

*Life's most urgent question is:
"What are you doing for others?"*

– Martin Luther King Jr.

iVolunteer

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VOLUNTEERING



Good Samaritan **Network**

Volunteering is generally considered an unselfish activity and is intended to promote goodness or improve human quality of life. It is helping, assisting, serving another person or persons without pay. In return, this activity produces a feeling of self-worth and respect. Volunteering is also widely held; it provides skill development, socialization, and fun. Volunteering may have positive benefits for the volunteer as well as for the person or community served.

iVolunteer Teams, Positions

Warehouse / Storage Sites - Assist in the systematic organization of the warehouse, including "sorting/processing" of received donations and consignment sales. This may include sorting, boxing, organizing, weighing, labeling, etc. Warehouse or storage site volunteers should be able to lift 30lbs minimum.

Office - Assist GSN office personnel and staff with related "office" work. This may include computer data entry, phone work, filing, sorting, mail prep, document/file proofing, shredding, etc. In some capable computer experience or training is helpful.

Holiday Data Entry Team – Data entry work (posting/typing, filing, phone follow-up, proofing, etc.) all GSN related Holiday application work. This team is "appointed" from those who express an interest and are assigned a "password" accordingly.

Personal Assistant – individuals who are willing to volunteer at least twice weekly as a personal assistant to carry out allocated work for specific staff they may be assigned to.

Coordinator – individuals who willingly oversee/coordinate specific assigned areas (social media, membership data, etc.) and regularly volunteer in collaboration with staff they may be assigned to.

GSN Lobby Phone/Receptionist – Assist and follow up with phone calls received and placed, retrieve vmail, document vmail, receive donations and help direct office/lobby traffic.

Standby Delivery Team – This team is typically "seasonal" specific. They personally deliver "after" event Holiday items as assigned by GSN. However, there may be additional times throughout the year that this team is activated.

Holiday Assistance iVolunteer – Assist GSN during Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday events (preparation and/or distribution dates). This includes the day of distributions and may include the week(s) preceding onsite for distributions.

Transportation Teams - These teams are involved in (a) **large truck** transport, delivery and pick up and/or (b) **cargo van** scheduled route pickups for items like: food drives, inventory boxes, humane society donations, etc. Typically these small transport teams work weekly. Additionally teams are responsible for delivery and pick up route(s) for our "Red Barrel Campaign" incorporated throughout Hamilton County each fall. On an as needed we may utilize additional transport team(s) for back-up work in larger item(s)/appliance(s), pallet work, storage transport, etc., and/or high-demand periods.

GENERAL VOLUNTEER

Individuals who sign-up to volunteer for specific event(s) to serve with GSN. Often this volunteer is a short-term, episodic volunteer.

PRIMARY SUPPORT VOLUNTEER

Individuals who are consistently involved in serving alongside GSN (minimum weekly or monthly basis) including special events.

COORDINATORS

Individuals who volunteer to coordinate specific areas of work within the infrastructure of GSN and take on a higher level of commitment and consistency of involvement. Typically involvement is until a project / event is completed or a yearly commitment.

VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER

Virtual volunteering is the practice of volunteering using the Internet, off-site from the organization. Virtual volunteering is also known as online volunteering or cyber service.

How to Sign-Up Online for iVolunteer Opportunities

Who Signs Up Online? – currently we ask **all volunteers** to use our online **iVolunteer sign-up system**, except for: “Personal Assistant”, “Coordinator” and “Virtual Volunteer” categories who work directly with assigned staff and whose sign-up may not affect the balance of office space and computer access/usage. These specialized volunteers weekly coordinate their schedule with respective staff.

Sign-Up Period – presently you can sign-up for typical volunteer areas and their listed date(s)/time(s) for a minimum of 30 days in advance, and often thru the end of the fiscal year... anytime 24/7!

Dates/Times/Slots Tabs – typical working days for iVolunteer sign-up will be Monday thru Thursday (most Fridays will be limited – and denoted as unavailable). A recognized holiday schedule will be implemented for our staff and volunteers, and those specific dates will not show up as sign-up options. Of course, the “**Holiday Assistance iVolunteer**” schedule is seasonal which is **typically** published no later than mid-October annually.

Currently, most sign-up times are scheduled for 2 hour shift/blocks and typically 2 volunteers per

shift/block - primarily for Office and Warehouse scheduling.

Normally scheduled shift/time blocks will include:
10am-12’pm
1pm-3pm

Volunteer/Task Tabs – typically only a select number of volunteers can be incorporated for specific tasks, dates/times/shifts, etc., due to office/warehouse space and other possible limitations.

Group Sign-Up - on occasion groups and additional individuals beyond the actual posted available slots can be accommodated by an advance request. Contact the GSN Executive Director for group volunteer requests early in planning.

Important Sign-Up Confirmation Note:
You will receive a “confirmation email” and you must confirm it by clicking a link in that email. The slot you signed up for will be locked for 10 minutes allowing you time to confirm. After 10 minutes you may still confirm the slot, but that slot will open back up for someone else in case they are interested in the same task/date/time, and you will be noted as “unconfirmed” – until you actually confirm your desire to volunteer.

Each volunteer is required to complete a personal information sheet and confidentiality statement, including providing a photo ID.

“The time is always right to do what’s right.”

– Martin Luther King Jr.

A Volunteer's Rights

The right to feel safe

As a volunteer, you have the right to be apprised of any potential risks as well as have precautionary measures and safety procedures in place to ensure your physical and emotional well-being.

The right to information about your volunteer role or project

Whether it's questions about the application process (why do I need to have a background check?) or the volunteer role or project itself (who will I be working with? how will my efforts make a difference?), you have the right to know the who, what, when, why, and how of your volunteer position.

The right to feel valued

Volunteering—whether for one hour or two years—is a significant commitment that you choose to make. In return, you have the right to feel that your time and contribution—however long you've volunteered and whatever your task—is valued.

Similarly, you have the right to feel that GSN is using your skills and talents well (keeping in mind that they may not always have the capacity to take on some or all of your ideas or proposed projects) and that the work you do has meaning and makes a difference.

The right to negotiate your volunteer role

Choosing how, where, why, and when to get involved is your right. Find yourself in a volunteer position that just isn't working for you? You have the right to talk to your volunteer manager or supervisor to discuss ways you might be able to shift your role or take on another optional project or position.

The right to leave

Certainly you have the right to leave at any time. Of course we don't want to lose any volunteer, either. Leaving permanently isn't a decision that should be made hastily but, if after talking to and working directly with your supervising staff member, and you feel unhappy, unappreciated, or unsatisfied with your volunteer experience; you do have the right to do something different, work elsewhere within the organization or leave the organization at any time.

“Do all the **good you can,
By all the **means** you can,
In all the **ways** you can,
In all the **places** you can,
At all the **times** you can,
To all the **people** you can,
As long as **ever** you can.”**

-John Wesley

A Volunteer's Responsibilities

The responsibility to communicate your needs

Feel like your work isn't meaningful? Not what you thought you'd signed up for? Or just bored and ready for something else? Talk to your appropriate staff member; provide specifics about your dissatisfaction and at least a few suggestions of ways to make it better. If you don't let them know that you're not getting from the experience what you'd hoped, they can't work with you to improve things. Similarly, don't hesitate to let them know if you feel you need additional tools, training, or support; if they can't provide it directly, they should at least be able to point you in the right direction.

The responsibility to follow through on your obligations

Improve your personal value as a volunteer by doing what you say you'll do, whether it's honoring the specific role and schedule you agreed to, providing notice if you're unable to perform your tasks or responsibilities, saying no or stepping away from volunteering when necessary, or simply serving as an advocate and good representative of the organization.

The responsibility to not promise what you can't deliver

Don't unintentionally promise too much. Sometimes when one is excited

about making a difference they may overextend themselves. This is especially important to avoid if you are working with a vulnerable population like children or the elderly, or when there are countless volunteer roles that need filled (like the Holidays). Find balance!

The responsibility to honor the organization's investment in you

An inescapable myth about volunteering is that volunteers are free. In fact, organizations invest quite a bit in their volunteers via staff time, energy, tools, training, and so on. This is why it's important to determine if GSN is a good fit for you, and, once you're in the role, to always first try negotiating your volunteer role if you're unsatisfied, rather than just suddenly leaving.

The responsibility to take care of yourself

Make sure that you aren't overextending yourself, burning out, or causing yourself physical, mental, or emotional harm. Don't take on roles that aren't a good fit or that you aren't prepared for.

While some stress and burnout may be inevitable depending on the project you can significantly limit it by seeking out support (talk to your volunteer manager and fellow volunteers), taking a break (either as you're volunteering. Have realistic expectations about what you can accomplish.

The responsibility to be publically fair and supporting

Should you have a differing of opinion with GSN leadership, it's best to avoid bad-mouthing the organization in public. Not only might your negative experience have been unique to your particular circumstance, but publicly bashing can hurt the organization's reputation and its ability to effectively carry out their mission.

FAQ Volunteer Overview

Who directly oversees “Volunteer Engagement” at GSN?

GSN’s Communications/Operations Director is responsible to oversee the development, engagement, administration and management of volunteers in direct coordination with the Executive Director.

What do I have to do when I first volunteer?

Each volunteer is required to complete a personal information sheet and confidentiality statement, including providing a photo ID.

Why do I have to sign a “confidentiality” statement?

Confidentiality is of utmost importance for all nonprofit organizations and it is especially important in relation GSN and the Hamilton County residents, clients and network base we serve.

What do I do when I actually arrive to volunteer?

For any event or volunteer opportunity – we always need volunteers to “sign-in” and “sign-out”. Simply sign your name and the time you arrive – and then sign out with the time you leave. Additionally, we prefer GSN volunteers are identified whenever possible. At times name badges, event staff t-shirts, etc., may be provided.

Why does GSN need to track my volunteer hours?

It’s enormously valuable to know how our volunteers are being engaged and where their time is being spent. Further, having good administration of volunteer hours for statistical data in reports, presentations and grant-writing is often critical to advancing our mission and vision.

How does GSN communicate with iVolunteers?

The most effective method of communication with GSN iVolunteers is typically email or text. No contact information will be shared third party.

What if my contact information changes?

Any time your contact information changes please provide that to the GSN office at your earliest convenience.

What does GSN do with my email and online sign-up information?

We are all about “confidentiality” and we have access to an online system that we believe is among the best in

GSN VOLUNTEERING

- Warehouse
- Office
- Holiday Assistance
- Lobby Phone/Receptionist
- Standby Delivery Team
- Holiday Data Entry Team
- Transportation Teams
- Personal Assistant
- Coordinator
- Virtual Volunteer

confidentiality. No volunteer lists are ever shared.

Why do donors have to complete a client DONATION RECEIPT for all donations?

All donations are “tracked” for GSN as part of a donor management system that includes Cash Receipts (Cash, Credit Card, Online Payment, Direct Deposit Donations, etc.) as well as all In-Kind donations (household goods, hygiene, clothing, toys, etc.). All requested information should be completed on each receipt at the point of donation. All donor information is extracted from the actual hard copy of the donation receipt for posting. As a non-profit 501(c3) we are required to track all donations and to post donor information for accounting purposes, and we always prefer to “go green” and to transact receipt communications via email if at all possible.

How are items processed when received in the warehouse?

We always weigh received food based on each donation receipt before processing it. Additionally we weigh cat and dog food/items based on each donation receipt. All other donations are tracked on a per donation receipt – based on our posted intake value chart. Once completed all donation receipts are then placed in the appropriate donation tray for posting.

Why does GSN need a “Phone/Reception” volunteer?

Trained “Reception/Phone” volunteers allow our office staff to be more focused on the daily workload -

especially related to sensitive files, financial documentation, client appointments, holiday work/maps, donor and volunteer management, etc.

Why does GSN use an “online” sign-up process for volunteers?

iVolunteer is an easy, effective way to sign up volunteers for events and to manage volunteer scheduling. It’s invaluable in saving staff time, increased participation, efficient contact information, administrative management and quick communications. Volunteers love its convenience! Additionally with the ability to confirm the number of slots per task/job, it provides clarity and direction for those utilizing the online sign-up.

What happens when I sign-up online as a volunteer?

You will be requested to provide your email account and a contact phone number. Additionally, you may be asked to provide your contact address information. Once you confirm a volunteer position you wish to fulfill, an email notification is sent to the form management administrator (Operations Director). That information is then communicated directly to the appropriate staff as needed. Additionally the scheduled time/details are posted on a daily/weekly inner office schedule. *(With the exception of Holiday or special event volunteering. Those volunteers are not listed/posted on the office schedule and are considered separate sign-ups from our actual onsite office and warehouse volunteers.)*

iVolunteer is an easy, effective way to sign up volunteers for events and to manage volunteer scheduling. It’s invaluable in saving staff time, increased participation, efficient contact information, administrative management and quick communications.

Can I just “show up” to volunteer with GSN at their offices or warehouse?

Yes you can! We are always glad to have volunteers even when online sign-up is not possible. However, our work load varies from day to day. It is possible we may not have work/tools and resources ready for you at that particular point in time. It's always best to call ahead.

Nonetheless, we respectfully request that everyone use our online sign-up. Further, with limited office space and computer equipment we genuinely need to prepare accordingly.

Can I personally take something from the warehouse or use office equipment for personal use?

Normally we prefer not to be placed in that position, but there may be occasions we are able to assist our volunteers on a limited basis. However, we must request that permission be given for each request/assistance. Speak to the Executive Director or the Operations Director for approval.

Can I personally borrow the GSN Van or Box Truck?

On occasion we can provide vehicle support to various network participants. However, typically we do not loan out the GSN Van or Box Truck (due to liability issues) unless approved directly by the Executive Director, and only when the vehicle(s) are not required for GSN business.

What if my volunteering “schedule” changes after I signup?

We prefer you use the cancellation procedure found in your original email confirmation. However, if you cannot cancel your online sign-up on your own, in a timely fashion, please contact the GSN office directly. Remember that “canceling” your sign-up online - allows that slot to become immediately/quickly available for others as they view the available slots.

What if GSN’S volunteer “needs/schedule” changes after I signup?

If you signed-up online (providing an accurate email address) we can easily contact you for quick communication of emergencies or other changes that affect our office or warehouse needs or schedule/time changes. Further, we always recommend calling ahead to confirm the scheduled volunteering and time(s) before arriving for your volunteer slot. Especially use good judgment when inclement weather is possible.

What “age” is appropriate for volunteering with GSN?

We always encourage families to volunteer: children, youth, adults, seniors. Typically anyone under age 16 must always be directly coordinated and accompanied by a parent, assigned adult or guardian. Modeling to children and youth a positive volunteering role model/culture is always appropriate.

DONATIONS

All donations are tracked for GSN as part of a donor management system that includes Cash Receipts (Cash, Credit Card, Online Payment, Direct Deposit Donations, etc.,) as well as all In-Kind donations (household goods, hygiene, clothing, toys, etc).

