

# Guide to Organizing a Service Event

## Initial Planning and Set Up

*"I will ask for your service and your active citizenship when I am President of the United States. This will not be a call issued in one speech or program; this will be a cause of my presidency."*

Senator Barack Obama, Mt. Vernon, IA, December 5, 2007

### Overview of A National Day of Service

President Elect Obama is calling on citizens and volunteers across the country to plan, organize and stage non-partisan, volunteer community service events in their neighborhoods for the weekend of Saturday January 17<sup>th</sup> through Monday January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This is an excellent way for volunteers to engage and collaborate with local organizations to create service events.

### Four Phases of Planning a Service Event

This guide is the first of four documents to assist volunteers and local organizations in planning community service events. It lays out guidelines for the initial planning and set up of any service event, but includes details that can be used specifically for the National Day of Service. The planning process is broken into four phases. While start and end dates are listed, there will be overlap as the phases move from mid-December to January 19<sup>th</sup>. The phases are:

1. Initial Planning and Set-Up: December 17 – January 2:

The first phase is the initial establishment of the event or events. Volunteers should meet with other volunteers to discuss the local organizations with whom they would like to partner, and contact those organizations to review possible service events.

Once the event details are established, volunteers should submit the event details. Goals for the event (discussed below) and volunteer responsibilities should be established.

It is strongly recommended that events be submitted before New Years Day

2. Volunteer Recruitment: January 2 –January 16

With the event created, the second phase will focus on recruiting volunteers to participate in the events. Event organizers should create a list of family, friends, co-workers and other members of their social networks. From this list the event

organizers should call volunteers begin recording commitments for attending the service event.

3. Event Details and Logistics: January 2 – January 18

During this period, the details of the event should be clearly established, and tasks should be assigned and executed. Details include: securing necessary materials, establishing the day's timeline and process for volunteer sign-in and sign-out, and organizing data immediately after the event.

4. Day of the Service Event: January 19

The activities for each service event will vary depending on the service provided. Event organizers should collect sign-in information for event participants, as well as a story about the event and a digital photograph that captures a moment of service in action.

## Goals

In order to better organize the service events, it is recommended that the event lead establish goals to track the progress of their service event.

The goals include:

- Number of events to be held
- Number of volunteers planned to attend the event
- Number of volunteer recruitment calls placed and contacts made
- Number of volunteer commitments
- Number of volunteers participating in event

## Suggested Service Activities

There are numerous organizations with who volunteers can partner to organize a service event. Most of these organizations fall into one of seven general categories, which include:

- Environment – such as beach and/or park clean-ups;
- Hunger/Homelessness – such as serving food at a soup kitchen;
- Health – such as organizing a blood drive or volunteering at a hospital;
- Education – such as tutoring or volunteering in a classroom, or helping to fix up a school;
- Civic engagement – such as teaching children about democracy and civic participation;
- Military/Veterans – such as volunteering at a local veterans' center;
- Faith – such as working with a local faith organization to run their children's book collection program.

Think about community organizations that fall into these categories, and build a list of those that may be interested in collaborating to hold a community service event.

## Sample Event Timeline

### Phase I – *Setting up your event*

- Thursday, December 18 – Volunteers meet to begin planning for National Day of Service; brainstorms the following organizations to partner with: Anytown Food Pantry, Anytown Park Clean-Up Brigade
- Monday, December 22 – Two volunteers meet with Anytown Food Pantry and Anytown Park Clean-Up Brigade to discuss working together to put on a service project
- Monday, December 29 – Volunteers meet and choose to do the project with Anytown Park Clean-Up Brigade at Kennedy Park (123 Kennedy Street) at 10 AM on Monday, January 19 with a goal of 25 volunteers; Volunteers choose Susanna Smith as the Event Lead; each volunteer brainstorms 10 neighbors/family members/co-workers to invite to the project; Jason Goodman is chosen as the Materials Lead
- Tuesday, December 30 - Susanna submits the proposed “Kennedy Park Clean-Up” event information

### Phase II – *Volunteer recruitment*

- Friday, January 2 – National Day of Service website goes live; 11 people sign-up online for the Kennedy Park Clean-Up
- Wednesday, January 7 – Volunteers plan volunteer recruitment phone bank at Susanna’s house
- Saturday, January 10 – Volunteers conducts volunteer recruitment phone bank at Susanna’s house with 16 phone bankers who recruit 32 people for the event

### Phase III - *Final preparations*

- Monday, January 12 - Sunday, January 18 – Volunteers work through “Final preparations checklist” (including confirmation calls) to make sure everything is ready to go

### Phase IV – *Day of Event*

- Monday, January 19 – Kennedy Park Clean-Up event and National Day of Service events nationwide. Susanna and volunteers heading up the event sets up the morning of, starts sign-in to begin the event. Susanna and other volunteers help lead event with 48 volunteer participating. That evening, several volunteers help record the sign-in information, record a story from the day, and share pictures from the day