

Day of Caring Best Practices Guidelines for Volunteer Team Leaders

Prior to Project Selection:

- Recruit a manageable number of volunteers to serve on your team
- Set up a meeting with volunteers to discuss and document:
 - Names, email addresses and emergency contacts for each volunteer
 - Interests of each volunteer (ie. types of projects, specific social issue, geographic region)
 - Skills of each volunteer
 - Limitations or special needs of each volunteer (physical and dietary)
- As needed, Team Leaders should attend a project selection and best practices workshop provided by United Way

Project Selection:

- Search for and select projects that are:
 - Appropriate for their volunteers skill set and interests
 - Require the same or larger amount of volunteers as on their team
- Input the names of volunteers and email addresses, if appropriate
- Email the nonprofit project coordinator to schedule a site visit
- Prepare a list of questions to be addressed during the site visit

During Site Visit:

- Utilize the project plan form provided by United Way
- Discuss the following with the nonprofit project coordinator:
 - Specific details of the project
 - Priority of tasks and anticipated timeline for completion
 - Limitations, restrictions or special needs of volunteers (physical or dietary)
 - Materials list (i.e. what the nonprofit will have and what volunteers might be able to bring)
 - Bad weather plans
 - Dress code
 - Lunch options
 - Parking for volunteers
 - Meeting place and time
 - Exchange key contact and emergency contact information
 - Potential risks and safety plan arrangements
 - Locations of first aid kits and restrooms
- Obtain directions to the project site

After Site Visit:

- Conduct a follow-up meeting with volunteer team to:
 - Discuss and distribute information obtained during site visit (i.e. directions, copy of filled out project plan form)
 - Discuss tasks and potential assignments for individual volunteers
 - Discuss materials that volunteers may bring
 - Discuss any risk factors and appropriate precautions (i.e. sunscreen, hats, bug spray etc.)
 - Confirm meeting time and location

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On Day of Caring:

- Bring a list of volunteers and emergency contacts for each
- Ensure volunteers check-in at designated meeting place
- Ensure volunteers sign a photo release form, as appropriate
- Ensure volunteers know the location of safety equipment, phone and first aid kits
- Check in with project coordinator and delegate tasks to volunteers
- Maintain contact with volunteers and nonprofit project coordinator throughout the day to assess:
 - Progress of project
 - Need for breaks
 - Engagement of volunteers in project (ie. Restless, bored, involved)
 - Need for reassignments
 - Need for alternative projects
- At lunch, sit with other volunteers and team leaders to share experiences and discuss the plan for the afternoon
- At the end of the day, bring volunteers together with nonprofit project coordinator for a debriefing:
 - Identify what worked
 - Identify what didn't work
 - Plans to complete unfinished projects, if appropriate
 - Ensure all appropriate forms are signed and turned in to project coordinators

After Day of Caring:

- Conduct a meeting with volunteers to discuss and document:
 - What worked
 - What didn't work and how to avoid it in future
 - Plans to complete unfinished projects, if appropriate
- Complete the on-line Day of Caring evaluation provided by United Way Program Coordinator and pass along to volunteers who may not have received it.
- Contact United Way Program Coordinator with any specific concerns or issues that arose as a result of the Day of Caring