



BEYOND BELIEF NETWORK

Beyond Belief Network Event Guides: Taking Great Pictures

One of the most attention-getting ways of publicizing your successful events and promoting your team is with pictures of your team in action. BBN offers monthly awards for Picture of the Month, and an annual Picture of the Year award for the best shots of your teams in action. Here are some suggestions to make your pictures even better.

Getting volunteers and permissions beforehand:

1. If you're the volunteer coordinator, you're likely to be pretty busy coordinating, so **try to find a volunteer to be in charge of pictures**. A member who's a professional photographer is a safe bet, but anyone who's passionate about photography would be a good person to pick.
2. **Encourage other members to take pictures**, too, especially to share online.
3. Many phones can take decent quality pictures, so you likely already have the equipment you need. However, **there's a reason that professionals use DSLR cameras**, so if you have one and your event isn't one in which your camera could be damaged or stolen, consider bringing it. If your volunteer has a good camera, so much the better.
4. **Get permission from your members** for being photographed and the pictures being shared in promotional material online (both in your social media and ours). Some people might not want their images used at all, and it's important to know that in advance so you can avoid taking pictures that you can't use. Make sure your volunteer has this information, too. A good trick for making sure that people who haven't given permission don't appear in photos is to give them a lanyard of a certain colour. Any picture that includes someone wearing one of these lanyards doesn't make it online.
5. Also **verify that the location allows pictures** (e.g., Red Cross is sometimes leery of letting donors take photographs, organizations might not want their members outed, etc.).
6. If you want your group to wear their BBN t-shirts in the photographs, make sure you submit all of your [event reports](#) to get your free BBN shirts with your logo at Levels One and Three.

Tips for taking great pictures:

1. Pay attention to light

- a. Taking pictures in front of windows or into the sun generally shadows faces, even if you can see them clearly through the viewfinder, so keep the brightest light source behind you (or use the flash if your subject is close enough).
- b. Make sure that your shadow or the shadow from a tree or building doesn't fall over your subject or part of your subject.
- c. Use a flash in low light, but watch out for reflective surfaces that can produce glares (e.g., windows, glass over picture frames, etc.).

2. Have a focal point

- a. Keep it simple. It's hard to show an entire scene, so focus instead on one or two people doing one activity.
- b. Keep an eye on what's in the background. You don't want the background to distract from the focal point.
- c. Don't stand too far away; get up close to your subject.

3. Rule of thirds

- a. Imagine that there's a tic-tac-toe grid in your viewfinder (what you can see through the camera focus or on your screen), so that you have three rows and three columns.
- b. The horizon should fall along either the top or bottom row (not the middle row).
- c. If your subject fits in the middle column, turn your camera to the side or move your camera so that the subject is placed at the intersection of two lines.

4. Portrait or group shots

- a. Get down so the camera is at eye level with the people you're photographing.
- b. Eyes of the person should be at the intersection of a row and column.
- c. For group shots, get close. Unless their shoes are interesting, there's no need to show more than head and shoulders.
- d. Don't cut off the top of someone's head.
- e. Remember that group portrait shots might be a great option for your group's profile picture, but BBN photo awards are only available for action shots.

5. Action shots

- a. Set your shutter speed high (fast) so that your image doesn't blur.
- b. Consider using a tripod.
- c. Try the action setting on your camera.
- d. Leave negative space in front of the movement.
- e. Take a short video and select individual frames from the video.

After your event:

1. Share your pictures in your [Event Report](#) and on the BBN [Facebook](#) page.
2. Use your best pictures in your group's newsletter and social media.

Questions or Concerns?

If you need help with planning your event or have additional questions, the best way to contact Beyond Belief Network is to use the contact webform, which enables us to track the resolution of your question: foundationbeyondbelief.org/contact-bbn. You can also email us at bbn@foundationbeyondbelief.org.