

# Community Service

Participating in community service events is a great way to give back to your community while spreading the word of FIRST. Your team can assist at exhibitions or local festivals, participate in environmental cleanups, or serve food to the homeless. There are always ways to help.

## **Here are four steps to having a successful volunteering program:**

1) Research to find different events in your area. The easiest way to find events in your area is through the Internet, e.g. if you type "Community Service in San Diego" in your search engine, many websites automatically come up and from there you can select whichever events you'd like to participate in.

2) Put a member in charge of finding and contacting those who are hosting the event. Keep in mind that this person will not only be in charge of contacting the hosts of the events, but also in charge of notifying team members of future events. Contact the event coordinators via email or phone, and be sure to only have one team member contact the organizations. In your message include your name, a brief description of FIRST and of your team, and ask if your team can help out with the event. For example:

*Hello (insert name of event coordinator here),*

*My name is (insert name here) and I am a member of a FIRST Robotics team called "(insert team name here)." FIRST stands for "For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology" and it is a robotics program that inspires young people to become leaders of science and technology by engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that enhance science, engineering and technology skills. My team is from (insert school name here) and this is our (insert amount of years your team has been involved in FIRST) year being involved in FIRST. I am hoping that my team can help volunteer at your event, (insert name of event here) on the (insert date of event here). I look forward to hearing back from you. Thank you.*

*Respectfully,*

*(Name, team number and name)*

3) Once you have contacted the event coordinator and received confirmation that your team will be volunteering at the event, the third step will be getting your team members to attend the event. One way The Holy Cows motivate their team members to participate in community service events is by setting a benchmark of thirty community service hours that are required in order for each member to travel with the team. We also have a monthly "Cowmoonity Service Allstar" where the team member who completes the most community service gets a prize!

4) While at the event, the most important thing to remember is to be both professional and respectful. Remember that you are not only representing your team, but also the FIRST community.

Other Important Notes:

- Perform as much community service beforehand so you won't end up volunteering during build season.
- Members' hours can be logged and used on college applications.
- Be smart about events. If no one had fun doing a beach clean up, don't schedule more or you will face lack of interest. Find events your team likes doing.
- It is important to lay the groundwork for sustained involvement.

Community service is a rewarding way to reach out to the community as a team. Members gain community service hours, while helping others in need, and are able to take advantage of the opportunity to use community service as a medium to spread information about FIRST. The Holy Cows highly recommend that all teams have their members use the message of FIRST to help and give back to their community.