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Volunteering On the Spot Toolkit

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There are many ways to give back, and one of the most important is by volunteering your time. Corporate volunteer programs increase employee engagement, create positive team-building experiences, improve the ability to recruit younger employees, and provide visibility for the company.

Our Volunteering On the Spot

projects provide meaningful workplace experiences for volunteers in a much shorter timeframe, with no transportation expenses. Many of these activities can be done during lunch or whenever your employees have a short break in their day. From painting a mural for a local charity, to creating inspirational cards for hospital patients, to assembling care kits, this toolkit is full of **On the Spot** volunteer ideas that will benefit people in your community.

Always reach out to a charity first to ensure the project fits their needs and determine how best to deliver your contributions.

You can also check out volunteer opportunities available by zip code on our website: healthcharities.org/volunteer



74% of employees say their job is more fulfilling when they are provided with opportunities to make a positive impact on social and environmental issues – and 83% of Millennials and 70% of all employees would be more loyal to a company that helps them contribute to important issues.

2016 CONE COMMUNICATIONS
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Kards for Kindness

Make homemade cards for local military veterans, nursing home residents, children's hospital patients, teachers, individuals with limited mobility, or those serving overseas. Many community members like veterans and the elderly often feel isolated, lonely, or unappreciated. Your words of encouragement offer hope and help them feel connected to your community.

Supplies

- Multi-colored paper, copy paper, or cardstock
- Markers
- Stickers, ribbon, feathers, magazine clippings, etc.
- Glue or double-sided tape
- Stamps and inkpads
- Pens
- Scissors
- Envelopes

Instructions

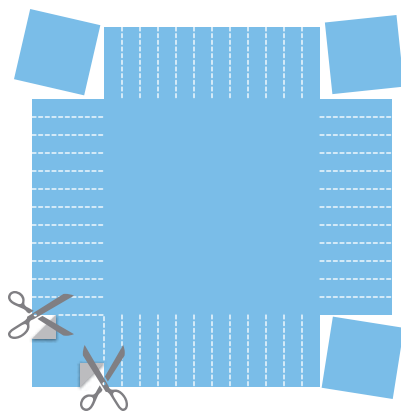
1. Choose a recipient (veterans, nursing home resident, hospital patient, etc.) for your card.
2. Gather the necessary supplies. You can use whatever craft supplies you have around the office, or buy new supplies.
3. Fold the cardstock or paper to create a card.
4. Decorate the card however you want.
5. Write a note of encouragement, hope, or thanks (based on the recipient) and sign your first name. "Thank You", "Birthday", "Thinking of You", etc.
6. Repeat as many times as you'd like.

Blankets of Comfort

Children and adults in the hospital, transitional housing, or homeless shelters are often looking for comfort. A simple blanket might be just the thing to provide security and warmth. Take fleece fabric and make a tie-blanket.

Supplies

- Fleece fabric (bright colors and patterns are encouraged!)
- Instructions
- Scissors
- Ruler



Instructions

1. Decide if you are making a small or a large blanket. A small blanket should be 30" long and a large should be 60". You do not need to alter the width of the blanket; keep it the standard size it is on the bolt.
2. Select your fabric and cut the right length.
3. Cut a 3" by 3" square out of each corner.
4. Fringe each side of the fleece by cutting 3" by 1" strips that you will later tie.
5. When all four sides have been fringed, begin tying each separate fringe. Make each knot tight but do not make it flush to the edge of the blanket or else the blanket will bunch up and not lay nicely.

Helpful Hint: If you don't have time to make blankets, just set up a donation box for employees to bring in a blanket to donate. Or, crafty employees can crochet or knit blankets at home and bring in to donate.

Camps for Kids Welcome Pack

Each year, more than 14 million children attend summer camp in the US. It's a right of passage for many, providing outlets for independence and personal growth. For kids facing long-term health challenges, it offers life-changing opportunities to see beyond their limits to new possibilities. Grab a backpack, pillowcase or bag, and create a Camps for Kids Welcome Pack. Choose what fun activities go in it.

Supplies

- Writing paper
- Pens and markers
- Stamps
- Board games
- Stickers
- Small toys or stuffed animals
- Coloring and activity books and crayons
- Backpack, pillowcase or bag
- Books
- Flashlight

Instructions

1. Collect or buy the necessary supplies. Make sure the activities are age appropriate. You choose what activities and items to include. You can even choose a theme.
2. Fill the backpack with the supplies and label with the child's age.
3. If you'd like, add a note to the child who will receive the backpack.

Helpful Hint: Backpacks full of supplies are also often needed at local schools, after-school programs, and homeless shelters.

Shoebox of Support

You can give a helping hand to individuals, children, and families experiencing homelessness. Find a shoebox and fill it with toiletries and other basic necessities.

Supplies

- Shoebox
- Travel size shampoo and conditioner
- Bar soap
- Lotion
- Deodorant
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Sunscreen
- Hair comb/brush
- Hand towels
- Bandages and antibiotic ointment
- Socks
- Tampons/panty liners
- Razors
- Tissues
- Re-sealable zipper storage bags
- Rain ponchos
- Bus passes
- Laundry gift cards

Instructions

1. Find a shoebox. Decorate it however you want without sealing the lid.
2. Purchase or collect new supplies.
3. Fill the shoebox with the supplies.
4. Collect shoeboxes in a large box.

Craft Kits

One of the ways [Childrens' Hospitals](#) excel in providing a warm and comfortable environment is through arts and crafts. The Happy Cart Project provides materials for children while they are receiving care in the hospital or waiting for a loved one.

Instructions:

Pick a craft, and place all supplies needed for the craft in a one gallon sealed, zippered plastic bags, including printed instructions. Craft supplies you should avoid: play dough, feathers, leaves, moss, dirt, glitter, and any food products like pasta or beans. If your craft requires safety scissors or glue, please include separately in a sealed zippered plastic bag.

Tips:

- All materials must be new
- Include all materials needed to complete the craft except glue, scissors, markers, and crayons (donate separately in another bag)
- Picture of completed craft in color on the front of the bag
- Step-by-step instructions easily readable in back of bag (English and Spanish versions, if possible)
- All crafts should be religiously, politically, ethnically, and culturally neutral
- Activities for all ages are needed, including children, teens, young adults, and parents

Items to avoid:

- Latex balloons
- Candles
- Knives
- Toy guns
- Water guns
- Any food items (beans, pasta, etc.)
- Small objects that could be a choking hazard
- Threatening themes such as death, medical procedures, medical personnel, and illness
- Other unsafe materials
- Any personal information (your name, name of your organization, address, etc.)

Waiting Room Fun Bags

It's hard to sit still and wait in the hospital or doctor's office. Help brighten a child's day with [busy bags or fun bags](#).

Supplies

- Crayons
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Paper
- Coloring books
- Stickers

Instructions

Fill a sealed, zippered plastic bag with activities. Make bags age-specific but generic enough for a boy or a girl.

Mask Straps

Mask Straps are used to improve the comfort level for patients required to wear masks to prevent the spread of infection or protect patients from infection. These mask straps replace the elastic band that comes standard on the mask. Patients say that flannel and fleece material feel much better against their cheek and cause far less rubbing than the original elastic band. Please note that anything made with fabric must be made in a smoke-free and pet-free environment. All masks must be individually packed in sealed zippered plastic bags.

Supplies

- High-quality flannel or fleece
- $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide pajama elastic
- $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide Velcro (tip: do not buy sticky Velcro dots as your needle will have a hard time going through the Velcro and get gummed up)
- Needle and thread
- Large safety pins

Instructions

1. Wash the chosen fabric in order to avoid irritation of the patient's skin. Please keep in mind that patients range in age from infants to young adults. For example, teenage boys want camouflage, sports, space adventures, etc. Girls, however, may enjoy kittens, horses, flowers, etc.
2. Fold the fabric salvage to salvage (uncut side to uncut side) and then cut straight strips of fabric that are $2\frac{1}{2}$ " wide.
3. Cut your fabric and elastic according to the sizes in the table.
4. Fold the fabric the long way with right sides together.
5. Sew a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam, and turn inside out and press.
6. Cut 2 pieces of Velcro about 1" long.
7. Insert a large safety pin at the end of the elastic strap and feed the elastic all the way through the strap (be sure to remove the safety pin).
8. Pin the elastic on the outside side of the strap to hold it in place, about 2" from the end on both sides.
9. Place the soft side of the Velcro about $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the end of the strap and sew the Velcro in place all around the Velcro. Repeat for the other side of the strap.
10. Place the rough side of the Velcro about 2" from the end of the strap over the elastic and sew in place all around the Velcro. This will secure the elastic in place. Repeat for other side of the strap.
11. Zig-zag the ends of the strap.
12. When the Velcro is folded, your strap will be about the size indicated on the chart above.
13. Mark the size on the inside.

SIZE:	CUT ELASTIC TO:	CUT FABRIC TO:
Small 10 inches	8 inches	15 inches
Medium 12 inches	10 inches	17 inches
Large 14 inches	12 inches	19 inches
X-Large 16 inches	14 inches	21 inches

Please Note: The medium size is the most frequently requested. The X-Large is the second most frequently requested. However, other sizes are also needed.

Snack Pack

Provide [healthy snacks](#) for family members visiting or waiting in the hospital for a loved one.

Supplies

- Pre-packaged, individually wrapped food items such as:
- Crackers
- Chips
- Fruit snacks
- Mixed nuts
- Microwavable popcorn

Instructions

1. Wrap a few of the snacks together in a Ziploc or clear bag.
2. Feel free to share some love by including a note of encouragement.

Comfort Kits

More often than not, families arrive at hospitals and homeless or women's shelters with very little. Show them someone cares by providing a [few comforts](#).

Ideas

- A new towel set (bath towel, hand towel, and wash cloth)
- A new bathrobe and slippers or cozy socks
- A "goodie bag" with candies, gum, playing cards, crossword puzzles, instant hand sanitizer, mints, etc.

Instructions

1. Box items or put them in a gift bag.
2. Feel free to share some encouragement by including a personal note.

Toiletry Kits

Each room is stocked with toiletry items for families to use during their stay at Ronald McDonald Houses. You can provide items specifically for Ronald McDonald House, or any local charity or shelter.

Supplies (please provide travel sizes only)

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Lotion
- Bath soap
- Mouthwash
- Deodorant
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Razor and shaving cream

Instructions

1. Kits should be placed in a Ziploc bag or neatly wrapped in transparent wrap and gathered at the top with ribbon, string, or a twist tie.
2. Feel free to share some encouragement by including a personal note.

Little Hats, Big Hearts

Help make red hats for babies born in February (American Heart Month) to raise awareness of heart disease and congenital heart defects. Donate the hats to your local hospital maternity ward.

Host a Donated Goods Drive

Many local nonprofits, including Salvation Army, Goodwill, American Cancer Society, Susan G. Komen and Covenant House, collect donated goods like clothing and jewelry. It's an easy way for employees to give back while doing spring cleaning. Check out these ideas.

Discovery Shops

The American Cancer Society Discovery Shops accept donations of gently used clothing, shoes, handbags, jewelry, furniture, antiques, and household items. Your donations are tax-deductible, and all proceeds support the American Cancer Society. Some stores provide pick-up for larger household items. Contact the [store nearest you](#) for donation services and policies.

Discovery Shops are located in California, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia and Washington.



Shelters

[Covenant House](#) continues to fulfill its mission by providing shelter and services to children and youth who are homeless or at great risk. To ensure that client needs are met, drives take place on a continual basis. Samples of items needed include:

Clothing

- Business Suits for Both Men and Women
- New Men's Jeans (new styles)
- New Men's and Women's Shorts
- New Polo Shirts and T-shirts(S-XL)
- New Sneakers and Dress Shoes(Men's and Women's)
- Slip Resistant Socks
- Bras (A-DD) and Sports Bras
- Boys Belts(size 34 and Up)
- Mesh Laundry Bags

Baby Items

- Diapers
- Baby wipes
- New umbrella strollers
- New or gently used baby clothing (up to 4T)
- Developmental toys & books for children under 3 years of age

Electronics

- DVD Players
- MP3 Players
- Headphones/Ear Buds
- AA and AAA Batteries for Electronics

Gift Cards

- Target, Wal-Mart, K-Mart
- Babies R Us, Toys R Us
- Payless Shoes
- Bookstores
- Fast food restaurants in \$5 increments
- Grocery stores
- Calling cards

New Personal Hygiene Items (trial or travel size)

- Shampoo, Conditioner and Hair Gels
- Men and Women's Deodorant (trial size)
- Lotion
- Body Wash/Soap
- Soap Containers
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Towels and Wash Clothes
- Lint Brushes

Educational Materials

- Notebooks
- Backpacks
- Pens and pencils
- Calculators

Hospitals

Contribute supplies needed for individual and group activities, stocking [St. Jude Children's Research Hospital](#) playrooms, and providing birthday, Christmas, and holiday gifts to patients.

For safety purposes, please avoid the following items: Stuffed animals, food, toy guns, knives, candy, cloth body dolls, balloons, porcelain dolls, VHS movies, soap or bubble mixtures, used items of any kind, and ride-on toys.

Per doctor's orders, to maximize the effectiveness of patient treatment and reduce chances of infection or serious allergic reactions, handmade items and items made of fabric should be sealed in a zipped bag prior to shipping. This includes do-rags, bandana head coverings, quilts, tote bags, bibs, and burp pads.

Hold a Departmental Recycling Competition

Recycle Old Clothes and Fight Breast Cancer

Did you know cleaning out your closets can help fight breast cancer?

You can support [Susan G. Komen](#) all year long simply by donating and recycling your unwanted clothing, shoes, toys and household textiles.

Look for the distinctive at American Textile Recycling Services Clothing & Shoe Recyclers; find a bin near you: www.atrscorp.com

Recycle Electronics and Ink Cartridges for Easter Seals

Help the environment and raise money for [Easter Seals](#). Recycle your cell phone, laser and inkjet cartridges, and more, to generate

funds to help support children and adults with disabilities and their families. Learn more about this eco-friendly, fundraising initiative.

Learn Together On the Spot

Tobacco Education

Volunteer to facilitate a [Freedom From Smoking®](#) program or another tobacco cessation/prevention group.

Hands-Only CPR

[Become a lifesaver](#). Watch a one-minute Hands-Only CPR video to learn to save a life, and share the link with family and friends.

Member Charities' Volunteer Links

[Community Health Charities](#)

[ALS Association](#)

[Alzheimer's Association](#)

[American Cancer Society](#)

[American Diabetes Association](#)

[American Heart Association](#)

[American Lung Association](#)

[amfAR Aids Research](#)

[Arthritis Foundation](#)

[Autism Speaks](#)

[Covenant House](#)

[Easter Seals](#)

[JDRF](#)

[Leukemia & Lymphoma Society](#)

[Mental Health America](#)

[National Multiple Sclerosis Society](#)

[Ronald McDonald House](#)

[St. Jude Children's Research Hospital](#)

[Special Olympics](#)

[Susan G. Komen for the Cure](#)

