

Types of volunteering

Family Volunteering

Today, there are many different definitions of "Family". Aunts, uncles, children grandchildren grandparents, foster parents, godparents, step parents, single parents, special family friends, mentors, pets – what you call family, we call family. Everyone can participate.

Family volunteering strengthens families, connects and strengthens communities, it helps create a new generation of volunteers and teaches the value of community service to our young people. When you volunteer as a family you also teach children to appreciate cultural and social differences in their community; you teach them kindness, empathy, respect and tolerance; best of all volunteering as a family is fun!

My Family interested in volunteering (PDF)

How can my organization accommodate family volunteers (PDF)

How to get involved

Here are some simple steps to help you get involved in family volunteering:

First identify what your family cares about in the community by asking yourself these questions:

- What issues in the community does your family see as critical (ex. poverty, education, etc.) List as many as you can.
- Of these issues, which ones concern or interest your family the most? List three.
- As a family, what activity would you like to do to make a difference?
- What kind of time can you commit?
- If you want to create your own opportunities, how will you begin?
- Who will make the contact on behalf of the family?

Addition points to consider

- Does your family have the time to volunteer right now? Perhaps a different time of the year would be better for everyone?
- If you have young children, is the volunteer opportunity in the type of environment you feel comfortable exposing your children to? Is it safe?
- Do you agree with and support the mission of the organization you would like to volunteer at?
- What is the job description for the volunteer position?
- Is there a time commitment for the volunteer position?
- Who is going to be the contact person with the volunteer agency?

- If you are raising money, clothing, etc. from home for a not-for-profit agency, how will you ensure people that the money and goods will in fact be going to a good cause?
- Does everyone in the family want to volunteer?

Now you can look at more specific ways to volunteer to best meet the needs of your family. If you need flexibility and creative volunteering options you may want to consider **Volunteering from home.**

Ideas:

Bottle drives, litter pick up, helping neighbors, assisting seniors inside and outside the home, window washing, fence painting, yard clean up, garage cleaning, organize a fund raiser (lemon-aid stand, baked goods, clothes, bottles, recycling), garden planting, read books and letters to blind seniors, organize to beautify a neighborhood park.

Next Steps

Agree on the project and organization that is the best fit for your family, contact the organization to advise them of your intentions, beginning the planning of the activity, execute it as scheduled. Don't forget to have fun and remember to evaluate the activity afterwards to ensure that all the family enjoyed it.

If your family is eager to meet new people and get out into the community you may want to **volunteering away from home.**

Ideas:

Helping at a seniors centre, caring for animals at a local shelter, computer instruction, arts & crafts, games, socializing, plant care and various activities.

Next steps

Agree on which organization and/or project is the best fit for your family and contact them. Select the best time to volunteer. Follow the intake steps that your selected organization has for their volunteers. This may include an application, an orientation, an interview and possibly some other form of screening, such as a police check. You may want to have a post project family evaluation meeting to review the activity, most importantly have fun!!

Use our [Searchable Database](#) to find the right opportunity for your family, or phone us at 265-5633

INFO FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Benefits

- Increases your volunteer base
- Creates stronger ties with the communities you serve
- Provides more awareness of community issues
- May create life-long volunteers
- Gives you a better sense of community needs
- Families are strengthened, which ultimately leads to stronger communities.

How to include Families

How do we include family volunteers into our programs

Before you start recruiting family volunteers you need be sure that you are incorporating all of the components of the volunteer management process into your programs.

- Planning
- Job Design
- Risk Assessment
- Recruitment
- Intake
- Orientation/Training
- Supervision/Evaluation
- Recognition
- Administration

Questions to think about

Some questions to ask:

- Would individuals throughout your organization see the importance of having a family volunteer program?
- What would be some of the staff's needs in implementing a family program?
- Do you have a minimum age requirement for volunteers?
- Will the staff have to make compromises in order to accommodate children younger than its policy states? List compromises.
- Identify some of the volunteer opportunities that exist in your organization that families could do in their homes.
- List three activities or programs that you currently have that families could become involved in quite easily.

- Do you believe that all volunteers at all levels feel respected and valued by your organization?
- What is the demographic makeup of families in your community?
- Do your publications and other external materials contain images of various family units? Are family images of traditional families?
- Does your volunteer base reflect the demographic makeup of your community?
- Who would be your partners in the area of family volunteerism?
- What would you do to develop relationships and partnerships around the issue of family volunteerism?
- How would you interview families?
- What would you have to do to ensure that your organization's insurance covered families?

Policies to consider

- Age
- Risk and Liability
- Screening
- Training
- Supervision
- Discipline
- Safety & Rules
- Consent forms and liability waivers

Family Project ideas

Families may be interested in working from their own home or possibly they will want to work at your organization. Here are a variety of different projects that may be suitable for Family Volunteers who would like to volunteer for your organization.

Arts/Crafts

- Sew children's clothes for a shelter
- Knit mittens for a homeless shelter
- Cards to be sent/delivered or presented to Seniors

Animals

- Walk animals at animals shelters
- Organize a food drive for a local animal shelter

Fundraising

- Bottle recycling
- Bake sale

- Lemonade stand

Miscellaneous

- Painting projects
- Clean-up
- Washing windows

Submit your opportunity

Families Volunteering Together offers short-term volunteer activities for families. We market your opportunities by posting submissions on our website, and interested families register through your organization. You are also expected to recruit family volunteers through your own network.

In order to submit a volunteer opportunity, your organization must be a member of Volunteer Calgary. Please log on to the [Member Portal](#), for more information. *Remember to click on "Family"

More Resources

- **Families Volunteering Together consultations** are available by phoning Volunteer Calgary at 265-5633.
- **Additional resources on family volunteering can be found in the Volunteer Calgary Library (hyper link to library)**