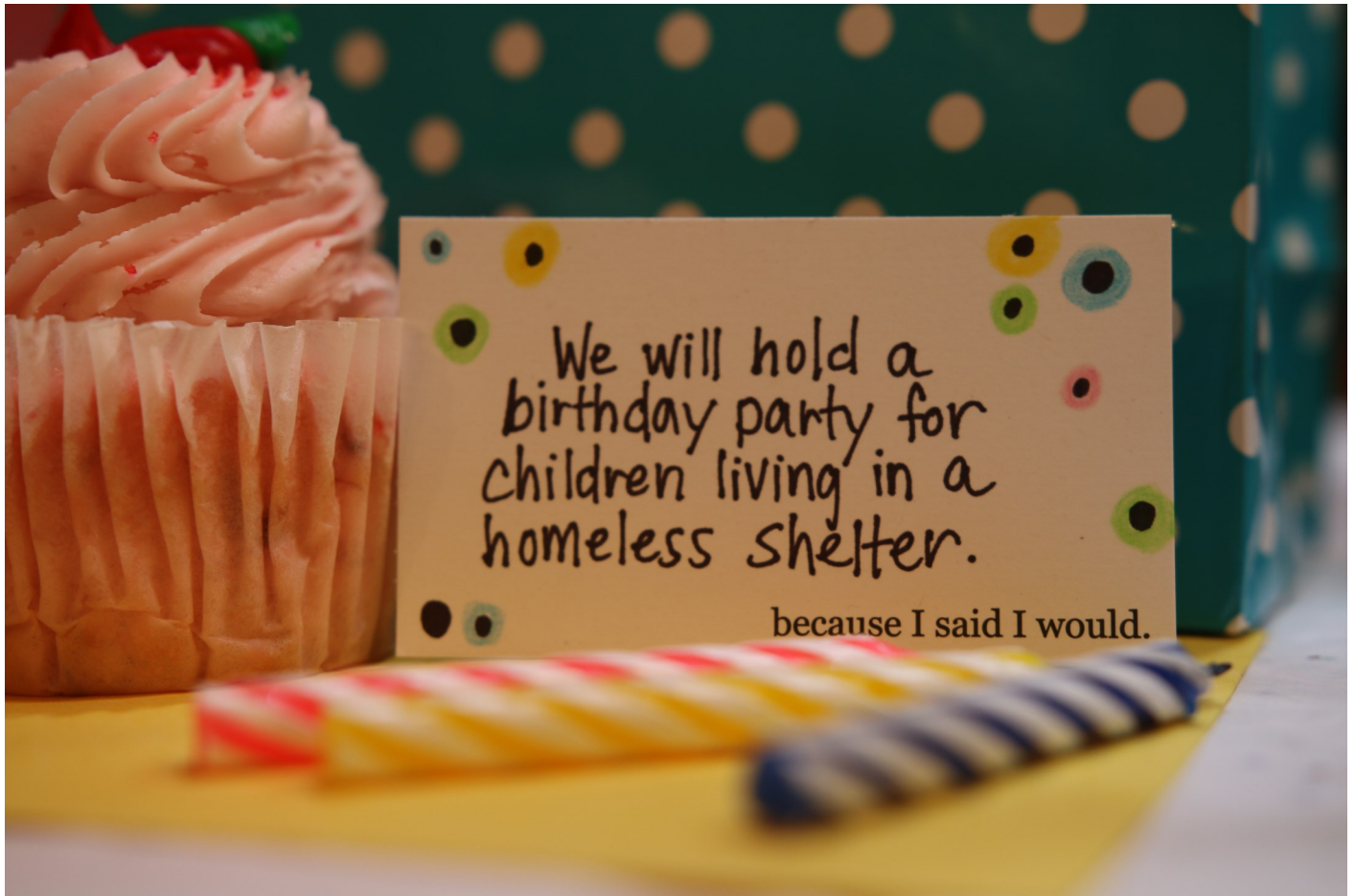


Birthday Party for Homeless Children:

A Volunteer Project Plan



A step-by-step guide to help you give back on your own terms!

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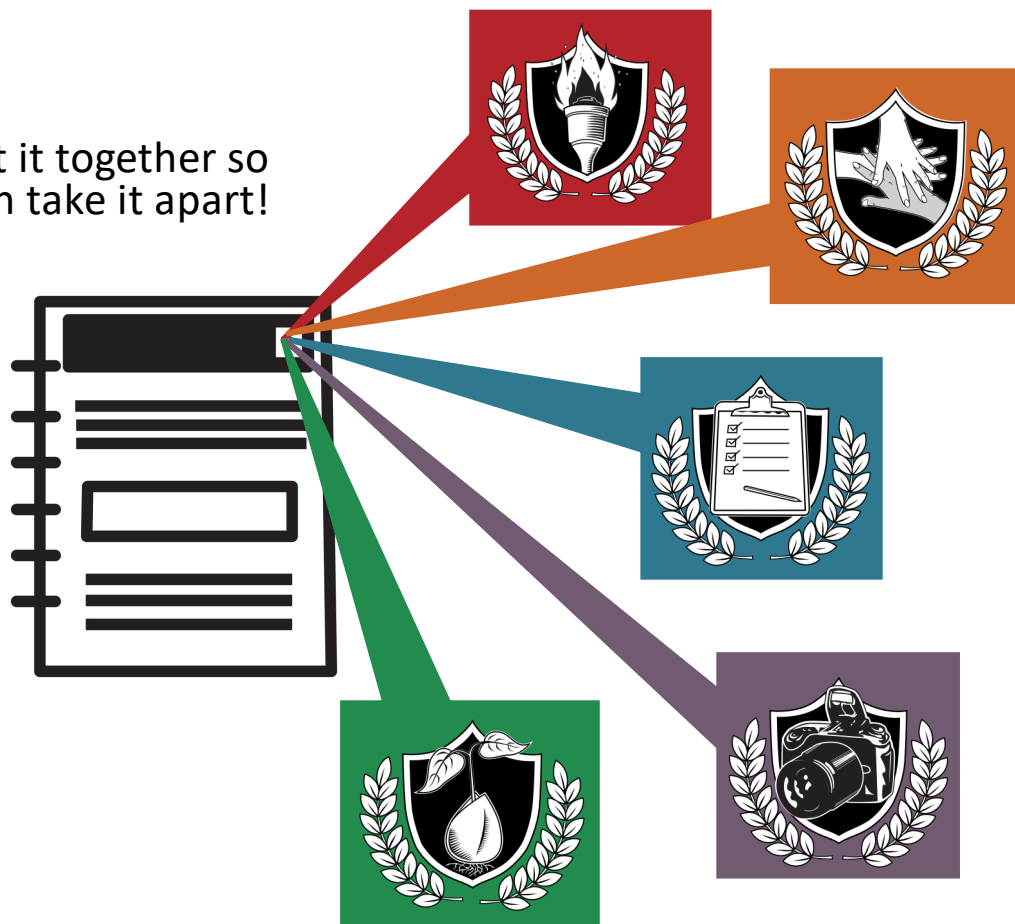
About Volunteer Project Plans

A Volunteer Project Plan is a step-by-step guide to complete a service project in your community.

All around us, there are opportunities to help our neighbors and our communities. However, it can be overwhelming trying to figure out what to do and where to start. A Volunteer Project Plan is the answer to this dilemma. We provide the tools and information you will need, including easy-to-use checklists.

All you have to do is distribute the checklists and other resources amongst members of your team according to their designated roles. The pages needed for each of these roles are indicated using a unique icon in the upper left corner.

**We put it together so
you can take it apart!**

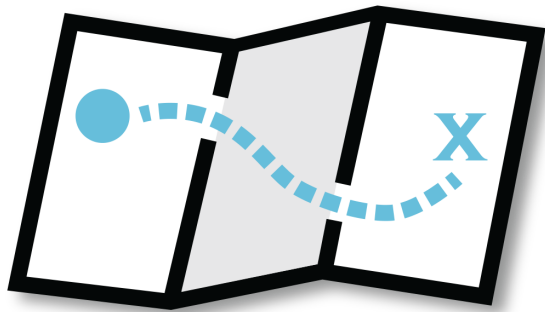


Please review the [commitment decision](#) page to help you decide if this project is right for you.

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The Issue:

The National Center on Family Homelessness reports that about 2.5 million—or about 1 in every 30 children-- are now homeless in America.¹ Family homelessness has been growing since the 1980s when this social problem re-emerged for the first time since the Great Depression.¹ Sadly, we have made little progress—if any—since this time. Over the past 25 years, rates of family homelessness went up as affordable housing options went down.¹ U.S Census data from 2010 showed a record-breaking 1 million plus homeless children enrolled in U.S public schools for the first time ever.² From 2006 to 2013, the number of homeless children went up by another one million children.^{1,2} By the next year, in 2014, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reported that 60 % -- or 129, 756--of all homeless family members on a single night in January—were children.¹



The Plan:

Call a homeless shelter in your neighborhood and obtain permission to host ONE birthday party for all of the children in the facility. Put on a party, turn up the music, and socialize with people that you may not have had a chance to get to know—yet! Get ready...it's about to be a good time!

The Impact:

Homelessness is detrimental to a child's development in many ways, from severe hunger and nutritional deficits to mental and physical health problems, learning difficulties and disruptions in friendships and routines.^{1,3} In addition to being hungry and sick, these children also worry a great deal, and perpetually feel unsafe.¹ All of this 'toxic stress' can lead to actual physical changes in the brain that will affect emotional self-regulation and cognitive skills, among other things¹; young children are particularly vulnerable to this phenomenon.² Socializing, on the other hand, actually enhances mental functioning and lowers stress and anxiety.⁴ Rituals like birthday parties can help children feel a sense of 'normalcy' and even excitement in the midst of the chaos of a housing crisis. It's a fun and easy way to uplift them, and you, at the same time!



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Commitment Decision Page



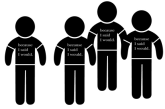
Please consider if you are able to do the following before making this commitment.



Prep Time: 5-8 hours
Service Time: 2-3 hours
Total time: 7-11 hours

\$\$\$
BUDGET

You will need:



A planning team of 4-10 people who will give 5-8 hours each



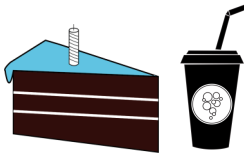
Party Supplies



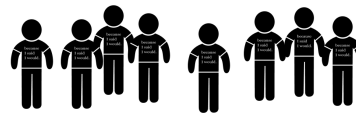
Photography equipment



A willing foster home to partner with



Cake & refreshments



Volunteers who will give 2-3 hours of time each

Planning Steps:

1. Arrange 2 meetings with the Leadership Team
 - A planning meeting– What option can we execute? Set deadlines, secure location, time, and date for the project, delegate leadership roles
 - A status and update meeting– What tasks are completed on each leader's "Before Day of Service" checklist
2. Call a homeless shelter and obtain permission to host 1 birthday party for all of the children in the facility
3. Choose a theme for your party
4. Get the necessary approvals from the facility
5. Secure a location for the party. You will likely need to host the party under the supervision of facility staff. Be sure to find out the regulations of the facility.
6. Coordinate with the host of the selected location to determine a final date and time
7. Spread the word: recruit additional volunteers to help you plan and host the party
8. Find 1 volunteer for every 3 people you are serving. For example, you will need 10 volunteers for 30 people

Serve:

Celebrate

Hold the party and have a great time!



3. Report

Return your completed Impact Report form



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Overview of Leadership Team Roles

Project Leader



- Oversees the planning, organizing and execution of the project including reporting impact
- Ensures that planning tasks are completed by coordinating with the other roles below*

Project Co-Leader



- Helps ensure that nothing 'falls through the cracks'
- Serves as a backup for other roles as needed

Logistics Leader



- Works with Volunteer Project Leader to identify needed equipment & supplies
- Orders or procures any supplies, food, or other materials
- Brings above to the location and sets up before the event

Photojournalist Leader



- Promotes the event
- Captures the experience to share success and inspire volunteerism
- Ensures that policies and personal preferences regarding photography and posting to social media are strictly enforced

Fundraising Leader



- Works with the Volunteer Project Leader to determine if additional funds or supplies are needed
- Finds and collects donations if necessary

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PROJECT LEADER SECTION



- Oversees the planning, organizing and execution of the project including reporting impact
- Ensures that planning tasks are completed by coordinating with the other roles

Project Leader Checklist



Before

BEFORE

Getting Started

- ☐ If desired, review the [adaptations page](#) for ideas to scale this project up or down
- ☐ Have a planning meeting to divide roles and coordinate other details
 - ☐ You may need to have a second status and update meeting to check in
 - ☐ If necessary, work with **Fundraising Leader** to procure extra funds or equipment PRIOR to setting a date for the project

Supplies and Permissions

- ☐ Coordinate with **Logistics** and **Fundraising Leaders** to obtain [equipment/supplies](#)
- ☐ Contact a local homeless shelter to partner with and get necessary approvals
- ☐ Research and identify cultural sensitivities and compelling statistics. Add these to the Impact Presentation

Near the day of service

- ☐ Hold your second status and update meeting if needed. What tasks are completed on each person's "Before" checklist. Are we on track? Are there any unexpected roadblocks?
- ☐ Double check with the **Logistics Leader** that all equipment and supplies are acquired and copies of 'Day of Service' materials (including Promise Cards) are packed up and ready to go

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Project Leader Checklist



During

DURING

- ☐ Give the [Impact](#) and [Safety & Training](#) presentations to volunteers before the Party
- ☐ Ask each volunteer to complete a Promise Card expressing his or her commitment to this project...and then collect them
- ☐ Be the main point of contact and oversee the other roles to ensure everyone is on track
- ☐ Cut the cake, and strategically coordinate how the cake and party bags will be distributed
- ☐ At the end of the day, return Promise Cards to their respective writers



After

AFTER

- ☐ Make sure the **Leadership Team** has completed their after service responsibilities
- ☐ Ask the **Fundraising Leader** for the collected information for the Impact Report
- ☐ Complete and send the [Impact Report](#) to *because I said I would**
- ☐ Work with the **Fundraising Leader** to thank any donors
- ☐ Thank your team and remind them of the impact of their hard work!
- ☐ Thank the partners at the facility where you held the party

*Items can be sent to projects@becauseisaidiwould.com

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Adaptation Options



- You can adjust (or scale) the project “up” or “down” if desired.
- Simply adapt the information and checklists provided to tailor this project to the interests of your volunteers and the specific needs of your community.

Scale It Up

Refugee Bowling

All refugees are seeking safety, freedom, and the chance to reclaim futures for themselves and their families. Starting over in a new place can be scary, but opening doors to new possibilities starts with navigating a new culture and strengthening ties to the community. This option intertwines cultures and demonstrates how every person has equal value, and everyone deserves a chance to have fun! The global family is strengthened when all of humanity is recognized. Before executing this party, take some time to learn different conversation starters and understand the cultural norms of the refugees. This will help break down the barriers and allow for a good time. Connect with a refugee organization to find out the steps you need to take to get everyone under one roof. This option requires a little bit more planning but it is well worth it!

Senior Living Party

Parties take a lot of planning, but this option is more simple to do. Youthful energy and enthusiasm, mixed with party hats, music, and games is all it takes to put smiles on the faces of senior living residents. Choose a theme and call a senior living facility near you to arrange a date and time for your group to throw a party. After getting permission from a facility, it is up to you to follow the facility guidelines, gather some friends, pick up some decorations, and celebrate like age is nothing but a number!

Scale It Down

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Impact Presentation Guide



Use this presentation guide to share the importance of this project before you begin. It is important that everyone understands the impact that their efforts will make. A motivated team works harder!

The number of homeless children in the United States has been growing since the 1980s.² **The National Center on Family Homelessness reports that about 2.5 million—or about 1 in every 30 children-- are now homeless in the U.S.¹**

The causes²

Economic forces such as stagnant wages, housing inflation and lack of affordable childcare contribute to the prevalence of child and family homelessness. The National Center on Family Homelessness lists the following additional causes:

- High rates of child and family poverty
- Continuing impacts of recession
- Challenges of single parenting
- Trauma and domestic violence



2.5 Million
=
1 out of 30
children

Number of Homeless Children in the U.S.

The Impact on Children

Children experiencing homelessness are impacted in almost every area of their lives. They are often severely hungry, sick, and worried.^{1,2} They are two to four times more likely to have mental health struggles than so-called 'poor' children of the same age who are housed.¹ Also, homeless children often experience:

- Exposure to domestic violence²
- Significant behavior and social problems⁴
- Slower development than peers¹
- Academic struggles¹
- Disruption in friendships and routines⁴

As you can see, homelessness leads to many stressors, and the cumulative affect of this can cause actual physical changes in the brain that affect cognitive skills and the ability to regulate emotions.¹ Therefore, a party is likely a very welcome reprieve and distraction during these trying times.

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Safety & Training Presentation



Prior to the event, research the cultural 'norms' of the people you are serving. Cultural differences are not just between countries. Each community, family, school, workplace, and person, has a culture of its own. The more we know about the culture of others, the more open-minded we become. With understanding, comes respect.

While we celebrate today, it is critical that we are aware of ourselves and those around us. Every conversation is a cross-cultural dialogue so... we must speak and act in ways that convey respect and promote understanding.

Every interaction is a chance to grow but only when you take assumptions out of the equation and actively listen to the stories of other people. We must all choose our words carefully in order to communicate effectively at the party.

Ways to increase effective communication:

- Using "I" statements when sharing experiences, feelings and opinions
- As a speaker, consider how your individual communication style affects others. Think to yourself, what is my tone like?
- Be careful when using sarcasm. Sarcasm is not recognized and understood by everyone in the same way.
- Share the floor and allow others to speak if you have already spoken.
- Avoid generalizing your view as being the universal truth.
- Withhold personal judgements both verbally and expressively. Your face has the power to share exactly how you are feeling and thinking so please, be self-aware.
- When talking with children, try kneeling or sitting down to be at eye-level with each other.
- Practice active listening: occasionally re-state what you heard to let the person know you are really paying attention to what they are saying

Today, make an effort to interact with someone you do not know. Speak with them, learn from them, and leave with more of an understanding of them. If someone expresses an idea, opinion, or point of view that is new to you or different from your own, try to see it from the other person's perspective.

Everyone walks a different path and it is not up to you to say whether that path is a good one or a bad one. It is okay to disagree, but it is not okay to shame, blame, or make someone feel any less than you. If you do not understand something, ask for clarification. Come to the party with the intent to learn, rather than the intent to control.

Real dialogue can be messy, but messiness is a sign of authenticity and honesty, and practice will increase your compassion and ability to communicate with others. Do not be overly concerned about having the perfect conversation, just take it upon yourself to follow these guidelines and be self-aware.

Now, IT'S TIME TO PARTY!

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Impact Report



1. Tally up the impact of your project
2. Share the results on social media to inspire others to volunteer
3. Send this form to: projects@becauseisaidiwould.com



Promises
matter!

Volunteer Hours:

Estimated total hours of planning time

_____ Hours

Estimated total number of day-of-service hours
including prep time, time spent at the party, and wrap up

+
_____ Hours

Total number of volunteer hours for the project

=
_____ Hours

Cost Analysis:

Estimated savings from donated equipment and supplies

_____ Dollars
+

Total cost of purchased supplies and equipment

=

Total cost of project

_____ Dollars

Impact:

Total cost of project

_____ Dollars
/

Total number of party guests

= Party guests

Cost per party guest

_____ \$/Party guests

PROJECT CO-LEADER SECTION



- Helps ensure that nothing 'falls through the cracks'
- Serves as a backup for other roles as needed

Project Co- Leader Checklist



Before

BEFORE

- ☐ Work with the **Project Leader** to make sure everyone has completed their 'Before' service tasks
- ☐ Ensure that nothing falls through the cracks
- ☐ Provide backup for other roles as needed



During

DURING

- ☐ Work with the **Project Leader** and other Leadership Team roles to make sure everything is running smoothly
- ☐ Ensure that nothing falls through the cracks
- ☐ Provide backup for other roles as needed



After

AFTER

- ☐ Work with the **Project Leader** and other Leadership Team roles to make sure things run smoothly
- ☐ Ensure that nothing falls through the cracks
- ☐ Provide backup for other roles as needed

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LOGISTICS LEADER SECTION



- Works with Project Leader to identify needed equipment & supplies
- Orders or procures any supplies, food, or other materials
- Brings above to the location and sets up before the event

Logistics Leader Checklist



Before

BEFORE

Get equipment and supplies

- ☐ Work with the **Project Leader** to determine [equipment & supplies](#) needed & quantities for each
- ☐ Make copies of the needed materials including [Promise Cards](#) (and cut them out)

Confirm the place and pack-up

- ☐ Once your team has a location —find out where to park and enter the building, and a description of the room/space where the event will occur (if applicable)
- ☐ Obtain information about rules, regulations, policies and other considerations that may influence how the project is done (including photography)
- ☐ Just prior to the Day of Service, make sure the equipment and supplies (including photocopies and Promise Cards) are packed up and ready to go



During

DURING

Set-up and volunteer sign-in

- ☐ Set up the registration table (or clipboards) and set out volunteer role checklists
- ☐ Help volunteers sign-in and select a role to start with. See Blank Role Matrix.

Oversee the equipment

- ☐ Find a volunteer to help hand out supplies if needed
- ☐ Work with the **Project Leader** to coordinate other needs as they arise
- ☐ Continually ask volunteers if they need anything– bathroom breaks? Water?
- ☐ Make sure volunteers have something to do at all times; rotate people as needed. See sample Role Matrix.
- ☐ Verify that all equipment and supplies are returned
- ☐ Oversee packing and cleaning up—leave nothing behind!



After

AFTER

- ☐ Return any borrowed or unused supplies
- ☐ Let the **Project Leader** know of any donations so that a personalized thank you can be made

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Equipment & Supplies Checklist



Try to get as much of your equipment and supplies donated as possible. Let organizations, friends, and others know that you are trying to help your community through independent volunteerism! Another great way to acquire discounted supplies in bulk is purchasing from a wholesale party supply store.

Number of Volunteers	5	10	20	50	100
Number of party guests	15	30	60	150	300
Number of sheet cakes	1/2	1	2	5	10
Length of party in hours	1	2	2.5	3	3.5

Don't forget!

- Registration Table
- Role Assignments
- Knife to cut cake
- Serving Spatula
- Water
- Surveys

	Cake	Every good party has a cake! Contact your local grocery store and ask for either a discount or a donated cake.
	Plates, forks, napkins	Enough for everyone
	Balloons	Mix it up! Big, small helium filled. Balloons are a key sign that a party is going on. Make sure to check about latex allergies first)
	Decorations	Choose a theme and decorate the party space with streamers, party poppers, and more.
	Age/Culturally appropriate Activity Stations	Crafts, face painting, board games, and active field games such as relay races, bowling, other activities popular with the group.
	Party Bags	one for everyone party guest (volunteers not included). Make these prior to the event. fill them up with little trinkets. It does not need to be anything fancy, just a small something for the guests to enjoy and remember the event by.
	Photo booth	It is illegal to take a picture of someone and use it for personal benefit. However, with facility permission, you can use a polaroid camera and take pictures of the guests as long as you do not keep them and give the photo to the rightful owner. Set up a backdrop and offer fun props where party guests can come and capture the moment.
	Music	Play appropriate music and liven up the party!

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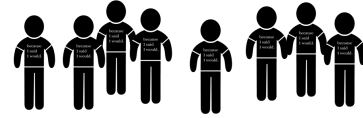
Volunteer Roles & Responsibilities



Copy. Print. and Cut along the dotted line. Distribute roles and responsibilities to all the volunteers. **Make a similar checklist for those with a specialty activity role.**

Greeters & registration

- ☐ Sign-in
- ☐ Locate the bathroom and fire exits
- ☐ Introduce yourself to the people at your station
- ☐ Help volunteers sign-in and direct them to their stations
- ☐ Take a picture of yourself, post it to social media, and spread awareness using the hashtag #becauseisaidiwould



Refreshment table

- ☐ Sign-in
- ☐ Locate the bathroom and fire exits
- ☐ Introduce yourself to the people at your station
- ☐ Set out drinks and snacks. Refill as needed.
- ☐ Set out paper plates, napkins and utensils
- ☐ Take a picture of yourself, post it to social media, and spread awareness using the



Decorators

- ☐ Sign-in
- ☐ Locate the bathroom and fire exits
- ☐ Introduce yourself to the people at your station
- ☐ Hang streamers, balloons and banners as desired
- ☐ Take a picture of yourself, post it to social media, and spread awareness using the hashtag #becauseisaidiwould



Role Matrix

The chart below is to ensure that volunteers know what they are suppose to be doing throughout the event. Fill out the Role Matrix and assign volunteers to a station. Assign the number of volunteers to each station that seems most appropriate. These assignments will be designated to the volunteers as they arrive and sign-in at the registration table. The volunteers will then write down their assignments on the back of their roles & responsibilities checklist.

Floater– the floater will fill in the gaps of stations that need an extra set of hands, as well as jump in when others needs to use the restroom, get a snack, get some water, etc. If there are not enough volunteers to monitor stations, the **Leadership Team** is responsible for filling in.

	1:30pm-2:00pm	2:00pm-2:30pm	3:00pm-3:30pm	3:30pm-4:00pm	4:00pm-4:30pm
Station 1:					
Station 2:					
Station 3:					
Station 4:					
Station 5:					
Station 6:					
Station 7:					
Station 8:					
Station 9:					

Role Matrix Example

	1:30pm-2:00pm Set-up	2:00pm-2:30pm Party Begins	3:00pm-3:30pm Party Time	3:30pm-4:00pm Cake/Party bag handout	4:00pm-4:30pm Breakdown/ Clean-up
Decorations	Laurie Kevin	Dominic Amanda	Alex Chris	ALL HANDS ON DECK	ALL HANDS ON DECK
Registration Table	Alex Chris	Laurie Kevin	Dominic Amanda		
Craft Station	Dominic Aman	Alex Chris	Laurie Kevin		
Face Paint Station	Erin Jacob	Mary Jamal	Cassie Matt		
Photo Booth Station	Cassie Matt	Erin Jacob	Mary Jamal		
Video Game Station	Mary Jamal	Cassie Matt	Erin Jacob		
Relay Race Station	Linda Nick	Rachelle Danny	Carlos Lucy		
Food/Water Station	Carlos Lucy	Linda Nick	Rachelle Danny		
Floater	Rachelle Danny	Carlos Lucy	Linda Nick		



Instructions for using a Promise Card:

- Write your promise to complete this project on the card
- Give the card to the Volunteer Project Leader
- Fulfill your promise
- Get your card back. Keep it as a reminder that you are a person of your word!

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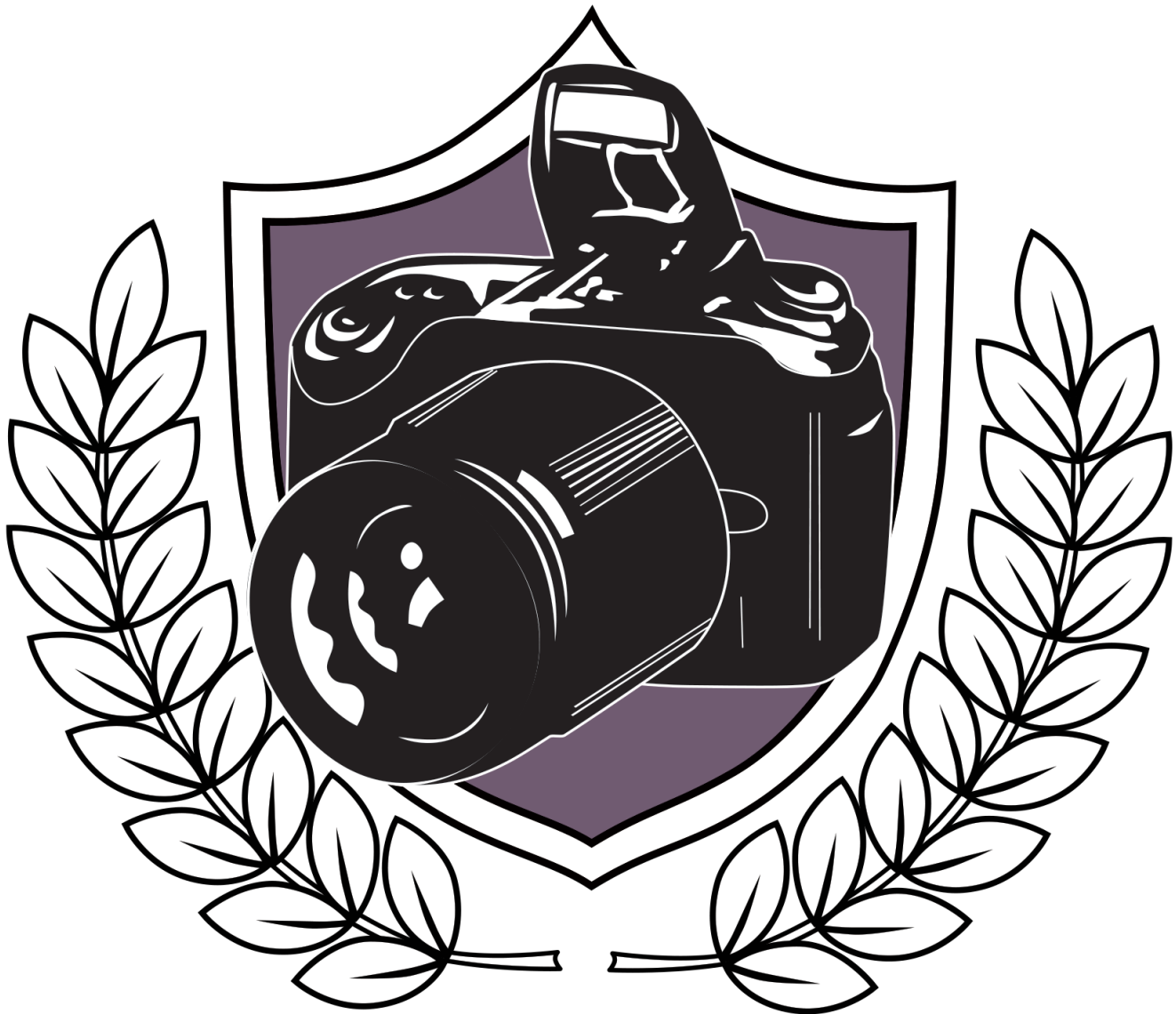
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PHOTOJOURNALIST LEADER SECTION



- Promotes the event
- Captures the experience to share success and inspire volunteerism
- Ensures that policies and personal preferences regarding photography and posting to social media are strictly enforced

Photojournalist Leader Checklist



A picture is worth a thousand words. Capture the moment and share the impact volunteering can make!

Remember: depending on location and the person you are recognizing, the rules and regulations of photography may vary. Make sure to ask if the person is comfortable having his or her picture taken.



Before

BEFORE

Promote the Event

- ☐ Recruit additional volunteers for the Day of Service; advertise the project using flyers and on social media, including the roles needed on the day of service
- ☐ Update and give flyers to the facility to help recruit seniors (see appendix)
- ☐ Contact local newspapers, news stations, and magazines (if applicable)

Prepare your equipment

- ☐ Charge batteries for your camera/s & ensure your phone is charged, and check that you have extra batteries and/or chargers
- ☐ Pack up your photography/ recording equipment
- ☐ Check with **Logistics** to understand the rules of what can and cannot be captured



During

DURING

- ☐ Bring and set up photography equipment
- ☐ Capture the project through photo or video (or both)
- ☐ Interview 5 or more people (see [Interview Guide](#))
- ☐ Make sure volunteers know how to use the hashtag **#becauseisaidiwould**



After

AFTER

- ☐ Use the completed **Photojournalist Leader** Interview Guide to write a short paragraph about an interesting part of the project
- ☐ Announce the outcome on social media platforms
- ☐ Send a recap—including photos and write-up of interviews—to *projects@becauseisaidiwould.com*

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Photojournalist Guide



TIPS FOR TAKING INTERESTING PHOTOS

Before and After—

- Show a striking difference between the start of the project and at the end.

Subject selection—

- Choose people/places/things to photograph that are unexpected, surprising, emotional, or action-oriented.

Frame and focus—

- Eliminate unnecessary background by getting 'up close' to the intended subject/s of the photo.
- Experiment with different angles and perspectives that draw the viewer in.

- Take a before and after shot
- Do a group photo
- Catch an action shot

Sample Interview Questions

1. What is the most unexpected thing to occur today?
2. Have you ever done something like this before?
3. What did you learn today?
4. Has this issue affected you directly or indirectly?
5. What did you discover while interacting with others? Does anything stand out? Any interesting discussions?



Write a short story that recounts interesting experiences people had during this event. Share your story with *because I said I would* headquarters and post it to social media to increase awareness and promote volunteerism!

Use the back of this sheet if desired

Email to projects@becauseisaidiwould.com

FUNDRAISING LEADER SECTION



- Works with the Project Leader to determine if additional funds or supplies are needed
- Finds and collects donations if necessary

Fundraising Leader Checklist



Before

BEFORE

Gather donations and/or host a fundraiser prior to the Day of Service

- ☐ Check with the **Logistics Leader** to find out what equipment & supplies are still needed (if any)
- ☐ Identify possible donors (or lenders if borrowing) for supplies or equipment
- ☐ Give donated equipment/ supplies to the **Logistics Leader**
- ☐ If additional funds are needed, plan and complete a fundraising event prior to the day of service (see [fundraising guideline sheet](#))
- ☐ Work with the **Project Leader** to use acquired funds to purchase needed equipment or supplies



During

DURING

Collect information for the Impact Report by doing the following:

- ☐ Recognize and record how many volunteers are there
- ☐ Find out from the **Logistics Leader** the cost of the supplies and how many of each are needed
- ☐ Distinguish between what was donated, borrowed, and purchased



After

AFTER

- ☐ Inform the **Project Leader** of information collected for the Impact Report
- ☐ Work with the **Project Leader** to thank any donors who had a part in making this project possible!

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Fundraising Leader Guide



Below are some general considerations for planning and completing a fundraising event. The more time you have in advance to plan, the more likely it is that you will have a successful event.

IDEAS

- Ice cream bar/potato bar
- Spaghetti dinner
- Pancake breakfast
- Flea Market
- Bake Sale
- Bingo
- Silent Auction

START

Decide on a fundraising idea.

Make a thorough **supplies list**. Do not forget about the **place or specific services** you may need like landfill fees or food delivery.

Calculate your 'break even' point: Subtract the cost of doing your fundraiser from the minimum amount of money that you could possibly raise. Make sure it is possible that you can raise enough funds to make your efforts worthwhile.

Research nearby similar fundraisers and schedule accordingly to reduce duplication of similar projects in the same area at the same time.

Promote/advertise your event as far in advance as possible.*

- Be clear what **payment types** will be accepted (cash, Paypal, credit, checks)
- Ensure your **electronic payment methods** are working
- Get sufficient bills and coins to **make change**

Donate the surplus: Any amount in excess of what is needed should be gifted to *because I said I would* or invested in another project.

END

After your fundraiser, **make personal thank you notes/calls** using the donor's name.

*Inform donors that gifts are NOT tax deductible because you are not a non-profit organization.

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Sources

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For more information:

National Alliance to End Homelessness

<https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-youngest-children/>

National Coalition for the Homeless

<https://nationalhomeless.org/issues/youth/>

National Coalition for Homeless Youth

<https://www.nn4youth.org/engage/nchy/>

because
I said
I would.