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Beyond Belief Network Guides: Cause-Area Service Events

One of the biggest challenges facing any new or established volunteer group is deciding on what kind of service events to plan. Before undertaking any project, a volunteer group must consider their size as well as their available resources. One solution is to try different cause-area service events and see which events best fit the group. You can use this guide for suggested service events.

Charitable Event Support

Events that fall into this category are usually the best option for a new volunteer group. Existing groups can also focus on this area when they're limited on time. There are often events in your area that need volunteers to perform various tasks such as set-up/clean-up, manning a booth and assisting others. Usually, volunteers will only have to donate a few hours of their time. Potential volunteers should contact the event's coordinator or other designated person for more information.

Some examples of charitable event support include:

1. Manning a booth at a local festival.
2. Volunteering at a walk-a-thon.
3. Picking up large donations from businesses.

Education/Advocacy

Education or advocacy events are often overlooked service events. While the two cause-areas can have separate events, they aren't always mutually exclusive. For example, one group may host a table at a community event with the intention to educate individuals and advocate for a particular subject. Whether your event can be classified as education, advocacy, or both it is usually ideal that the volunteers be keen listeners and knowledgeable.



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Some examples of education/advocacy service events are:

1. Participating in an after-school program as tutors.
2. Helping at a local library's book drive.
3. Educating others about a particular cause (ex. canvassing, leafleting, etc.)

Environmental

Environmental events are perfect for groups that enjoy working outside. However, these events will often be dictated by the weather. Have one member keep track of local weather reports. No one wants to volunteer in sub-zero or sweltering temperatures. Still, when planned and carried out correctly, this can be a great monthly event.

Some examples of environmental events are:

1. Participate in Adopt-a-Highway and keep your section of road clean.
2. Volunteer at a local Earth Day event.
3. Organize a plant-a-tree event or volunteer with a local plant-a-tree organization

Fundraisers

Without a doubt, fundraisers are one of the most challenging events any volunteer group can host. If you're a new team, unless you have the necessary resources, it's probably best to wait until your team has had more experience before you attempt a fundraiser. It takes a great amount of time to plan and requires advertising beforehand. Since fundraisers also involve collecting money, it's vital to have trustworthy individuals helping. When completed successfully, a fundraiser can collect a lot of donations and also bring attention to your team.

Some examples of fundraisers are:

1. Hosting a bake sale.
2. Raising funds through a car wash.



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3. Holding a raffle or silent auction. Check the gaming laws in your state before deciding to host.

Health

These service events can focus on a health-related issue or topic. Contact your local hospital, health center, or nursing home to ask what tasks they need volunteers to complete. Donation drives to collect needed medical supplies are also important and another way to participate in a service event in this cause-area.

Some examples of health service events are:

1. Participating in a blood drive.
2. Collecting medical supplies for a local clinic.
3. Holding a fitness event.

Hunger

Food brings us all to the table, and service events centered on the cause-area of hunger can attract many participants. If your event involves food preparation, make sure everyone on the team follows healthy food preparation practices. Also, check if any participants have food allergies and make any necessary changes. These service events can make a great weekly or monthly event.

Some examples of hunger service events are:

1. Volunteering at a food pantry or soup kitchen.
2. Preparing a meal for a women's shelter.
3. Delivering meals to a senior citizen's home.



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Poverty Assistance

Poverty assistance is a key cause-area because poverty is an issue that affects many communities. While it is possible to set up a stand and give away items directly to those dealing with homelessness, it is important to check with your city's ordinances regarding setting up and distributing items on public property. Good intentions give anyone the right to disregard the law. Service events in this cause-area can also make good weekly or monthly events.

Some examples of poverty assistance service events are:

1. Organizing a monthly giveaway supporting people experiencing homelessness.
2. Collecting school supplies for underprivileged children.
3. Volunteering at a location that helps families in need (ex. Ronald McDonald House).

Overlap

It should be no surprise that cause-areas will often overlap with each other. A particular service event may fit equally well into one or more categories. It's okay. The key thing when considering a service event is to first consider your group. Understanding their interests and needs can help you figure what service events will work best for your group in terms of participation and community impact.

Questions or Concerns?

If you need help with planning your event or have additional questions, the best way to contact Foundation Beyond Belief is to use the [contact webform](#), which enables us to track the resolution of your question.