

Guidelines for Single Volunteers Chapters

Single Volunteers History, Mission & Vision

Single Volunteers History - Since Anne Lusk got the first all-single volunteer Habitat for Humanity project started in Vermont in the summer of 1996, Single Volunteers chapters have formed in Phoenix, Arizona; Sacramento, California (Singles in Service, a project for the Single Volunteers of Hands on Sacramento); San Diego, California; Greater Wilmington Area, Delaware; South Florida; Central Florida ; Baltimore/Annapolis, Maryland; Washington DC Metro Area; Boston, Massachusetts; Twin Cities (Minneapolis/St. Paul), Minnesota; Las Vegas, Nevada; SV of the Upper Valley, New Hampshire; Hunterdon County, New Jersey; Mercer County, New Jersey; Rochester, New York; Buffalo, New York; North Eastern, Ohio; Lake County, Ohio; Western Reserve, Ohio; Bucks County, Pennsylvania; Greater Wilmington Area; Rhode Island, Rhode Island; Austin, Texas; Richmond, Virginia; SV of the Upper Valley, Vermont; and Washington DC Metro Area, Washington DC.

Single Volunteers <http://singlevolunteers.org/> has also had chapters in Canada and Australia in addition to the US. Additional US and non-US chapters are welcome and encouraged. Check the SV website for active chapters. Currently, Single Volunteers chapters come and go due to fluctuating leadership, changing marital statuses, and funding resources. Therefore, for new chapters forming, Single Volunteers recommends affiliating with a similarly-missioned nonprofit agency such as a Hands On Network <http://handsonnetwork.org/> (click on Affiliate Network) or Points of Light Foundation Volunteer Center National Network (VCNN) http://www.pointsoflight.org/centers/find_center.cfm affiliate.

Partnering with such organizations and Single Volunteers is ideal. Single Volunteers are highly motivated to meet new friends and have more time available than general volunteers. These nonprofit agencies have the relationships with local charities, infrastructure and stability and Single Volunteers subgroups can provide an added draw for new volunteers. When marital statuses change, volunteers can seamlessly continue to participate in other volunteering opportunities.

Single Volunteers Mission - Single Volunteers provides singles with a productive way to meet other singles by organizing volunteer activities which groups of singles then perform. The aim of each activity is to have a minimum of 12 single people, ideally an equal number of men and women of similar ages, work in close proximity on a worthwhile project.

A national clearinghouse provides information through electronic mailings (email) to help local chapters get started and through a web site to inform the general public about Single Volunteers and serve as a connection for existing chapters. Single Volunteers also works to spread the basic concept of singles volunteering to facilitate new chapter formation.

Chapters are self-governing and patterned after the needs of their local community, the supervising agency or organizers that could include a church, a nonprofit organization or an individual. The national clearinghouse only provides guidance and the web site and is not responsible for the operations of a local chapter. **Local chapters are encouraged to initially be adopted by a similarly missioned nonprofit agency and then eventually file for 501(c)3 nonprofit status.** Funds generated by modest dues or from fund raising can pay for a staff person. Single Volunteers is not intended to be a profit making business.

Single Volunteers Vision - As a result of the wholesome meeting places and benefactoral ethic of Single Volunteers, America will have men and women who have formed meaningful friendships and solid marriages. Equally as important, America will have countless volunteer hours given freely for the betterment of all citizens.

People Magazine:

http://singlevolunteers.org/dc/media/people_magazine.pdf

Washington Post: <http://singlevolunteers.org/dc/media/washpost.shtml>

NY Times: <http://www.singlevolunteers.org/dc/media/nytimes.shtml>

Guidelines for Single Volunteers Chapters:

REQUIREMENTS

Chapters must:

- Be designed for members who are single (at least unmarried)
- Focus primarily on volunteer activities
- Strive for gender parity
- Provide a current link to the SV website from Chapter websites/yahoo! groups.
- Must have a website and e-mail box.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapters might consider:

- Recommending that members be available to date, not just unmarried. The organization may be seen as misrepresenting itself otherwise.
- Can have new volunteer orientation ½ hour before planning / general membership meetings.
- Have a clear description of event and expectations on the website.
- Volunteers only need make a one-event commitment. Even if jobs are ongoing week after week, although should they want they can volunteer again for the same job each week if they want.
- Select events that:
 - Allow people to work together.
 - Are no- or low-cost activities, where the non-profit provides the materials/equipment. The value to nonprofit of each volunteer hour is approximately \$14, so should be able to ask for tasks that allow volunteer interaction.
 - For smaller chapters starting up, accept jobs with a minimum of 6 people, specifying that they must work as a team (minimum of 3 people) and be able to interact while volunteering. If nonprofit needs 2 people per station, require that they be rotated as often as feasible.
- After-event socials are essential, particularly if it is not a exclusively SV event (SV participants are part of a larger group).
- SV project leaders
 - Get FULL information on what job entails from the agency's Volunteer Coordinator, and determine how many

- volunteers the agency really needs, not (ie: the number they are asking for may be assuming half the volunteers won't show). Be sure that all volunteers on team are really needed, because volunteers like to work when they get there.
- Mandatory team/project leader training or a project leader checklist.
 - Can't be a project leader with event participation experience, unless they co-lead with experienced SV leader or non-profit representative.
 - Can continue as their marital status changes, as long as they make their status known. Leadership takes time to build and this is one way to maintain it.
 - Events coordinated by the agency are at least hosted by an SV host.
 - Separate phone strictly for group, but not for event-related stuff. Don't give out personal phone numbers for general contact.
 - Suggest setting time limits for planning meetings. Put non-agenda items or discussions on a subject over time limit into "parking lot" to handle after agenda is covered if time or if not time to put on the agenda for next time.

BENEFITS OF CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP:

Chapters Resources

- Free website space on national Single Volunteers server – chapters must provide their own webmaster
- Listserv – mailing lists, chapters to provide moderators
- Use of the name Single Volunteers
- Other chapter coaching and experiences via Yahoo! Group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SV-USA/>.
- In the future, templates for bylaws, incorporation, checklists, procedures, etc.

HOW TO CREATE A NEW CHAPTER OF SINGLE VOLUNTEERS IN ASSOCIATION WITH A VOLUNTEER CENTER

Sandra Hamel reinvented the idea of Single Volunteers in association with Hands On Sacramento (HOS) in the form of Singles in Service (SIS). For more information go to <http://www.handsonsacto.org/> and click on the link for Singles In Service or our Yahoo! Group at: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Singles_In_Service/. When an article written on Singles in Service included mention of Single Volunteers SV, Sandra contacted Single Volunteers, went to their 2004 Leadership Conference, got SV chapter certification for SIS, and committed to bringing Single Volunteers together with the Hands on Network. Here are her recommendations for forming a new Single Volunteers chapter in association with your local Hands On. Contact Sandra Hamel at: Sandra95617@yahoo.com, P.O.Box 132 Davis, CA 95617-0132.

- 1) Obtain a copy of the “Guidelines for Single Volunteers Chapters” at <http://singlevolunteers.org/> (click on Starting a New Chapter)
- 2) Contact the local volunteer center (such as your local Hands On Network <http://handsonnetwork.org/> (click on Affiliate Network) or Points of Light http://www.pointsoflight.org/centers/find_center.cfm Volunteer Center National Network (VCNN)). Share your idea and a copy of “Guidelines for Single Volunteers Chapters”. Ask them if they have such a group already or know of such a group in the area. If they do not, share the benefits of such a partnership and request their commitment to supporting your efforts. (If they do, express your interest in joining in.)
- 3) Review the Guidelines and contact Dana Katherine Kressierer, dana@singlevolunteers.org, (410) 566-5546 who coordinates new chapter approvals.
- 4) Join the SV-USA · Single Volunteers Yahoo! Group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SV-USA/>.
- 5) Invite one or two leaders who are single and wish to step into leadership positions. Accept only those volunteers

inspired by the role, if you need to manipulate now you'll need to motivate later. You'd best make more invitations.

- 6) Schedule a kick off meeting.
- 7) Advertise for existing Hands On volunteers who are single to come to a kick off meeting for forming a Single Volunteers chapter.
 - a. Add a fun/social element such as meeting at a restaurant, food or door prizes.
 - b. Use your local Hands On (HO) Website, newsletter, and HO speaking engagements for preliminary advertising. You will need dedicated volunteers to form your foundation and you will find them already volunteering.
- 8) At the kick off meeting:
 - a. Get people to sign in on a roster so you have a way to contact them and the information needed to set up an email distribution list.
 - b. Decide on a name, "Single Volunteers of Hands On [city name]" for example.
 - c. Invite attendees to step into leadership positions, especially when they make suggestions. Accept only those volunteers inspired by the role, if you need to manipulate now you'll need to motivate later. You'd best make more invitations. Roles include:
 - i. Moderation – leads planning meetings, oversees agenda and minutes.
 - ii. Communications – establishes and maintains distribution list, Yahoo! Group, website.
 - iii. New project coordinator – makes sure there is at least one project per month (or agreed on frequency depending on number of volunteers), ensures project leaders get appropriate publicity
 - iv. Marketing/recruitment – contacts prospective agencies and volunteers through print, radio, television, and electronic mediums. Recruits writers of press releases and articles.
 - v. Project leaders- act as intermediaries with agencies, direct coordination of volunteers, greets and orients volunteers, makes sure events include mixer and

- after-party, keeps needed statistics and historical information.
- vi. Hosts – for projects where the leader is from the agency: makes sure events include mixer and after-party, greets and orients volunteers, keeps needed statistics and historical information.
- d. Schedule monthly planning meetings. Regular meetings have been helpful. (Ohio has monthly meeting on first Saturday night of the month and then go out for dinner afterwards).
- 9) Create an email distribution list for the planning board. Yahoo! Groups can work well for this purpose.
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/>
 - 10) Plan a group event that allows a minimum of 8 volunteers to interact as they perform the activity with materials and tools provided by the benefiting agency. Examples include: construction or clean up activities (tree planting, river clean-up), donation sorting (food bank, clothing), making lunches for the homeless or the elderly, participating in public television or radio pledge drives, assisting with set up for local non-profit benefits, table-top activities such as mailings, flyer collating, assembly.
 - 11) Plan a pre-event mixer (a game to introduce volunteers and an opportunity for them to learn about the agency to be helped) and an after party (going as a group to a locally-owned pub or casual restaurant near the project site is the easiest thing)
 - 12) Draft a press release once details (date, times, location, activities, attire required, things to bring, project leader and contact information) are agreed on.
 - 13) To get new members to come: Email/fax to local newspapers, radio, and television. Post details on local community calendars, bulletin boards and related Yahoo! Groups online.
 - 14) At events, personally invite participants who show leadership potential by acknowledging specific characteristics and asking them to come to a planning meeting.
 - 15) Write up a PSA and send it to local radio and TV stations.

Singles In Service is a project of Hands On Sacramento (HOS). SIS gives single volunteers opportunities to meet and make a difference in the Sacramento community! SIS partners with local non-profit agencies (such as Habitat for Humanity, Sacramento Tree Foundation and American River Parkway Foundation) to coordinate fun, one-day and half-day service projects. For more information go to <http://www.handsonsacto.org/> and click on the link for Singles In Service or call 916-447-7063 x 304 and ask for a Hands On Sacramento application. You can also join our Yahoo! Group at: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Singles_In_Service/

- 16) Take photos of event(s) and record details such as number of volunteers, activities performed, organizations helped, amusing anecdotes and so on for Single Volunteers chapter certification and more general articles for magazines.
- 17) Write up an article about your organization using the above details and attach photographs.
- 18) Send this information to:
 - a. Local and regional magazines. Target local newspapers and magazines in philanthropy columns, local interest columns and event weeklies.
 - b. Local philanthropic, progressive, and religious singles groups (such as Sierra Club Singles, Single Vegetarians, and Unitarian Singles).
 - c. List events on electronic calendars (on Craig's List, newspapers, TV stations), related Yahoo! Groups (local activities, singles, volunteering), and email to publications that have weekly singles event calendars.
- 19) Develop a 12 month calendar targeting recurring events that are popular and have willing project leaders. It's always easier to do recurring events.
- 20) Maintain an event calendar on your website or Yahoo! Group and set automatic reminders.

ARTICLES ON SINGLES IN SERVICE:

Hands On Sacramento Newsletter - September / October 2004

Singles in Service - A Year of Fun and Philanthropy - by Sandra Hamel (pages 1 and 5)

<http://www.communitycouncil.org/hos09-1004.pdf>

Sacramento Bee Scene - Friday, May 7, 2004

Social causes: Volunteer groups are having fun doing good By Will Evans -- Bee Staff Writer

<http://www.sacbee.com/content/lifestyle/story/9195405p-10120741c.html>

Sacramento Bee/ Lifestyle - Thursday, December 30, 2004

Volunteer profile/Sandra Hamel - By Gloria Glycer -- Bee Columnist

<http://www.sacbee.com/content/lifestyle/story/11895649p-12782530c.html>