

Community Service

GENERAL 2

PIONEER PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS 2

 ASSOCIATION-SUPPORTED PROGRAMS 2

 PIONEER PARTNERSHIPS 3

FOCUS ON EDUCATION 4

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES 4

 SELECTING THE PROJECT 4

COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMITTEE 5

 OBJECTIVES 5

 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES 6

 RECRUITING COMMITTEE MEMBERS 6

 USING THE TALENTS AND INTERESTS OF MEMBERS 6

 PROGRAM DIVERSITY 7

FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY SERVICE 7

PLANNING THE ANNUAL PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES 7

 DEVELOPING THE ANNUAL PROGRAM 8

 CALENDAR OF EVENTS 9

PARTICIPATION..... 9

 ATTRACTING PARTICIPANTS..... 9

 CO-BRANDING 10

 RECOGNITION 10

RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTS 11

GENERAL

This Practice is a reference for our commitment to community service. TelecomPioneers is a network of current and former telecom industry employees and their families who volunteer to address community needs. We represent our companies' and the industry's commitment to responsible corporate citizenship. Pioneers are a major contributor of volunteer activities in our communities, offering a broad-based platform of community service that includes educational, environmental, human services, as well as health and life enrichment programs. Pioneers put a visible face on our sponsor companies' commitment to the community.

PIONEER PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Over the years Pioneers have learned to be very creative in planning and supporting projects that are innovative and useful in our communities. We have also recognized that with the support of various organizations, our goals can be more easily accomplished. The Association, therefore, has entered into a number of organizational alliances or partnerships to benefit our organization as well as the community in general. The following sections provide an overview of these programs, products and partnerships.

Association-Supported Programs

The Association supports many programs (products) at the national and international level. Programs that continue to benefit the community and are popular with Pioneers year after year include:

- Beep Baseball – This Pioneer invention – a 16-inch softball specially outfitted with a beeping device makes baseball a game for all athletes – sighted and sightless alike.
- Computers for Schools (Canada) – This multiple-award winning program is reclaiming, refurbishing and recycling used government and business computers for needy schools and libraries.
- Hug-a-Bears – This homemade teddy bear is provided to law enforcement agencies, fire departments and emergency squads for their use in comforting children in traumatic situations.
- Heart Pillows – These pillows give comfort to patients undergoing heart and other surgeries.
- H.O.T. Trikes – Another Pioneer invention, the “hand-operated tricycle” is designed for children who cannot use their legs.
- Playground Maps – Pioneers paint maps of the United States, Canada and/or North America on elementary school grounds and provide a teacher's aide to assist in geography lessons.

- Smart Bears – This Hug-a-Bear spin-off carries a “backpack” of items to encourage learning.
- Talking Books – This program of repairing Talking Book machines brings the printed word to the visually or physically impaired.
- Easy Access – This program helps improve access to national and state/provincial parks for those with disabilities.
- 911 Call Simulator – This project teaches children how to phone for help in an emergency.
- “Read to Me” kits – These kits are designed to reach newborns and literacy “at-risk” parents, stressing the importance of reading to children from birth and throughout childhood.

Pioneer Partnerships

The Pioneers Association has joined with the following organizations to improve the quality of life in our communities:

National Beep Baseball Association

A partnership started in 1964 to support the blind and visually impaired in playing a modified version of baseball.

Canadian National Institute for the Blind

A partnership started in 1971 to support the Talking Book repair program in Canada.

Family Matters

A partnership signed in 1999 with the Points of Light Foundation designed to increase volunteerism by family units.

Habitat for Humanity

A partnership signed in 1997 to encourage the local units of both organizations to work together to build houses for low-income families.

Industry Canada

A partnership signed in 1995 to support the growing need for computers in schools and libraries across Canada (Computers for Schools).

Junior Achievement

A partnership signed in 1995 to support in-school economics education in schools across the United States and Canada.

Library of Congress

A partnership started in 1960 to support the Talking Book repair program in the United States.

National Park Service/National Center on Accessibility

A partnership dating back to 1991 to support accessibility efforts in national and state parks.

U. S. Department of Education

A cooperative, working agreement dating back to 1995 in support of the Department of Education and the Goals 2000—Educate America Act. This agreement was updated in 1998 to focus Pioneers' education efforts on the Department's Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. In 2003 the written agreement expired and it is now verbally agreed that the Pioneers will focus on the "No Child Left Behind Act."

The Association ~~Executive Committee~~ Board of Directors has also announced its support for the White House-sponsored Millennium Communities Program as well as the Canadian Federal Government's Millennium Partnership campaign.

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Many of the educational initiatives discussed in the previous section, both in terms of partnerships and programs, are a direct outgrowth of the Pioneers "Focus on Education," as it has come to be known. It is important to keep in mind that these are merely a beginning point for this effort that is further supported by the hundreds of other projects initiated and developed at the grassroots level. Activities such as adopt-a-school programs and student mentoring, for example, add fuller definition to our educational focus.

In order to continue to position Pioneers as the preeminent volunteer organization for education and to make good on our commitment to the America's Promise program (100 million hours of community service, 50 percent of them in education-based programs), Pioneers at all levels of the Association should remain open to investigating and adding new programs that reflect the goals of the organization.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Pioneers impact generations to come through an array of environmental projects. These are defined as projects that correct or enhance the environment. Various federal, state and provincial agencies are located throughout the U. S. and Canada (the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Forest Service, Environment Canada, Canadian Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food etc.) and can provide project ideas. These offices have free literature and may provide speakers for chapter meetings to describe local problems and government programs that may need volunteers.

Selecting the Project

Environmental projects can include – but are not limited to - the following categories:

- Clean water programs (beach and river cleanups)
- Adopt-a-highway
- Recycling
- Tree planting
- Soil conservation
- Noise pollution
- Clean air programs
- Ramp building, hiking trails, boardwalks, wheelchair accessible fishing piers, etc.

In the beginning, it is advisable to stick to simple projects with clearly defined goals that are attainable within a fairly short time. The project should pertain to a local problem and deal with an environmental subject that excites the membership. By working with local officials and determining the needs of the community, you will have meaningful projects with specific goals for your team.

Regular, continuing projects scheduled on a weekly or monthly basis, as well as one-time projects, such as a clean-up drive or seedling planting, are just a few more examples of what your team can do. While the contribution that Pioneers can make to the environment is substantial, environmental activity promises to return many benefits to the Pioneers as well. Sponsoring projects to preserve and enhance our environment gives the chapter the opportunity to:

- Encourage greater membership participation through programs that appeal strongly to all Pioneer members and non-members.
- Undertake projects that reward participants with visible and relatively quick results.
- Cooperate with the local community and conservation organizations.

COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMITTEE

This section provides information on the form and function of the Community Service Committee in the chapter, council or club. Please note some units may elect to create separate committees to address educational and environmental concerns, while others may choose to include these topics within the Community Service committee.

Objectives

Individual Pioneers have been active in community causes for many years. This strong civic interest, coupled with personal concern for fellow members, led Pioneering's earliest community service projects. The first Pioneer group community service activities began in 1948 and have continued to be the "backbone" of our activities to this day. Community service was the theme of the 1958 General Assembly (Annual Meeting), where it was officially adopted as an Association-wide goal and a new tradition for TelecomPioneers was born.

The objective of the community service committee should be to stimulate the desire and provide the means for all members of the Pioneer family to participate in worthwhile activities in their communities.

Duties and Responsibilities

The community service chairperson acts as an advisor and coordinates the community activities of the chapter, council or club under the leadership and guidance of the chapter and unit executive committees. The unit executive committee is responsible for approving community service activities as official Pioneer projects. *Note: All executive committee-approved projects (along with any budget requirements) should be so noted in the formal meeting minutes.*

At all levels, the Community Service Committee meets regularly to make recommendations on the activities the chapter, council and/or club will be involved in during the Pioneer year and to monitor their outcomes. In this, the committee considers which projects best meet the needs of the local community and the interests and energies of the membership. Once these projects are determined, the committee should work with the Participation Committee in promoting and encouraging the engagement of the membership and in maintaining accurate and timely records of participation hours for input to the on-line PA7 system. (See Defining Community Service Projects and Reportable Volunteer Information Practice, for more information on tracking results.)

Pioneer community service programs should be constructive. It is important to avoid projects that are negative, that point fingers at local industry, or that may embroil Pioneers or the chapter in controversy.

Recruiting Committee Members

The most important qualification for any committee member is enthusiasm! Enthusiastic leaders are the difference between a merely adequate and a really great service program. Some of Pioneering's most successful projects, which spread to many chapters across the Association, resulted from the enthusiasm, inspiration and devotion of a single member. And speaking of "single members", a committee of one is still a committee for Pioneering.

It is important to select people who will enjoy the work and are willing to give the extra effort needed to complete their assignments.

The committee should be diversely balanced and include regular and Life Members and, where possible, it is also a good idea to have representation from many company departments/business units.

As with any volunteer position, prospective members should also review the obligations of their assignment with their supervisors and get their concurrence before accepting.

Using the Talents and Interests of Members

Pioneers have a wide range of interests and talents. The community service committee should utilize both of these in planning the year's program of activities and attempt to

provide opportunities for everyone to participate. Asking your members for their ideas is another great source of volunteer opportunities.

One of the first places to look for possible information on members' special interests and skills is your chapter office. Many chapters maintain an interest and skill bank that is readily available.

Program Diversity

The formal acceptance of community service as an Association goal has created a great variety of activities, with new ones being constantly added. Additional emphasis over recent years has been focused on education, with literacy projects such as a personalized reader, Junior Achievement classes, etc. Many projects concentrate on the specialized needs of particular areas; a few require the learning of special skills; some demand only a few hours now and then. Pioneers also reach out to people with disabilities, the homeless, and the hungry – taking the skills learned from their jobs to offer volunteer expertise in everything from organizing food pantries to building a playground for children, to removing tons of trash from local rivers and parks.

FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

By design, Pioneers serve our communities through time and effort. Projects that consist solely of direct financial contributions to charitable organizations should be discouraged.

However, projects in which Pioneers participate as leaders or workers in community fundraising drives (such as those for Muscular Dystrophy, the Red Cross, etc.) can be encouraged, since the emphasis in such cases is on our service not on our cash donation.

From time to time, funds will be needed to support a Pioneer community service project. For example: lumber and paint may be needed for a project at a school; a special piece of equipment may be required, such as an infant hearing screening machine or a bath for a hospital or a computer for a local non-profit center.

For information on Association-approved ways to raise funds for your Pioneer projects, see the Procedures for Fund Raising Practice. Many sponsoring companies have a “matching grant” program that is based on participation hours for a non-profit – be sure to check with your organization to determine how you can make your volunteer hours count in more ways than one.

PLANNING THE ANNUAL PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES

The Committee's efforts to establish a complete program or schedule of the community service projects and activities for the Pioneer year will benefit the chapter, council and club in organizing the individual efforts, recruiting member participation and delivering on project goals.

As the new Pioneer year approaches, it is important to review the results of projects and activities conducted during the year. What has worked well and what hasn't? What have you learned? Are there "tired" projects in need of rejuvenation or replacement? Are more activities required that appeal to shorter-term employees? Life Members? Partners and the families of Pioneers? Is better sponsor company alignment necessary? Is the unit spreading itself too thin? Or not stretching enough? Is the program top-heavy with projects requiring a longer-term commitment by the volunteers?

These are all things to consider when setting goals and developing a community service program of activities for the upcoming Pioneer year.

Developing the Annual Program

Activities from the previous year that have attracted good participation should be considered for ongoing inclusion when planning your current-year program. However, in order to attract members to participate and to keep their interest and enthusiasm high, the annual program must continue to offer some diversity and include new projects added as applicable.

Sources of help in generating new project ideas include:

The Association Office – The programs listed earlier in this Practice are proven success stories, and community service committees of units that have not been involved in these efforts should give them strong consideration. The Association Office can also provide information on other successful projects developed by Pioneers in other local areas.

Sponsor Company Community/Public Relations Teams – These professionals can offer insight into company goals and initiatives already planned for a given area, be they corporate programs or those sponsored by other business/employee resource groups like the Pioneers. These can offer opportunities for aligning Pioneer efforts with our sponsor companies and for partnering with other organizations.

Other Non-Profit Organizations – There is no shortage of need in our communities, and many other community service organizations exist to help meet them. Local United Way agencies, Volunteer Canada's provincial agencies and Points of Light-based volunteer centers, for examples, are excellent sources of information on how to have an impact in our communities.

In planning the annual program it is not only necessary to consider that the interests and talents of local Pioneers are extremely varied, but also that as individuals, the time they have available to volunteer for service in the community may vary. Your Pioneer volunteer program, therefore, needs to be flexible, allowing for both short- and long-term involvement, night as well as weekend work. The goal is to have room in the overall Pioneer program for everyone's contribution, no matter how great or how small.

The well-rounded Pioneer program of activities should include three types of activities:

1. Regular, ongoing projects scheduled, for example, on a weekly or monthly basis (such projects as repairing Talking Book machines, leading Junior Achievement classes, delivering personalized reader to schools or making Hug-a-Bears)
2. Occasional or recurring projects (such as seasonal collection drives for back-to-school supplies, clothing or food)
3. One-time or annual projects (such as helping Habitat for Humanity build a complete home or participating in a walk-a-thon.)

A good mix will also include programs of assistance to the young and to the aged. These programs bring volunteers into direct contact with the recipients of the service.

Another thing to consider is location – when the project is easy to get to, you will get volunteers to schedule their time either in the evenings or on the weekends and bring their families.

And don't forget: The projects should allow time for Pioneer fellowship along with the work. Make sure your volunteers enjoy themselves . . . and they will find a way to come back for more!

Calendar of Events

When the unit's executive committee has approved the program, a calendar of planned project activities should be distributed for the entire Pioneer year. This calendar of events should describe the project, with details as to time and place (as available), and include the names and telephone numbers of the project leaders and information on how to volunteer for a particular project.

Optimally, the calendar of events should be printed in the unit's all-member newsletter, posted at a visible sponsor company location or web site (as appropriate), handed out at Life Member club meetings, etc.

PARTICIPATION

Once the executive committee approves the annual program, individual projects need to be announced and opportunities for participation offered.

It is important for everyone to know that help on community service activities is welcome from many sources. This includes active Pioneers and non-Pioneers, Life Members, Affiliates, Partners and other Pioneer family members.

Attracting Participants

There are many ways to attract people to community service projects. For example:

Face-to-Face Appeal: There is no substitute for personal contact. Surveys indicate that the main reason people do not volunteer is that they have never been asked. Many people

will help on a project if they are asked personally. Another means of face-to-face contact is for the leaders of a particular project to give an informal talk on the program at a meeting, luncheon or reception.

Flyers and Notices: Flyers, letters, emails and web pages are excellent sources of announcing community service projects. Good flyers will feature an attention-getting picture, sketch, or a “catchy” name for a project. This will add greatly to the publicity value and help attract participation. The Pioneer unit, chairperson’s name and telephone number and how to volunteer should also be included. Posters on bulletin boards in company lobbies, employee lounges and cafeterias are also helpful in getting a brief message across to all employees. Since the message is communicated quickly with a poster, emotional appeal is important, with very brief directions to a source for further details.

Pioneer and Company Publications: Company and/or local Pioneer newsletters are an excellent medium as they reach large numbers of employees and members. Many sponsoring companies have Web-based and other electronic communications vehicles that can be used not only for posting calendars but to register for a project, too.

Open Houses, Exhibits and Membership Drives: These can be used to demonstrate the service side of Pioneering dramatically to regular members, Life Members, other employees and family members. Memberships drives are an excellent time to “show the world” what volunteerism can accomplish, and live demonstrations are good because an enthusiastic participant is the best recruiter for any project!

Co-Branding

It is very important to try to keep the name TelecomPioneers as well as the name of the sponsor company before employees and the general public by making sure to identify all activities with the Pioneer organization and logo and the sponsor company name. This can be accomplished through the use of banners, T-shirts, hats, jackets and the like. Pioneers should also make use of similarly identifying labels or plaques to brand items repaired, made or donated by the members.

Recognition

When the project is complete, the members and participants will appreciate hearing about letters of thanks from the organizations and individuals who are recipients of Pioneer generosity. Remember, too, that everyone appreciates some recognition for a job well done, including volunteers in our community service activities.

There are many ways to recognize the volunteers.

One is to make sure that any stories and/or pictures of community service activities published internally always feature the workers – and that the workers are identified by name.

Personal thank-you letters for specific projects are always appreciated. Year-end thank-you letters signed by the president of the local Pioneer unit are also appreciated. If appropriate, a copy of the letter might be sent to the participant's supervisor.

A page in the local Pioneer newsletter could be developed on a regular basis to recognize outstanding workers or to list the workers who participated in community service during the past month.

Certificates of appreciation are always nice to receive and can be given either for numerous hours of service or for specific accomplishments.

When feasible, an "appreciation party" is suggested for workers at year's end – with top local Pioneer officers and management people present. This might be coordinated with a chapter meeting, training session, etc. (Outstanding community service awards are generally presented at a chapter's annual meeting or regional assembly.)

Community service work done by the Pioneer unit should be publicized to the general public to establish a favorable Pioneer and sponsor company image in the community. Such publicity can serve the dual purpose of attracting attention to local needs and thereby help in recruiting additional help to meet these needs.

RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTS

In an organization of volunteer workers, record keeping is a chore that must be kept as simple as possible for everyone. Records, however, are the only way to determine whether an organization is meeting its goals for the year.

Chapters and their respective units keep records of the number of hours each volunteer serves (including Pioneer Partners and others) in each project. This information is entered into the on-line PA-7 report via the Association Web site: www.telecompioneers.org For more information on the PA-7, see the Defining Community Service Projects and Reportable Volunteer Information Practice.