

## **Murrysville Volunteer Program Volunteer Guide**

### **2016-2017 Volunteer Tips for individuals and organizations**

This booklet was prepared by the Murrysville Volunteer Program committee by researching other volunteer organizations and what how they help their communities.

Our Mission is to increase volunteer awareness and engagement in both community and Municipal roles.

We want to emphasize and reinforce how volunteers can get involved and where to get engaged...how to make a difference...with the end goal to establish a broader and more effective level of volunteer participation in the community, while improving the service level of volunteer organizations.

### **Using this Volunteer Guide**

A lot can be said about the positives of volunteering. It is important to enhance the experience all one can. Therefore, to maximize benefits for the volunteer and the organization, this guide offers tips that will give an idea of what volunteers should ask themselves and the organizations for which they volunteer. In the future, we will continue to update and expand this guide to help people continue to serve the community in a more effective and prosperous manner. Volunteers already do make this community a better place to live. The Murrysville Volunteer Program will strive to make this even better.

Thank you for taking the time to look through this Volunteer Opportunity Guide. Your support provides solutions to many critical needs in the area. We hope that you can find a meaningful opportunity to share your time and talent.

Details about volunteer organizations and opportunities to support them in Murrysville and the Franklin Area can be accessed through the Murrysville website at [www.murrysville.com](http://www.murrysville.com) under "Volunteer Opportunities" on the home page. Contact information and hyperlinks to organization websites are provided.

### **Volunteering Tips....**

#### **Before You Call or Apply....**

***Know what you want to do.*** Take some time to think about how you want to help. Start with the basics: What do you like to do? What are you good at? What skills do you have to offer? What issues concern you? What causes are important to you? Would you like to learn something new? What are your life goals and does any opportunity help you achieve these goals? Are there limits to where you want to volunteer? Write down your thoughts and use them to help you find the right volunteer opportunity.

**Research the organizations and their opportunities.** If the organization has a web site and you have online access, you may find it helpful to look at their website to learn more about the organization.

### **When You Call or Meet....**

**Ask questions.** It's best to ask any questions you have when you first call an organization. You and the organization can then determine if you are a good match.

**Be understanding.** Organizations cannot always take you on as a volunteer, even though you are willing to help. If an organization can't use you at this time, don't be discouraged. Just call back at a later date or find another organization that needs you now.

**Be honest.** Do not over commit. If the organization needs someone with skills you don't have, or they require a longer commitment than you are willing to give, be honest with them. They will try to find an activity that matches your abilities if at all possible.

**Be persistent.** If someone doesn't call you back immediately, don't assume they don't need you. Most organizations have small budgets and staff to handle overwhelming demands and they usually are very busy. Simply call back.

**Be prepared.** When meeting with a representative from the organization, bring along a summary of your skills you want to share or a biography/resume that translates your experience to skills that would be relevant to the position you would like. Discuss the goals you want to achieve by volunteering.

### **When You Volunteer....**

**Be responsible.** Make sure to dress and act appropriately. Show up on time. If you have to be late or absent, call the volunteer coordinator as soon as possible. Help them find someone to fill in for you.

**Be realistic.** You may not always see the impact your efforts are making. Volunteering is hard work, the problems are often profound, and the victories usually small. Never doubt that you're making a significant difference.... YOU ARE!

**Be humble.** Most people will thank you for your efforts, but some may not. Remember that people appreciate your efforts even if they don't say it.

**Be creative.** Volunteer your skills and ideas will come with time. Think about all the ways you can use your special talents to make a difference. Network and discuss your ideas with everyone. Work to make your new ideas solve old problems.

**Be proactive.** Get to know the organization and understand the culture. If something is not going well, discuss it with your volunteer supervisor, ask for feedback and share ideas that you have.

### **Virtual Volunteering...**

**Be aware.** Yes, there is such a thing! If you have a computer and the necessary skills, some organizations offer the opportunity to do volunteer work over the computer.

### **Group Volunteering...**

**Be prepared.** Before you call, figure out what type of organization you'd like to volunteer for, how many people will be in your group and when you can help.

**Be understanding.** Some organizations do not need groups to help, and most only need them at certain times. Don't be discouraged if an organization cannot use your group. There are others that can.

**Be flexible.** Don't tell an organization when you will come to help. Instead, ask when they need you.

**Be reliable.** Show up on time with the number of people you promised. Be prepared to work hard. The harder you work the greater impact you will make.

**Finish what you start.** If your project runs longer than you expected, work until it is completed. You have volunteered to do a job so don't leave it unfinished.

**Think past one time.** Most organizations that use volunteer groups would love to have them return on a regular basis. Working regularly with an organization is rewarding for the volunteers and helps the organization meet the needs of their clients.

### **Daytime Volunteering**

**Try to be flexible with your time.** Because of work or school schedules, you may only be able to volunteer in the evening or on weekends. If you have free time during weekdays, however, many organizations would be happy to have you help.

### **Special Needs**

**Talk with the organization.** Most organizations will make every effort to accommodate volunteers with special physical needs. If you have such needs, talk with the volunteer coordinator about them during your first call.

## **Special Tip**

***Give voice to your heart through giving and volunteering!*** Bring your heart and your sense of humor to your volunteer service, along with your enthusiastic spirit, which in itself is a priceless gift. What you get back will be immeasurable!

## **For Volunteers and Organizations**

Volunteer Rights include:

- To be treated as a partner and friend
- To have a meaningful assignment with consideration for the individual's interests, skills and life experiences
- To be kept "in the know" through frequent communications
- To receive thoughtfully planned and effectively presented orientation and training for the volunteer position
- To receive sound guidance and direction
- To be assured of accurate record keeping to meet the individual needs
- To be treated respectfully
- To be heard and be a part of planning, to feel free to make suggestions
- To enjoy a work environment that is energetic and conducive to work and fun.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering! For more information please visit, [www.murrysville.com](http://www.murrysville.com) or call our Volunteer Program Coordinator at 724-327-2100 extension 115.