



volunteer centres

Ionaid d'Oibrí Deonacha na hÉireann

IRELAND

family volunteering

a step by step guide

Family volunteering occurs when family members volunteer together in community service activities. They may come from different generations in combinations such as parent/child or grandparent/parent/child, or from same generation, such as adult partners, or brother/sister.



Why do or would families volunteer?

A very strong reason for families to volunteer together is that parents want to raise their children to believe that everyone has a responsibility to their family, friends, neighbours and community. All families that volunteer make a conscious effort to be active and to meet with others with similar values. Families are also aware that volunteering is an activity that can help build & sustain relationships within the family unit.

"It's a tremendously bonding experience to share something as fulfilling as helping meet another person's need with other members of your family. How could parents better teach their children values?"

how families benefit from volunteering

- They gain a shared sense of accomplishment and satisfaction from giving back to the community.
- Volunteering creates positive role models for children and youths.
- Volunteering builds the self-confidence of family members.
- Volunteering creates a history of family memories.
- Volunteering makes families feel valued.
- Families can make new friends.
- Volunteering develops family pride.

how communities benefit from family volunteering

- Volunteering offers a potential for on-going change. Children who volunteer become adults who volunteer.
- Volunteering teaches the value of service and involvement in the community.
- Families become more responsible and involved.
- Families help to build an active community.
- Families have potential for finding solutions to their communities problems.

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helpful hints on family volunteering

- Talk openly with your family about the experience. Encourage all family members in their efforts.
- Have fun! Enjoy spending time with your family.
- After your family volunteers, talk about the experience at home, over dinner, or anytime.
- Keep a diary of your family volunteering. Have family members take turns writing about their experiences.
- Create a family volunteering calendar to plan your volunteer work. Get input from all family members in planning future activities.
- Encourage other families in your school, community or workplace to participate with you.
- Be proud of what your family has accomplished!

Adapted from Volunteering as a Family (United Way of Metropolitan, Atlanta, 1996)

"Family volunteering is a unique win-win-win situation where the volunteer, the organisation and the community can benefit equally."

preparation tips

- Start slowly. Consider onetime or short-term activities before making a long-term commitment
- Involve all family members in the planning process.
- Consider doing your family volunteer activity with other families in your school, neighbourhood or workplace.
- Research your selected volunteer opportunity. Get information about the time, place, age and skills requirements, and safety considerations.
- Attend orientation and training sessions. These will help you understand the organisation and your role as a volunteer.

"As early as 1987, a survey by American firm 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."

volunteering ideas for families

- Inviting a housebound or elderly neighbour for dinner.
- Shopping for a housebound person.
- Getting involved in the Special Olympics.
- Donating clothes or toys.
- Helping clean the local environment.
- Helping at a shelter or soup kitchen.
- Writing for a community newsletter.
- Painting and making repairs at a community centre.
- Delivering meals on wheels.
- Helping with Christmas Hampers.
- Walking or caring for animals.
- Reading and writing letters for those who need assistance.
- Visiting a nursing home on family trips.
- Getting involved in community theatre or sports.
- Helping those new in the community to locate and access the resources they need.
- Giving blood.
- Organising fund-raising events for good causes.
- Developing a family-to-family relationship with those new to the community, such as family-to-family mentoring.

For more ideas, contact your local volunteer centre!

Either drop in or give them a call and they will be happy to chat through your options for volunteering as a family and discuss any issues you may have. Your local volunteer centre can be contacted at the following address: