Building Community: Gifting Time Volunteer Resource
Topic 5 – Virtual Volunteering

Virtual or remote volunteering can open new opportunities to engage volunteers from any location. Although the Building Community; Gifting Time Community Survey (the survey) reported on respondents' positive and negative opinions about online technologies, it can nevertheless provide alternative options for people who are well versed in the use of technology or willing to learn something new.

Virtual volunteering can overcome barriers such as time, transport and, to some extent, bureaucracy. Participants at the Community Forum were asked what opportunities exist such as virtual and remote volunteering, to make volunteering more accessible for everyone in our community?

Strategies to encourage more virtual volunteering on the Sunshine Coast

Virtual Volunteers

Many traditional volunteering roles may lend themselves to virtual volunteers and may make it easier for people interested in volunteering but constrained by distance, time, commitments, and other barriers to volunteering.

Training in the use of technology to take advantage of virtual volunteering needs to be tailored to suit the audience. As volunteers age or experience ill health, and on-site volunteering is no longer a possibility, virtual volunteering may be a way to keep them engaged. There are examples in the Resources section of different roles that can be completed remotely. Complete an audit of the volunteer tasks in your organisation and determine which of these may be suitable for undertaking remotely.

It is important that those in leadership roles and volunteer management are familiar with virtual volunteering to promote opportunities and support their virtual volunteers.

Creating online communities

Some of the reported motives for volunteering in the community survey relate to meeting new people and feelings of a sense of belonging. Organisations may need to consider how they include virtual and remote volunteers in their social and work-related gatherings, so they do not feel excluded and can build community connection. Reward and recognition will be as important to virtual volunteers and another way to make them feel included.

Resources

Examples of Virtual Volunteering

Australian Museum
Australian Volunteers
Vollie
The Smith Family
Be My Eyes
Career Village
Friends of the Earth
Translators Without Borders

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