

Query on Virtual Volunteering/Employee Volunteering During COVID-19

June 4, 2020

Query: *Even if offices reopen, there could be extensive health and safety protocols or additional restrictions that make in-person volunteering difficult. Does anyone have any strategies or resources for virtual volunteering that could be shared?*

CNJG:

- Governor's Office of Volunteerism [Resource Page](#) and [Volunteer Guidelines](#)
- NJ VOAD's [Volunteer Portal](#)

SUEZ

- Send letters/notes to resident in local nursing homes or like-type facilities.

Many of them have been confined to their rooms and weren't able to socialize with family and friends. We thought by having our employees send letters to them it would help brighten their day and bring some cheer to them while having to social distance themselves from everyone. We actually started out only doing it for 3 weeks, but ended up extending it for 6 weeks (just ended it). Our employees loved participating and the residents enjoyed receiving weekly letters from their "pen pals".

- We also offered our employees several independent virtual volunteering opportunities that they could do individually. A few were: the American Red Cross, Hire Heroes and Eldercare Lifetime Connections Program.

Sanofi

- [Jersey Cares](#) is an incredible resource for virtual volunteering for both individual opportunities, as well as corporate service.
- [Caring Capital](#) is also another one that has a variety of options.

Janssen Pharmaceuticals

- We're promoting "acts of kindness" - things that our colleagues can easily do with their families, while still maintaining social distance (e.g., take a walk in your neighborhood and pick up litter; draw cards to healthcare workers; host a food drive in your neighborhood; etc.).
- For some of these activities, we'll be setting up Zoom calls where people can do it at the same time and promoting them as mental health breaks (e.g., take an hour to write a note to a family struggling with cancer – we'll introduce you to a nonprofit org that works in this space, and then just allow for social time) – additionally, we're encouraging teams who are interested in doing this to organize one on their own and providing a list of possible volunteer topics/activities
- We're also reaching out to our nonprofit partners that we typically support to see if they have virtual assignments that our colleagues can engage in – anything ranging from the

simple, 30 minute activity (e.g., card writing) to something more meaningful and skills-based (e.g, help develop a crisis communications plan) - however, not sure how recruitment will go so we are being mindful of how we promote this so our partners recognize it's not a guarantee that they'll be able to recruit someone

- We'll also be promoting resources where colleagues can find their own remote/virtual projects that match their interests and availability – catchafire, taprootplus, volunteermatch, etc.
- We intend to pilot a virtual one-day skills-based volunteer model, where ~50 employees (in small teams) can work with ~10 nonprofits on scoped out projects where the nonprofit can walk away with a solution
- Dependent on interest, we'll also pilot some virtual “classroom” style skills based projects – e.g., if a communications function wants to develop a “storytelling 101” training, or marketing team wants to develop “market research 101”, we'll host a series of trainings and then invite our nonprofit partners to the trainings and possibly offer some 1:1 consulting after training

We're working on how to package them so it provides a wide range of opportunities for anyone interested, but doesn't come across as overwhelming. We know a lot of colleagues are struggling with balancing the demands of home/work right now and want to be respectful of that, as well.

Holman Enterprises

- the Philadelphia Foundation's [Key Skill Hub Volunteer Portal](#) compiles good ways to volunteer virtually.

Both people looking to volunteer, and nonprofits looking for help, can post. These opportunities tend to be high-skill positions – marketing strategy, graphic and website design, etc. – for individual contributors, very different from the large groups of people we used to activate to paint or landscape or pack meals.

Summit Medical Group Foundation

- [Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County](#)– looking for one-year commitments
- [Jewish Family Services of Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren Counties](#)



VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Family Mentor Program/ Senior Friendly Visitor Program

Volunteers are matched with vulnerable families or socially isolated, frail seniors for weekly or twice a month virtual visits by phone alone or internet. Make a difference in someone's life by developing a relationship and providing support and meaningful time together.

Tutor

Volunteer tutors are positive role models who provide consistency and educational assistance to a child through one-on-one tutoring, virtually

Good Deeds Program

Remotely help seniors with technology issues i.e. setting up Zoom, Facetime, etc.

Other opportunities: Senior Shopper Program

Provide grocery shopping and no contact drop off to homebound frail seniors weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. Telephone contact only.



Online applications available at www.jewishfamilysvc.org.

Contact us at admin@jewishfamilysvc.org for more info.
