

7 Practices of Highly Helpful Volunteers

with Partners in Hope and Beyond

- 1. Treat People Like People, Not Projects** Projects are rewarding, enjoyable, and can be very helpful. Who doesn't like a positive outcome, a final product, or a "look at what I just did with my last 4 hours," story? It's just important to remember that people aren't something to fix, but rather, we are made in the very image of God to draw closer to, be present with, and walk alongside. We are all called to love and serve one another, not complete each other.

The person(s) you're serving, and the other volunteers have feelings, intrinsic worth, and a need for community versus the project you're doing that has a punch list, market price, and no emotional needs.

"Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor." Psalm 8:5

- 2. Focus on the Process, Not the Outcome** Your volunteer role is part of a process; the task is not the goal! Tasks are designed to help meet a physical need, share a burden, lighten a load; encourage and motivate you and the person you're serving; and facilitate meaningful connections. Process says, "I am helping a person who's on their own journey", and "I get the chance to make a positive impact today".

Process Focused - is this you?

- "How exciting – I get to be part of something bigger than me, bigger than this moment in time!"
- "I'm going to enjoy putting my all into this!"
- "I just love trying and learning new things!"

Outcome Focused - or is this more like you?

- "I hope the other volunteers know what they're doing."
- "I'm going to get this project done in no time!"
- "I'm concerned I won't know what do to."

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

- 3. Commit to Being Part of a Team**

- Work well with others.
- Understand the value and necessity of teamwork.
- Encourage others to try new things.
- Be friendly, approachable, and able to listen to differing points of view.

- Contribute your talents and skills while appreciating someone else's.

“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor.”
Ecclesiastes 4:9

4. Consider the Power of Prayer We believe that when you ask God to give you love for a neighbor, he can. When you ask for patience, he provides opportunity to practice. When you ask him to be near, his presence sweeps in and surrounds you with his peace and strength. Prayer also opens a space in your heart for God's guidance in how you can best help another person.

- We pray that God will prepare your heart and use you to benefit others.
- We pray that God will work in the life of person you are serving.
- Will you pray *with* the person you're serving, whenever possible, or offer to pray for them?

“And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.” 1 John 5:14

5. Choose Their Thoughts Wisely

Natural thoughts a volunteer may have:

- “I want them to deserve my involvement.”
- “I want them to appreciate my efforts on their behalf.”
- “I want to feel my time and effort are not wasted.”

Higher thoughts a volunteer may have:

- “I want to accept them for who they are, not who I think they should be.”
- “I will feel good about my efforts no matter what.”
- “I might not ever know just how important my involvement has been.”

Thoughts the person you are helping may have:

- “I don't want them to judge me, my way of life, or my situation.”
- “I want them to respect me and my property.”
- “I want them to understand and care about what's happening in my world.”

* In this regard, you may be the recipient of “overshare”; the person you are serving gives you more personal information than you were expecting. If you have concerns because of your interaction, please contact staff.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8-9

6. Maintain an Attitude of Gratitude This means making it a conscious effort to express appreciation for your opportunity to be of service, to focus on the bigger picture, and find something good amidst any situation.

- **Be grateful** that trust and responsibility have been put into your hands.
- **Be thankful** that you get to experience the joy and satisfaction of making a difference in someone’s life.
- **Be humbled** by what you have gained and learned through the generous invitation to show up for someone at their most vulnerable time of need.

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." 1 Thessalonians 5:18

7. Express Genuine Care and Compassion

- **Be Kind** - Kindness is the joy of satisfying the needs of another person before our own; it means putting the other person first.
- **Be Patient** - Patience is the ability to accept others’ imperfections, recognizing that we are all in the process of transformation.
- **Be Courteous** - Courtesy means treating others as personal friends, recognizing their value as a person. The courteous person recognizes the value of relationship.
- **Refrain** from giving unsolicited advice - Its disrespectful and presumptive to insert your opinions and ideas when they may not be wanted.
- **Follow through** with what you say - say yes when you mean yes and no when you mean no, and keep momentary awkwardness from getting in the way of being a trustworthy person.

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.
Romans 12:10