



Zones 30 and 31 Leadership Seminars 2019

Best Practices for a Meaningful Volunteer Experience

Follow Your Passion: Are you interested in a particular club project that your club is involved in, or could be involved in? Why does that project interest you? Talk to club leaders about getting involved, and make sure that you tell them why this project is important to you. If you're not sure what could be interesting to you, try out a project by volunteering for a smaller or shorter assignment.

Check Your Calendar: Rotary is a service organization – everyone is a volunteer. How much time do you have, and are you willing to give? Are you up for a long-term gig? Or do you want something that is short and infrequent? Could you donate a certain amount of time each week or month? Do you have digital technology skills that could allow you to contribute to the project on a flexible schedule? Before you volunteer, be honest with yourself and your club members

Find Flexible Options: Talk to club and project leaders to tailor the assignment so that it is meaningful for you and helpful to the project. If you have children or grandchildren, consider volunteering as a family. Think about looking for a volunteer opportunity suitable for parents and children to do together.

Consider Your Unique Contribution: Do you want to use your skills, or develop new skills? Are you good at planning events, persuading others, organizing teams or developing budgets? Assess what you're good at and enjoy, and make sure that club or district leaders know the skills you enjoy using. If you're interested in doing something that is not based on your professional skills and experience, make sure that club or district leaders know so that you're not pigeon-holed into a role – such as the banker or accountant who is always asked to take on a budget or treasury role.

Learn or Try Something New: Rotary can offer excellent opportunities to develop skills or do something different from your daily routine. Want to improve your team leadership skills? Volunteer to lead a committee, subcommittee or part of a project. Working on your writing skills? Write for or edit a newsletter? Want something different from your everyday or office environment? Sign up for a hands-on project.

Don't Wait to Be Asked: Question club members or district leaders about their volunteer experiences and how they got involved. If you're interested in a specific leadership role, ask someone in that role about their volunteer experiences that were helpful in leading to that role.

Find a Confidante: Sharing both successes and challenges in a positive manner is key to a meaningful volunteer experience. A confidante or mentor can help you make the most of your volunteer experience.

Turn Mundane Assignments Into Celebrations: Every volunteer project has tasks that need to be done. Be proactive and suggest making these tasks a group activity. Ask each volunteer to bring a snack, set up music, and have fun while you work. Turn the task into an opportunity to connect with other members and potential confidantes.