



Holiday Season Volunteer Ideas and Tips

The Classics: Some Traditional Ways to Volunteer

****Before donating items, always ensure the receiving individual or organization can actually use the items.***

- Assist food pantries and shelters prepare/serve meals for folks experiencing food instability
- Collect and distribute warm socks, gloves, and other needed items to folks who are vulnerable to cold weather
- Make holiday cards (send to veterans, neighbors, elders, people impacted by disaster, people who work far from family, folks who are incarcerated)
- Gather and donate gently used clothing, toys, and non perishables
- If you choose to exchange gifts, select products that make a difference! Example: Women's Bean Project
- Plan your holiday party around a service project

Outside the (Gift) Box: Give Back In New Ways

- Shovel snow, clean up yards, parks, and public spaces in your neighborhood
- Help folks put up decorations if they want to and have limited ability to do so independently
- Find out how you can support addiction recovery centers and mental health crisis resources
- Volunteer at a youth center to create a safe fun space for students while they are out of school and while their parents are working
- Get involved in LGBTQ initiatives, find ways to show support for folks who may not be connected with or accepted by their families
- Make time to visit with elders in the community or in nursing homes who may experience social isolation
- Give a Day along the way...while traveling for the holidays, schedule in an extra day to contribute to a community project somewhere on the way - look for local Foothills United Ways in the area you are travelling or look at: www.volunteermatch.org
- Organize or support putting together a community meal/outing/activity for international students who are staying on campus over break. CU Boulder opportunity:
<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0544a5ad2da2f49-international2>

Tips for Volunteering

- Communicate clearly with all involved parties about how you can best offer your time
- Understand that many nonprofits may be understaffed and swamped during this time
- Many organizations experience a drop off or shortage in volunteer support directly after the holidays-be open minded to volunteering when your work is most needed
- Keep in mind that there is a wide variety of religious backgrounds, cultures, identities, and ways to celebrate holidays
- Keep your phone use to a minimum when you show up to volunteer
- Get clear consent before taking or sharing any photos of the project, people impacted, and anyone involved.
- If you do chose to share your experience on social media, only share information and photos that ethically represent the people and project
- Make a connection! Service projects are a great way to meet new people and/or spend quality time with folks you already know
- Plan ahead and follow through

*For more information on how to apply these ideas to CU Boulder and our larger community, stop by and visit us in UMC 458!