



Peer-Led  
Community Support  
for  
Pregnancy, Infant &  
Child Loss

# Tips To Volunteering

Want to get involved? Great! Gardens of Grace has opportunities that can address many different skill sets. Here you have a few tips that will help you to make the best out of your experience:

1. **Be honest with yourself**
2. **Figure out what you want to do**
3. **Join the army!**
4. **Ten ways to be a good volunteer**

**1. Be honest with yourself about how much you want to give.** If you are not sure about how much time you wish to commit to think about the following before you decide:

- Look at your schedule -work, family, friends, other commitments you have already made- and see how much free time you have
- Consider whether this volunteer commitment is going to fill up some extra time that you've got, or whether you are going to need to squeeze it in-or perhaps give up something else you've been doing (which could be anything from your book club to watching funny videos on YouTube)
- Decide if having another commitment is going to make you feel good and happy and useful-or stressed out, overwhelmed, and resentful
- Imagine the volunteer commitment you are about to take on and where you see yourself in a year. Do you see yourself as proud of what you've accomplished? Wanting to continue? Hoping to take on more? Or glad to put it behind you now that you've done your time?

If you first make a small commitment to volunteer, and you later decide you like it, you are having a good time, and you are really making a difference, then whomever you are volunteering for will be more than happy to give you more to do!.

**2. Figure out what you want to do.** Gardens of Grace offers positions requiring many different skills, so finding something you LIKE to do, or are GOOD at, should be simple. If you want to do something you have never done before, be sure you have the time to commit to it. Taking this into account will allow you to choose the right volunteer opportunity so is both enjoyable and fruitful to you:

- Do you wish to do something that allows you to put in practice your skills? Maybe something that you have done before, or continue doing nowadays



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- Would you like to develop new skills? Think about new things you've never done and don't be afraid to try them out! You might find new skills and talents you did not know you possessed
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- Do you like "asking for money"? A lot of people enjoy this! If setting up goals for fund-raising is your thing, look for those opportunities that would allow you to do this
- Are you into building projects, changing places, re-organizing sites? Longer projects that involve building things or making capital improvements are extremely worthwhile and gratifying. Get involved in one of these on-campus!

**3. Join the army!** The army of volunteers wants you. But, unlike other armies, it really wants you to be happy too. So think about where in the ranks you want to be. Every volunteer job needs everyone from soldiers to generals and everyone in between too!

- **Generals:** The generals like to plan. They have an idea in their head and part of the fun of it is bringing that vision to life. There are two qualities that are great for generals to have: (1) generals need to see the big picture: it may be their own idea or it may be someone else's idea that they bring to life, and (2) they are organized. Generals not only have these skills, but they are energized by the activity and the responsibility. They do not usually find it particularly stressful. Time consuming, for sure.
- **Lieutenants (and captains and colonels):** They are willing to take on a big job, but they usually don't want to do any more than that, and they don't really want to do any less, either. Anyone who has ever worked on a school fair, a fund-raiser, or a church bazaar and has found themselves on a committee knows how important the leader of that committee is. They do an important and gratifying task, but it is focused and limited. Lieutenants often see a need and find a way to fill it.
- **Soldiers:** Soldiers like to work hard. They want to know what they need to do and when they need to do it. They are priceless. Many people who like to be soldiers are willing and able to take on enormous tasks, and they enter into their job with gusto and the knowledge that they have to complete everything they have committed to; their focus is on their responsibility and no one else's. These are the people who keep the engine running. Of course, some soldiers move up the ranks from time to time.



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### **4. Ten ways to be a good volunteer**

1. If no one has told you what to expect, you ask.
2. Be on time. If something comes up that is unavoidable, or if you even just have a change of heart, you own it and let the organization know you're not coming. You can do this via e-mail, phone, or even text messages. If you DO decide to not follow a commitment, make sure you arrange for a replacement, or allow enough time to find one.
3. Come equipped with whatever you said you were going to bring. This could include everything from closed-toe shoes to your mom or dad. If you want to be a terrific volunteer, you ask if there's anything else they might want you to bring.
4. You remember that you are in service. If the person running the project asks you to do something you really don't want to do, you do it anyway. If you can't do something due to health reasons, explain them and then ask what you can do instead.
5. Remember that you are there to help. Having a good time is key, but while you are at the activity, it is actually, at best, the second-most-important reason you are there. If your task is done, for example, ask "what else can I do to help?"
6. If something takes a surprising turn, you go with it. Remember this is a volunteer experience and that everyone is doing their best. If you want to be a stellar volunteer, find ways to resolve the surprising turn things have taken.
7. Use your common sense. Remember, the rules that apply to the rest of your life apply to volunteering too. Say you are cleaning a park, and you fill all the garbage bags. No supermarket is nearby and no one has thought to go to the supermarket. However, you see the garbage cans for regular use in the park so you start filling them with the garbage you have left. You don't have to ask, you just do it. Common sense.
8. Remember that people are people. A smile and friendly questions such as: What is your name? Where are you from? are always good ice breakers.
9. Focus on the good. It's about people trying to do something nice!
10. You stay until the job you agreed to do is done. Even if other people leave early you want to be a great volunteer! And before you go, you say thanks.