

It's Almost Spring Meeting Notes

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Reasons Why Volunteers Start and Continue to Volunteer:

- Social
- Valuable work
- Part of whole
- Gaining new experiences and skills

Volunteer Experiences

Positive Volunteer Experiences	Negative Volunteer Experiences
Social, community	Disorganized
Education	Poor use of time
Training – clear expectations	Lack of appreciation
Communication	Lack of training – safety
Sense of ownership	Isolation
Matching the task to the person	No orientation
Explaining why the task matters	
Autonomy & creativity	
Different tasks available	

Volunteering as Career Development – job description(s) for volunteers

- Portfolio – master gardener hours; college application
- Networking, feeling needed
- Leave comfort zone – new achievements
- Project management skills
 - Grant writing
 - Budget
 - Record Keeping
 - Organization
- Resume
- Construction skills
- Creativity – problem solving
- Work ethic and references
- Cultural sensitivity, communication

How does your organization communicate to volunteers the meaning of their service?

- Church Bulletin names people in appreciation

- Dinner for key volunteers
- Marking progress, accomplishments of garden volunteers
- Recognizing volunteers as moral person
- Making volunteers ownership clear
- Reflection – encourage amazement
- Recognizing individuals transformation
- Sharing personal stories
- Orientation specifically for volunteers including mission statement

Recruiting & Retaining Volunteers

- Meet their needs (social, belonging, development)
- Be clear about mission, meaning
- Welcome them and make expectations clear
- Be there when you say you will
- Risk management – garden side and school side
 - Rules, expectations – signed by volunteers. Includes safety rules, children’s safety, confidentiality
 - Helps weed out undesirables
 - Protects your institution – insurance, liability
 - Makes volunteers feel safer

Task/Reason Listing

Task	Reason
Water	Growth for plants
Stake tomatoes	Garden infrastructure
Weed rows	Aesthetics, space for healthy
Teach kids	Making garden educational
Composting	Sustainability, healthy soil
Harvesting	
Coordinate Volunteers	Organization
Beautifying garden/aesthetics	Make garden welcome
Find funding/grants	Sustainability, \$\$
Planning – layout and garden schedule	
Put away/clean tools	Cost/time efficiency
Appropriate use of materials	Safety
Preparing soil/env.	Adequate work (children)
Design/layout	Efficiency
Finding ‘champion’ for summer – take food (food bank/donation)	Use of produce during all months
Education of plants	Correct identification; teaching/signage
Tilling	Health/Nutrition
Planting	Food deserts

Weed	Food access – local Education Healing Income Self-sufficiency Sustainability
Water	
Harvest – prep & deliver	
Construction – fence, raised bed, greenhouse	
Mulch	
Compost	
Fertilize	
Site Supervisor	Assess/assign tasks; quality assurance; assure site smooth
Pest Management	
Mowing	
Maintenance	
Leaders – Tours; spokesperson	
Education	
Prep Work	Label
Data Entry	Seed Inventory
Social Media/Market	
Planting, harvesting, weeding	To get the produce “food”
Watering, set up sprinkler system	So you investment doesn’t die
Composting	To have good fertilizer
Trash removal	Looks clean, protects plants
Start Seeds	So there are plants, safe money
Fence (pallets)	To protect plants from animals/mowers
Prepare & submit grant application	To raise funds for resources
Donation requests	To get resources; community building
Research what to plant, where and how	Success of garden
Soil test (ISU Extension)	So garden will thrive
Bring harvested food to food pantry	So people can eat when food is ripe and tasty
Recipe sharing/nutrition education	Education – so food isn’t wasted
Offer produce to volunteers	To show as appreciation
Rotate crops	Long-term planning
Worm tea or other natural techniques	Keep out insects/blight
Mulch	Save water, weeding time
Clear out greenhouse	Use space efficiently
Weed	Keep plants health – nutrients + water + sun
Water	
Keep walkways clear	Safety for people & plants; accessibility
Tool safety	Safety
Harvesting	To use the food; keep plant producing; keep pests & animals away
Delivering Food	Get food to hungry
Plant	To grow so you can harvest
Install fence	Critters out; define blot; keep traffic off plants
Make signage	Garden identification; communicate ground rules and contact info; communicate purpose

