

ENCOURAGING FAMILY VOLUNTEERING

*Family volunteering creates opportunities for parents, children and other family members to spend time together contributing to the community and club they care about. It is a great way for families to enjoy quality time with each other. Family volunteering also introduces family members to the benefits of volunteering. It is a fact that people who volunteer when they are young are more likely to volunteer throughout their adult life. Family volunteering can be a practical way to express values to children and young people. Volunteering provides parents/guardians and other family members the opportunity to be a positive role model by demonstrating how to be involved with the community, how to make a difference and also enjoy it. Volunteering in a family group can improve communication among family members, strengthen family bonds and be a lot of fun.*

**Why Involve Families as Volunteers in Your Club?**

* Family volunteers grows future generations of volunteers
* Family volunteering provides access to a larger pool of volunteers
* People who volunteer as a family are more likely to volunteer more frequently
* Volunteers can be more reliable as individuals commit as a family group
* Volunteers have greater commitment as their volunteering and family interests are competing less for time
* Family volunteers can be valuable for events and seasonal activities e.g. Christmas parties etc.
* Family volunteering provides greater potential for long-term retention of volunteers
* Family volunteers can help your club develop stronger ties to all of the community
* Family volunteering provides opportunities for intergenerational learning

**Benefits of Family Volunteering for Families Include:**

* A shared sense of accomplishment and satisfaction from giving back to the club
* Experience a stronger sense of community and feeling less isolated
* Helping families learn about their local club and community
* Creating family memories
* Learning new skills or building on existing skills
* Building self confidence in family members

**Successful Family Volunteering Activities are:**

* Fun, active and hands-on
* Flexible with a range of activities, times and locations
* Able to include a range of experience and age groups
* Inclusive of children, with learning opportunities
* Able to be shared with other families

**Some Examples of Family Volunteering Include:**

* Festivals and events
* Fundraising activities
* Club nurseries
* Club facilities development – tree planting, painting etc.
* Recycling projects
* Junior committees
* Gear recycling – boots etc.
* Christmas club community day – visit to families, nursing homes etc.
* General club activities

**How to Attract and Retain Family Volunteers**

* Promote the fact that your club welcomes families as volunteers
* Be flexible and consider the volunteer opportunities you are providing
* Allow for participation by younger and older people and groups. Can the work be shared for some of these volunteering opportunities?
* Provide opportunities for children to take part as this will encourage their parents/guardians to become involved as volunteers

**Finding Family Volunteers**

* Be strategic with your advertising. Consider local school newsletters, community magazines, mass bulletins, local community groups and childcare centres
* Ask your existing volunteers to bring their families along. Ask prospective volunteers if they are interested in volunteering with their families
* Emphasise how your opportunity enables families to spend quality time together as well as making a difference to the club and community
* Promote a volunteer project as a ‘Family Volunteer Day’. Limiting the initial involvement to a single day can be a good way for families to try out volunteering and ensure that this is a positive experience