark your creativity. Be sure to contact the media outlet to confirm the length format of your PSA.)

You have extra time—we need extra hands! Celebrate the American Spirit-Volunteer. Your help is needed to (goal of the project) on (day, month, date, year). Help us connect our community and make a positive change. For information about the project contact (contact telephone number).

Celebrate the American Spirit—Volunteer! Volunteering is not just nice, it's necessary to connect our community and help our neighbors. Join us on (day, month, date, year) and pitch in to (goal of the project). For information about the project contact (contact telephone number).

What better way to get connected to our community than volunteering on (day, month, date, year)? We need your help to reach our goals at project. All are welcome. Young and old, families and groups. Celebrate the American Spirit and the (your city name) Spirit. Volunteer Call xxx-xxxx for more information.

### Sample Flyer

**(enclose with recruitment letter to companies  
and other groups)**

Celebrate the American Spirit—VOLUNTEER!

SIGN UP NOW  
FOR  
(your project name here)

Sponsored by (your group's name or partner organization's name here)

Month/Day/Year  
Time

You and your (family, co-workers, members, friends etc.) are invited to make a difference in (name of city) and to spend some quality time together making a positive difference in the community!

Volunteer opportunities are available to:  
(list tasks available or project's outcome)

Call (XXX-XXXX) for more information.

Coordinator for this project is

and can be reached at  
(insert phone, e-mail etc.)

to sign up or learn more

## Step Five Appendix

### Recruitment Sign-Up Form

(print on white paper)

Name of Organization:

Name of City:

Date of Project:

Volunteer Information:

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

E-mail

No. of children, ages:

Family Team Members:

Names

Address

City, State, Zip

E-mail

(Print coordinator name)

(Address and/or fax # here)

(Please make additional copies of this sheet as needed)

Fill out and Fax or Mail this form to: (Local contact address and fax number)

### Individual Volunteer Confirmation Form

Bring this form with you on (date of your project)  
This is your confirmed assignment

(Name of Volunteer)

Has been assigned to:

Meet at \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.

Site Name:

Directions to volunteer site:

Thank you!

Contact \_\_\_\_\_ if there are specific accessibility accommodations necessary for your full participation in this service assignment.

## Step Five Appendix

### Volunteer Job Description

**Title:**

Give each volunteer task a title that reflects the role the volunteer will fulfill. A title lends importance to the position.

**Orientation and Training:**

Type of training that will be provided, where, when, and how.

**Location:**

Indicate where the volunteer will serve. Address any transportation issues here.

**Responsibilities and tasks to be performed:**

List of duties and responsibilities

**Qualifications:**

Indicate what knowledge, skills or experience is needed.

**Time required:**

Number of hours, days etc. Include any meeting requirements and define a minimum and maximum time commitment expected from volunteers.

**Benefits:**

List benefits available for volunteers such as childcare, meals, T-shirts, etc.

**Team Leader:**

Name, title, and phone number of person who will supervise or who is coordinating this volunteer activity.

**Dress/Equipment Needed:**

## Step Six Appendix

### Budget Worksheet

	What is Needed	Calculate Amount Needed	Cost	Possible Donors
Materials				
Staff/Consultant				
Equipment				
Printing/Copying				
Postage/Mail Lists				
Marketing				
Transportation				
Insurance				
Telephone/Fax				
Space Rental/Permits				
Food/Drink				
Recognition				
Miscellaneous				

## Step Six Appendix

Resource Development			
Possible Sources/Contacts	Service Area	Resources	Fundraising
Businesses/Corporations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National</li> <li>• Local</li> </ul> Foundations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National</li> <li>• Local</li> </ul> Individual Donors           Government support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National</li> <li>• State/Local</li> </ul> Faith-based organizations           Schools/Universities           Individuals           Other			

## Step Seven Appendix

### Community Calendar Listing

(Name of Groups) Join Volunteers Citywide (Countywide etc.) to  
(Goal of Project)

On (day, month, date) volunteers from all over (city, county, neighborhood etc.) will gather at (project site) to showcase volunteering as a way to benefit neighborhoods, communities and families.

Volunteers are encouraged to join this project and help to build community and make a positive difference.

For additional information, call (XXX-XXXX) or call the (project team member/coordinator) at (XXX-XXXX) or (partnering agency).

Note: insert a disability symbol. Disability symbols can be obtained by XXXXXX.

CELEBRATE THE AMERICAN SPIRIT—VOLUNTEER!

## Step Seven Appendix

### Print Media Pitch Letter

Date  
Name  
Title  
Publication  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Dear Name:

Volunteering works to make life better for all in (name of community here). The time volunteers give is invaluable for building community relationships, improving the lives of our neighbors, and providing an example for others.

On (day and date) volunteers will participate in an effort to (what is to be accomplished). We have a great project and would like the opportunity to share the details of this community service event with your readers. (name of group project partners) have been working diligently to make this project a success.

We hope you'll share this news with your readers as the momentum builds. Volunteers from (name some groups or neighborhoods) will be found working in the community and giving their time and energy. We want people to read about the event, and be inspired to volunteer by joining this project or initiating their own projects. In fact, we hope participants will be inspired to stay involved as volunteers in their community all year long.

Thank you for taking the time to review the enclosed materials. If you have questions or need additional information, please call me at (XXX-XXXX).

Sincerely,

### Media Alert

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT: Name of contact for any media questions, include a phone number and or email address.

(PROJECT TITLE – BOLD AND ALL CAPS)

(Subtitle of Project – Bold and Title Case)

- WHAT: Write a description of the project, including: number of volunteers, purpose of the project, link to other projects, and community issue being addressed.
- WHO: List any VIPS attending or participating in the project  
From what groups are your volunteers being drawn: families, local residents, etc.
- WHEN: Date and time for the local media to visit
- WHERE: Physical address of the project
- WHY: Explain the anticipated impact of the project in the local community and link to your group's mission statement goals or community objectives.

Include mission statements or message points from other participating organizations or partners.

## Media Tools At-A-Glance

Information	What is it?	Who receives it?	When should you send
<b>Pitch Letter</b>	Written sales tool, used to peak interest in your event.	Specifically customized for each: Photo desk editor (newspaper) Feature reporter (newspaper) Radio news director Magazine editor (magazine) TV/radio talk show producer	2 to 3 months before event
<b>Media Release</b>	Generates interest, often becomes the first three paragraphs of the article.	Photo desk editor Feature reporter Assignment editor Radio news director TV/radio talk show producer Magazine editor	Send one month prior to event. Include a media kit.
<b>Fact Sheet</b>	Provides background information like facts and figures to help reporters build a story.	Photo desk editor Feature reporter Assignment editor Radio news director TV/radio talk show producer Magazine editor	Send in media kit when requested
<b>Backgrounder</b>	Provides basic information in an attractive format.	Photo desk editor Feature reporter Assignment editor Radio news director TV/radio talk show producer Magazine editor	Send in media kit



## Step Seven Appendix

Information Piece	Function	Who receives it?	When should you send it?
<b>Community Calendar Entry</b>	Short, concise entry for calendar	Community calendar editor	Every Monday beginning 4 to 6 weeks prior to event.
<b>Media Alert</b>	Conveys urgent reminders to the recipient. Sent 1 to 2 days before the event.	Photo desk editor TV news assignment editor Feature reporters	Sent 1 week before the event.
<b>Site Map</b>	Assists in getting reporters to the actual location of your event.	Everyone	As requested
<b>Public Service Announcement (PSA)</b>	Brief script delivered to radio and TV to be read on the air.	TV promotion director or news assignment editor Radio news director	6 weeks prior to event
<b>Spokesperson Biographical Sketch</b>	Provides single-paragraph description of the individual's interest.	Photo desk editor Feature reporter Assignment editor Radio & TV news director TV/radio talk show producer Magazine editor	Be prepared to forward as requested; when you send the media release, include the media kit.

## Step Eight Appendix

### Sample Registration and Evaluation Forms

Volunteer Registration:

Emergency Contact Name/Phone:

Volunteer Name:

Daytime Phone:

Address:

City: State: Zip:

Fax: E-mail:

Business/Corporation

Volunteer Project Evaluation

1. How did you find out about this activity and what prompted you to participate in this activity?
2. What has changed as a result of the volunteer's work efforts?
3. What did you like most about volunteering today and what would you change?
4. What did you learn most from today's activity?
5. Would you (and your family) or your company or youth group be interested in family volunteering projects in the future?
6. Was the project/activity accessible and well organized? Challenges? Improvements?

### Project Evaluation

Name of Project (if applicable):

Organization Sponsoring Project (if applicable):

Contact Name for Sponsoring Organization:

Address:

City: State: Zip:

Daytime Phone: Fax:

E-mail:

Approximately how many individuals volunteered from your organization:

If possible, please provide the approximate number of volunteers in the following age ranges:

0-5      6-12      13-18      19-30      31-60      61+

What went well?

What challenges did you face?

Suggestions for future projects:

Was the project/activity accessible and well organized? Challenges? Improvements?

# Step 8 Appendix: Reflecting on Activity

Almost all volunteer opportunities help to build stronger communities and connect people to each other, solving the problems of isolation and disconnection that cause so many of this nation's serious social problems.

You can help your volunteers to identify the healing effects of their work for their community and for themselves by building in opportunities for personal reflection during and after their volunteer service. For decades, effective youth service programs have included reflection to help turn a volunteer experience into a learning opportunity. Through reflection, young volunteers are given the time and space to examine their service, interpret their feelings and apply their experiences to broader community issues. Volunteers grow from service because they have made themselves aware of the impact they are having and seeing the change.

Reflection does not have to be a structured group activity. Be creative about including reflection opportunities throughout the service experience.

### Tips for Effective Reflection

- Allow time for reflection. Research shows that even a few extra seconds helps most people organize their thoughts.
- Directly relate reflection to service being done.
- Plan for reflection from the beginning of project planning. Be intentional about including reflection from the start.
- Reflection is a method of learning not therapy. It is simply not appropriate to dig into people's personal lives. Make sure people know that they are not expected to tell secrets or private feelings or facts about themselves.
- The best reflection isn't always planned reflection. Be flexible and prepared to capitalize on "teachable moments."
- By reflecting on their contributions, volunteers can feel an increased sense of personal power and take ownership for their work. As volunteers become more personally invested in the work, volunteer programs can benefit from increased participant retention and commitment. Ultimately, the agency will have improved programs and services and healthier volunteers.

## Sample reflection activities

- Evaluation—Add a few reflection questions to your written evaluation form, such as “How did people respond to you?”, “How does what you did today compare with anything you have done in the past?”, or “What advice would you give to someone doing this project for the first time?”
- Guest Book—Ask volunteers to sign your organization’s guest book before they leave. Let them know they are free to write anything they want about their service experience.
- Contribution Cards—Prepare a small card for each volunteer that includes information on how their service contributes to the mission of the organization and how they have helped the community. Link their work to broader community issues.
- Lunch Break—Provide a reflection opportunity during a meal break. Place background material on the social issues your organization addresses on the lunch tables. Provide a sample discussion question for volunteers to discuss at their table while they eat. Questions may include, “If you hadn’t gone today to do this service, what would have happened?” or “What could be done to solve the problem permanently?”
- Bumper Sticker—Tell volunteers that you would like them to help you think of an idea for a new bumper sticker slogan for your group’s projects. Ask them to write their ideas on a big sheet of paper with markers.

## Step Nine Appendix

- Research the causes or issues important to you. Look for a group that deals with issues about which you feel strongly.
- Be brave. If there is not a volunteer opportunity in your community around a community need you think is important, start your own project. Better yet, collaborate with a nonprofit or government volunteer program to address the need.
- Have fun. Expect both personal enjoyment and satisfaction from your volunteer efforts.
- Be a year-round volunteer! We all then to think more of those in need during the holidays; but volunteering is welcome and necessary all year.

This last section will help you take steps towards committing to an actual volunteer experience.

Actions:

- Contact a Volunteer Center (call 1-800-VOLUNTEER or visit [www.1800Volunteer.org](http://www.1800Volunteer.org)) or a service organization to find a listing of volunteer opportunities and

to learn about the volunteer organization.

- Call organizations that match your volunteer interests, abilities and schedule an appointment to meet with the organization's volunteer manager to determine how to get involved. Ask for a tour of the volunteer facility.
- Ensure that you have a good match between the volunteer organization and yourself before you volunteer. Feel free to "interview" the volunteer manager.
- Complete any paperwork (application, background check, etc.) needed in order to volunteer.
- [Add local volunteer opportunity information here.]

*We've culled these interesting tips from a variety of sources. To see the original resources visit: [www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org), [www.youthnoise.com/site/CDA/CDA\\_Page/0,1004,216,00.html](http://www.youthnoise.com/site/CDA/CDA_Page/0,1004,216,00.html), and [http://www.pointsoflight.org/programs/programs\\_nvwintra.htm](http://www.pointsoflight.org/programs/programs_nvwintra.htm)*

## So, You Want To Keep Volunteering?

You know that volunteering is an amazing experience! Maybe someone told you about a volunteer assignment they are really excited about, or you just completed work on a one-time community service project and are hooked on the great feelings that volunteering provides. But what next? You know you want to volunteer, but aren't sure about your next steps. This brochure will help you figure out your options.

## Step Nine Appendix

As you search out your next volunteer experience, here are some questions that can help you assess your volunteer expectations, skills, and needs.

### Questions:

- What am I interested in doing as a volunteer?
- Do I want to do something I'm good at? Do I want to volunteer in something related to my job?
- What do I want to learn about? Do I want to learn a new skill?
- How much time can I dedicate to volunteering? Do I want to volunteer on a daily, weekly, monthly, or episodic (on-time-event) basis?
- Do I have an area of expertise that would benefit an organization? Consider the skills you have to offer. If you enjoy outdoor work, have a knack for teaching, or just like working with people, look for volunteer work which incorporates these aspects of your personality and interests.
- Should I consider volunteering as a family. The experience can bring a family closer together and can introduce everyone in the family to skills

and experiences they've never before encountered. You can define your own family. It can be a nuclear family, a group of friends from work, or your bowling team.

- Would I volunteer in person, or be a volunteer on-line? Can I volunteer from home or work? If you have computer access and the necessary skills, some organizations offer volunteer work over the internet.
- If I'm volunteering away from home, how will I get to the volunteer location?

As you start to volunteer in your program of choice, it helps to have realistic expectations about the responsibilities and opportunities that will be available to you!

- Expect to be interviewed. Some volunteer positions require specific skills. You may be interviewed for your volunteer position, need to fill-out an application, and describe your qualifications. It is all a way for volunteer managers to make sure you have a positive volunteer job experience.

- Attend the orientation meeting. Informed volunteers are excellent volunteers.

### Tips for Volunteers

- Be flexible. It's hard to find the perfect fit right away.
- Be persistent. Volunteer coordinators can be very busy people. Call or e-mail back if you don't get a quick response to a query.
- Don't over-commit your schedule. Make sure the volunteer hours you want to give fit into your busy life.
- Be responsible. Show up on time, follow through with given assignments, and call if you have a conflict with a scheduled assignment.
- Go to training classes when they are offered. You will feel and be more prepared.
- Be patient. You may have to work your way through several different volunteer jobs before you get to the one you really want.

# Creating Group Projects

**Fax to:** 202-729-8105  
**Mail to:** 1400 I St., NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20005  
Attention: CGP Feedback Form

Please let us know what you think about the publication.

How did you receive this copy of the publication? Check all that apply  
From a Volunteer Center \_\_\_ From The Points of Light Foundation\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_

Did you share the publication with any other programs or groups?  Yes  No

What member of other programs or groups: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of programs or groups: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which materials were most useful? Why?

Which materials were least useful? Why?

Do you have any recommendations for the next edition?

Use this space to add any additional comments, complaints, or suggestions you may have about the publication. We appreciate and welcome all feedback.

# Notes

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# Notes

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# Notes

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**With appreciation to the following Points of Light Foundation staff and the following departments for their input and expertise:**

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## Partners

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