

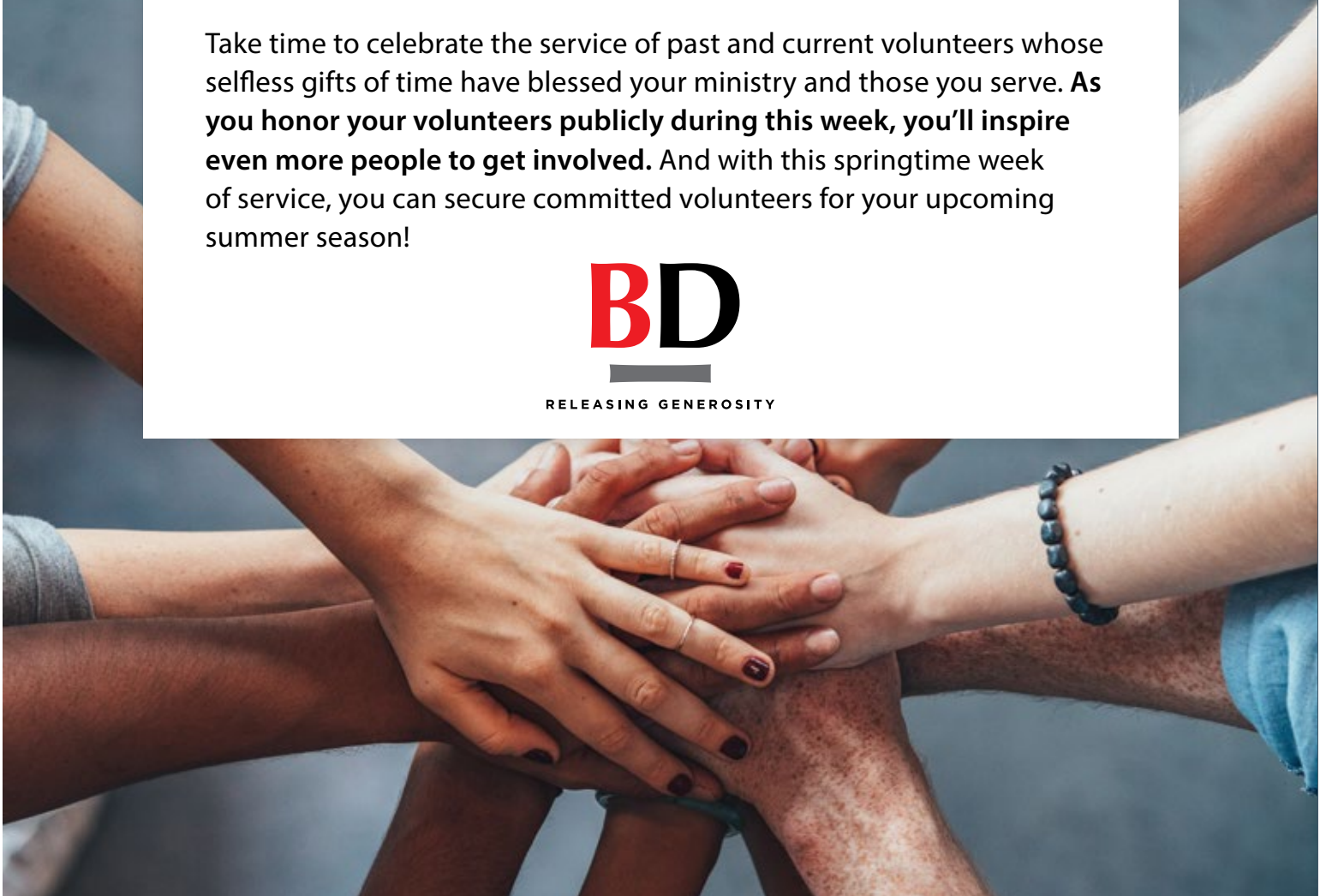
# National Volunteer Week: Celebrate, Inspire & Invite Helpful Hands

“There is power in numbers...” “Many hands make light work...” These are phrases often heard when we talk about teamwork. But there’s truth in these ideas. **When facing community challenges – like homelessness, hunger and poverty – we need the help of the entire community.** National Volunteer Week – one week in the month of April devoted to service – presents an ideal moment to rally your community to serve at your ministry and see how they can make a difference in the world, starting in their own backyard.

Take time to celebrate the service of past and current volunteers whose selfless gifts of time have blessed your ministry and those you serve. **As you honor your volunteers publicly during this week, you’ll inspire even more people to get involved.** And with this springtime week of service, you can secure committed volunteers for your upcoming summer season!

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# CELEBRATE

When the spotlight falls on the needs your Mission must meet, the volunteers who help to meet those needs don't always get the recognition their service deserves. National Volunteer Week celebrates extraordinary people doing extraordinary things. Take advantage of this week to honor those who make the heart of your ministry truly beat!



**Start with Thanks.** Before thinking through ways to gain more volunteers during this important week, make sure to thank faithful volunteers who currently serve at your organization or who have in the past. Send a letter of appreciation from your Mission director, a card signed by several Mission guests or even a handmade gift made by your residents. As you reach out to volunteers who've served in the past, you can also invite them to join you during this week which celebrates service.

## PRO TIP!

As a kick-off or celebratory end to this week, host an annual meal or reception highlighting the work of volunteers – both new and old. If your Mission logs volunteer hours served, this would be a perfect time to share this awe-inspiring stat and challenge your community to surpass it in the year ahead!



**Daily Point of Light Award.** National Volunteer Week encourages communities to nominate outstanding volunteers for the Daily Point of Light Award, a national recognition honoring individuals whose service “lights the way” in their cities to “spark” change for good. Visit [pointsoflight.org](http://pointsoflight.org) to nominate a volunteer!

## PRO TIP!

Encourage followers of your Mission's social media to join you in nominating volunteers for the Daily Point of Light Award. Sharing about the award leads to awareness – which in turn could inspire new volunteers to help your ministry even more!

# CELEBRATE, continued



**National #ivolunteer Social Media Campaign.** Encourage current volunteers and supporters of your ministry to join you in a social media campaign showcasing service. At [pointsoflight.org](https://pointsoflight.org), people can download a sign with the campaign's #ivolunteer hashtag, then post a photo with it sharing why they serve. For greatest impact, be sure to pair the photo posts with the hashtag #ivolunteer or #NVW and #ServiceUnites (two National Volunteer Week hashtags), plus your ministry-specific tags to shine a brighter light on your valuable volunteers.

## PRO TIP!

Visit National Volunteer Week's **toolkit** at [pointsoflight.org](https://pointsoflight.org) for sample social media posts and shareable graphics you can use to inspire service this week and beyond!



# INSPIRE

Everybody loves good news. When you celebrate and honor your current volunteers, you create a culture of appreciation your organization becomes known for, inspiring others to get involved! In addition to celebrating current volunteers, check out more ways you can engage new volunteers to serve as you share the heart of your Mission.



**Local Social Media Campaign.** Build upon the strength of National Volunteer Week's #ivolunteer social media campaign by uniting your community with a local campaign recognizing your ministry's most dedicated volunteers. Consider a theme to give continuity to your campaign – for example, on day one, highlighting a volunteer who has served one year, on day two, a volunteer serving two years, etc.

## HERE'S A GOOD EXAMPLE:

*"A million meals served! That's how many meals superstar volunteer Samantha Smith has helped to serve at [Mission Name] – 200,000 meals every year, for 5 years! Thank you, Samantha, for dishing up a million meals and immeasurable amounts of love to our Mission guests! #MissionHashtag #NVW #ServiceUnites"*

## PRO TIP!

Pair your posts with a photo of your volunteers serving. The recognition shows how much they're appreciated and gives prospective volunteers a picture of what service at your Mission can look like. If the volunteers pictured represent a business, church or other group in your community, be sure to tag that group's Facebook page in your post. Your ministry will benefit from added exposure to that group's followers!

# INSPIRE, continued



**Mission Tour.** When supporters of your Mission are able to see firsthand how their donations and prayers are changing lives, the vision of your ministry becomes their own. Invite current donors, social media followers, churches, businesses and community groups to sign up to tour the Mission. Start or end the event with a testimony from a program resident whose life has been changed in the Mission's care, and offer info on current volunteer needs.



**Meet the Director.** Either as part of a Mission tour or as a stand-alone event, connect supporters with your Mission director, who can share a powerful perspective on the work of the ministry and be a strong voice of encouragement to personally invite attendees to become volunteers. Many Mission supporters recognize the name or face of your Mission director, but having the chance to meet in person makes a lasting impression, fostering deeper community investment in your cause.



# INVITE

While some helpful hands will rally themselves to serve when they hear stories of how volunteers are helping out, others need that extra special touch – a personal invitation – to take that first step to volunteer. As you reach out, present National Volunteer Week as an event they won't want to miss, and one you sincerely hope they'll attend!



**Seven Days of Service!** Go all out this week with a daily service opportunity volunteers can sign up for each day of National Volunteer Week. Use this week as a “service opportunity sampler,” giving volunteers an idea of the different ways they can get involved at your Mission. Encourage sign-ups in advance so you'll know how many helpful hands to expect. Host the suggested service days that follow, or come up with your own according to the unique needs of your Mission and the guests you serve!



# INVITE, continued



## **Day of Prayer Sunday**

Start the week with your volunteers by seeking the Lord for His guidance, help and blessing for all those who will serve. Reach out to church groups and current volunteers and supporters, inviting them to join you at the Mission to pray for the week ahead. Provide a list of praises and prayer requests to guide your time together – you can even share this on social media or via email, still engaging those unable to pray on-site!



## **Meal-Prep Monday**

Volunteers can help your Mission food service team prepare for the many meals ahead, from sorting food pantry donations to chopping veggies. “Providing meals” is often the main role people associate with a Mission, so use this day to show them all that goes into this vital service and how they can help!



## **Tutoring Tuesday**

Welcome volunteers with teaching experience, professionals with skills to share or simply those with a heart to help others learn. Let them sit in on a tutoring session or class at your Mission, and use this day as an introduction to longer-term service opportunities in your education center or life-skills classes. Incorporate service into this day by having volunteers help sort class materials, make copies or tidy up classrooms.



## **Warehouse Wednesday**

If your Mission has a thrift store, give volunteers a behind-the-scenes look at this valuable enterprise. Even if you only have a warehouse, volunteers can help sort through donations of clothing, food and household items your ministry receives. As a thank-you for their service, consider giving all volunteers who help a coupon for a discount at the Mission thrift store.

# INVITE, continued



## **Tots to Teens Thursday**

Many people think Missions only serve hungry, homeless men. Open volunteers' eyes to the reality that your ministry serves everyone, from tots to teens! Organize a fun spring day of games, activities and treats for the children and teens staying at your Mission. Volunteers can help coordinate games and activities like face painting, serve healthy snacks and provide anything else your youngest guests might enjoy! Consider pairing with a "pack their backpacks" drive to encourage donations of school supplies and other items young guests at your Mission need.



## **Foodie Friday**

Make this day a food fest in several fun ways! Volunteers can continue meal-prep tasks, like sorting food donations, as well as serve guests at any of your daily meals. If you add a food drive to this day, volunteers can bring needed pantry items to donate when they come to serve. You might even reach out to a local restaurant or business to see if they would donate a special treat like dessert for volunteers and Mission guests after one of your meals on this Foodie Friday!



## **Spring Cleaning Saturday**

On a day when more people aren't working, benefit from the help of many "weekend warriors" to clean up around your Mission grounds and facilities. Provide indoor and outdoor options, and tasks for every level of ability – from trimming a tree to cleaning counters – and affirm volunteers that every selfless act of service makes a difference.

## **PRO TIP!**

**Prepare for Follow-Up.** At each daily service event, make sure to have sign-up sheets to collect contact details of your volunteers (emails, phone numbers, etc.). Print flyers or small cards with information on how your volunteers can commit to ongoing service at your organization.



# INVITE, continued

## PRO TIP!

**End with Thanks.** When volunteers feel appreciated and sense that their help made a difference, they're more likely to help again! Be sure to follow up with all volunteers who helped during your service week, expressing your thanks and personally inviting them to serve at your Mission in the future.



**Summer Sign-Ups!** With National Volunteer Week leading up to summer, your Mission has the perfect opportunity to enlist a committed volunteer force to rely on during the leaner summer months when many people are away traveling. But remember – summer is also a time when many students are home for summer break, so tap into this treasure trove of summer helpers who'll catch your Mission's vision as they serve and might even grow into long-term volunteers and supporters!

This strategy sheet is provided to you by Brewer Direct's Academy and can be located in the Library. If you'd like to discuss the ideas found here or want to know more about the Academy, contact Shellie Speer, Senior VP, Academy at [sspeer@brewerdirect.com](mailto:sspeer@brewerdirect.com) or (719) 210-6207.



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