Transforming Food Pantries through Volunteerism
Using Learning Communities To Meet Our Ever-Increasing Needs

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Volunteers

• Food Pantries cannot survive without volunteers
• Yet volunteers have the ability to drive us crazy
• Many complain that volunteers
  • Aren't reliable
  • Take more work
  • Don't commit

Core to Friedens Mission

• Volunteers are at the core of our mission, not a means to an end
• Friedens empowers our volunteers each year to both:
  • Grow as individuals
  • Serve the community

Core to Friedens Mission

• We do not actively seek volunteers for specific skills they have to offer our organization.
• As a volunteer-driven organization, we have found that the only way to empower our volunteers to stay invested is by encouraging them to learn about the heart behind our mission and by giving them the opportunity to improve our processes to meet that mission.

Building Ladders of Peace

IMPACT
• 2,500+ VOLUNTEERS
• SERVED countless HOURS
• 4 DIFFERENT SITES
• 10,000 UNIQUE HOUSEHOLDS
• TO FEED 58,000 PEOPLE
• WITH 5 DAYS OF FOOD

HOURS

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Learning Outcomes:

• Creating a culture that encourages and supports connecting your volunteers with community members and your mission.
• Integrating volunteer contributions by transferring ownership of small tasks, allowing the best of the ideas to infiltrate throughout the organization.
• Empowering volunteers to recruit, train and equip the next generation of volunteers.

20/20/20 Volunteer On-Ramping

People: Creating easy on-boarding

Passion: Connecting with each volunteer’s skills

Purpose: Carrying the mission.

Engaging Volunteers: People

Creating easy on-boarding

Create a culture that encourages and supports continuous volunteer learning, critical thinking, and risk-taking with new ideas.

• Each step of increasing volunteer engagement takes about 20 hours. During the first step of onboarding, we spend a lot of time focusing on connecting our volunteers with community members and our mission. During this stage, most information is flowing from the organization to the volunteer. Even with 20 hours of volunteer service, people are often intrigued with what they experience, but they don’t fully understand the organization’s larger mission.

Engaging Volunteers: People

Creating easy on-boarding

• Entry: Streams of Volunteers
  • School groups / hours
  • Church groups / missions trips
  • Social Media followers
  • Business teams
  • Invite community members to serve
  • Job Transition Programs
  • Drop In Site
• Overview of Volunteer
  • Little Buy-In
  • Don’t love/ passion for mission
  • Curious
  • Want to be busy
• Faithful in the Small Things
  • Regular volunteers
  • Connect with others in the community
Engaging Volunteers: Passion
Connecting with volunteer’s skills

Allow mistakes, and value volunteer contributions.
• During this second step, the concepts of a learning organization come into practice. After an individual has been volunteering for about 20 hours, we ask if there is something we could do to improve our processes. Their response almost always includes something they uniquely can provide. It is during this stage that we begin to empower individuals to take ownership.

Engaging Volunteers: Passion
Connecting with volunteer’s skills

Learn from experience and experiment.
• During the third step, carrying the mission, volunteers have the most impact on the organizational structure, as they are given the tools they need to implement best practices throughout the organization. After serving 40-plus hours, they have learned not only our procedures; more importantly, they have learned the “why” behind our processes and the heart behind our mission. They are purposefully instructed to train someone to fill the requirements of their position.

Learning Community

Disseminate the new knowledge throughout the organization for incorporation into day-to-day activities.
• These skills help shape the next step of growth for our whole organization. We begin translating the new knowledge into ways of behaving throughout our food pantry network.

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