Volunteering Project Ideas

Consider the following activities suggested by the National PTA for increasing volunteerism. Keep in mind that in selecting activities, it is important to include initiatives for increasing parent/family involvement which are identified in the school’s improvement plan or the Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS).

Conduct a **school climate survey** in order to assess how friendly your school’s climate is to parents. Use the information received to guide efforts to make the school’s climate more inviting.

Host a **How You Can Make a Difference** orientation session for parents and volunteers each year. Invite school staff to address relevant topics, demonstrate equipment use and provide parents and other volunteers with a packet of timely information.

Create a **Volunteer Center** in the school. While it may take creativity, almost any facility can accommodate some sort of welcoming area for volunteers, from a corner of the library to an area in a hallway with a couple of lockers for personal belongings. Put up a bulletin board for announcements and be sure there is a place to sign in and record volunteer hours.

**Show appreciation.** Thank volunteers throughout the year in the school newsletter, at special events and using personal thank-you notes. Consider creating a ‘Wall of Fame’ display or bulletin board with pictures of volunteers helping with school activities and events. Showing what and how much can be accomplished by volunteers can encourage others to get involved.

**Create volunteer opportunities** that go beyond the traditional tasks that volunteers perform. For example, at the secondary level, consider a “Parents in the Hall Program” which encourages parents to drop in and get their exercise walking at the high school instead of at the gym. After picking up a volunteer/visitor badge at the office, these parents perform an important service by increasing the adult presence in the building and thereby reducing behavior problems. As a side benefit, parents get acquainted with the school.

Publish a **Volunteer Resource Book**, listing the interests and availability of volunteers for school staff members’ use. Survey parents regarding their interests, so volunteer work will be meaningful. Be sure to determine how frequently a volunteer would like to participate, including the option of just one time per year. Include options for those who are available to help at home with a community or chapter house meeting. Use the resource book to help match school needs with volunteer interests.

**Recruit one room representative** for each classroom who would be responsible for coordinating volunteer activities for the class. This person would work closely with the teacher, matching interests and needs.

*Adapted from: National PTA (2004)*