



Heart of Illinois
UNITED WAY

HUDDLE UP!

TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING ■

COMPANY & NONPROFIT
PLAYBOOK

HUDDLE UP!

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About Huddle Up!

Huddle Up! is the Heart of Illinois United Way's volunteer engagement strategy which transforms team volunteering from transactional to transformational. By embedding short reflection and team-building moments into group service projects, companies and nonprofits can strengthen relationships, deepen community understanding, and increase long-term engagement.

The Heart of Illinois United Way provides *Huddle Up!* as a meaningful way to match company employee volunteer teams with area nonprofits.



INCLUDED IN THIS COMPANY & NONPROFIT PLAYBOOK:

- × Moving the Ball Down the Field: From Activity to Impact
- × The *Huddle Up!* Framework
- × Winning Plays: Move Volunteer Teams Across the Goal Line
- × The Locker Room: Your Spot for Bonus Plays and Extra Resources
 - × The Post-Game Huddle: What, So What, Now What
 - × Sideline Starters: Ice Breakers & Team Building
 - × Situational Coaching: Adapting To Volunteer Needs
 - × 2-Minute Drills: Just-In-Time Training for the Moment
 - × End Zone Insights: Measuring and Evaluation Results
 - × Calling the Plays: Game Ready Communications



For more information on the Huddle Up! Volunteer Engagement Strategy for Nonprofit and Corporate Partnerships, contact Gina Edwards at gina.edwards@local.unitedway.org | volunteer.hoiunitedway.org

MOVING THE BALL DOWN THE FIELD: From Activity to Impact

Many volunteer projects focus primarily on completing a task. Volunteers arrive, work together for a few hours, and then return to their daily routines. While these activities are valuable and help nonprofits meet immediate needs, teams may leave without fully understanding the broader impact of their work.



Huddle Up! helps bridge the gap between activity and impact.

- × By adding brief moments of context, teamwork, and reflection to a volunteer experience, teams gain a deeper understanding of the nonprofit’s mission and the community needs they are helping address.
- × Volunteers also have an opportunity to share insights, strengthen relationships, and recognize how their collective effort contributes to something larger.
- × These small moments of connection can transform a one-time service activity into a meaningful experience that encourages continued engagement, stronger partnerships, and a deeper sense of community.

From Transactional to Transformational Volunteer Experiences

Huddle Up! helps organizations capture both the work completed and the impact created.

- × Transactional volunteerism focuses on outputs — what was completed during a project.
- × Transformational volunteerism focuses on outcomes — what volunteers learned, how teams grew, and how the community benefits.

TRANSACTIONAL VOLUNTEERISM	VS	TRANSFORMATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM
Focuses on completing a task		Focuses on learning and impact
Measures outputs <i>(what was accomplished or produced)</i>		Measures outcomes <i>(changes to knowledge and behavior)</i>
Short-term activity		Deeper engagement
Limited reflection		Reflection and shared understanding

The *Huddle Up!* Framework

The *Huddle Up!* Framework provides a simple structure to guide teams before, during, and after a volunteer opportunity. By preparing teams, leading meaningful conversations, encouraging purposeful engagement, and fostering reflection, *Huddle Up!* helps nonprofits and employee volunteer teams create meaningful experiences that strengthen relationships and deepen community impact.

At its core, *Huddle Up!* focuses on five key plays

1. Game Plan: Assessment
2. Kickoff: Preflection to Prepare the Team
3. In the Game: Teamwork in Action
4. Post-Game Huddle: Reflection and Connection
5. Goal Line: Community Impact



1. Game Plan: Assessment

Before the volunteer experience begins, nonprofit partners and volunteer teams take time to align goals, expectations, and logistics.

- This step helps ensure the volunteer project supports the nonprofit's mission while also creating a meaningful experience for volunteers.
- Nonprofits and companies discuss roles, preparation needs, and communication plans before the service day.
- A strong game plan helps everyone arrive ready to work together and achieve the project's goals.



2. Kickoff: Preflection to Prepare the Team

Before volunteers begin their service, teams briefly "huddle" to understand the purpose of their work.

- This moment helps participants learn about the nonprofit's mission, the community need being addressed, and the role their volunteer efforts will play in supporting that mission.
- Kickoff helps volunteers start with shared understanding and a sense of purpose.



3. In the Game: Teamwork in Action

During the volunteer activity, participants work together to complete meaningful tasks that support the nonprofit's work.

- This is where teamwork, communication, and problem-solving come into play.
- Nonprofit partners and employee volunteer team leaders may highlight moments that connect the work volunteers are doing to the broader community impact.

The Huddle Up! Framework (continued)

The *Huddle Up!* Framework provides a simple structure to guide teams before, during, and after a volunteer opportunity. By preparing teams, leading meaningful conversations, encouraging purposeful engagement, and fostering reflection, *Huddle Up!* helps nonprofits and employee volunteer teams create meaningful experiences that strengthen relationships and deepen community impact.



4. Post-Game Huddle: Reflection and Connection

After the service activity, volunteers take a few minutes to reflect together.

- These short conversations help teams connect their experience back to the nonprofit's mission, share insights from the day, and consider how they can stay involved in their community.
- Reflection transforms a single volunteer event into a deeper learning and team-building opportunity.



5. Goal Line: Community Impact

When volunteers understand the purpose of their work and reflect on their experience, service becomes more meaningful for both the team and the nonprofit partner.

- Teams leave with a deeper understanding of community needs and the mission of the organization they supported.
- Nonprofits strengthen relationships with volunteers and build opportunities for continued engagement.
- Together, these experiences help move organizations and communities closer to lasting impact.



Why the Huddle Up! Framework Matters

Research and experience in volunteer engagement consistently show that reflection and context deepen the impact of service experiences. When volunteers understand the purpose behind their work and have space to reflect afterward, they are more likely to:

- Feel connected to the cause
- Strengthen relationships with teammates
- Retain what they learned about the community
- Stay engaged in future volunteer opportunities

→ **The Huddle Up! Framework helps companies and nonprofits create these meaningful moments without adding significant time or complexity to a service project.**

WINNING PLAYS: Move Volunteer Teams Across the Goal Line

Utilize the *assessment, prefection, and reflection* learning model

Every yard gained takes your team one step closer to a touchdown. Let's discover how to convert every action into a win that counts, both for your team and your community.

PLAY #1 - Game Plan: Assessment

Preparing a successful volunteer experience

Assessment provides an opportunity for nonprofit partners and volunteer teams to align goals and expectations before the volunteer project begins. By discussing the purpose of the project, defining roles, and planning how teams will work together, organizations can create a well-prepared volunteer experience that benefits both the nonprofit and the volunteers involved.

FOR NONPROFITS

- × How does the volunteer project relate to your mission? | What outcome(s) do you want to reach?
- × What skills-based learning or leadership roles does the volunteer project provide?
- × What preparation needs to be completed in advance by the organization and the volunteer team?
- × Has this team volunteered with your organization before? | What other volunteer experiences might they bring?
- × Who will serve as the volunteer team leader(s)?
- × How will you communicate with the team before, during, and after the volunteer project?

FOR EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEER TEAMS

- What inspired your team to volunteer with this organization?
- What does your team hope to learn or experience through this volunteer project?
- Are there specific team-building goals you would like this experience to support?
- What skills, interests, or experiences do team members bring that may support the project?
- Who will serve as the team lead or point of contact during the volunteer experience?
- How will you help your team understand the mission of the nonprofit before the project begins?

WINNING PLAYS: Move Volunteer Teams Across the Goal Line

PLAY #2 - Kickoff: Preflection to Prepare the Team

Preparing volunteers for a meaningful service experience

Preflection encourages both nonprofit partners and volunteer teams to think intentionally about the upcoming volunteer experience. By considering expectations, perceptions, and opportunities for connection before the project begins, organizations can create a more engaging and impactful experience for everyone involved.

FOR NONPROFITS

- × How can you learn more about the volunteer team before they arrive?
- × What are the expectations of the volunteer team? How can you meet or guide those expectations? How do they expect to be engaged?
- × What concerns or questions might volunteers have before participating in the project?
- × What do volunteers likely know—or think they know—about your organization and the community you serve?
- × How can you clearly communicate the impact of the volunteer project and its connection to your mission?
- × What intentional steps can you take to encourage teamwork, engagement, and connection during the volunteer experience?

FOR EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEER TEAMS

- What do you already know about the nonprofit and the community they serve?
- What questions do you have about the nonprofit's mission or the community need being addressed?
- Why is this cause important to your team or organization?
- How can you learn more about their programs and your volunteer opportunity?
- How can your team support one another to make the experience meaningful and productive?
- What intentional steps can you take to encourage teamwork, engagement, and connection during the volunteer experience?
- What does success look like for your team at the end of the volunteer experience?

PLAY #3 - In the Game: In the Game: Teamwork in Action

Strengthening teamwork while supporting the nonprofit's mission

During the activity, volunteers work together to complete meaningful tasks that support the nonprofit's mission. This is where teamwork, communication, and problem-solving take place. Nonprofit staff and employee volunteer team leaders can highlight moments that connect the work being done to the broader community impact.

WINNING PLAYS: Move Volunteer Teams Across the Goal Line

PLAY #4 - Post-Game Huddle: Reflection and Connection *Capturing learning and impact after the volunteer experience*

Reflection helps nonprofit and employee volunteer team leaders connect their experience to the broader mission of the nonprofit and community needs while serving as an opportunity to assess.

FOR NONPROFITS

- × What did the employee team experience or observe while volunteering with our organization?
- × What did volunteers learn about the community or the people our organization serves?
- × Using the *What, So What, Now What* reflection questions (see page 10 in *The Locker Room Appendix*), what insights or perspectives did volunteers gain from the experience?
- × What did team members learn about themselves or about working together?
- × What outcomes did this project create for our organization, clients, or community?
- × How might these volunteers stay involved or continue supporting our cause?
- × What actions can these volunteers or the company take to continue making a difference?

FOR EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEER TEAMS

- What activities did our team complete during the volunteer project?
- What did we observe about the nonprofit's work or the community they serve? What moments stood out to us during the experience?
- Why do we think this work matters to the nonprofit and the community?
- Using the *What, So What, Now What* reflection questions (see page 10 in *The Locker Room Appendix*), what did we learn about the organization or issue addressed?
- What did we learn about our teammates or how our team works together?
- How might our team continue supporting this organization or cause?
- What actions could employees or the organization take to stay involved in the community?
- How might this experience influence the way our employees/team approach volunteering in the future?

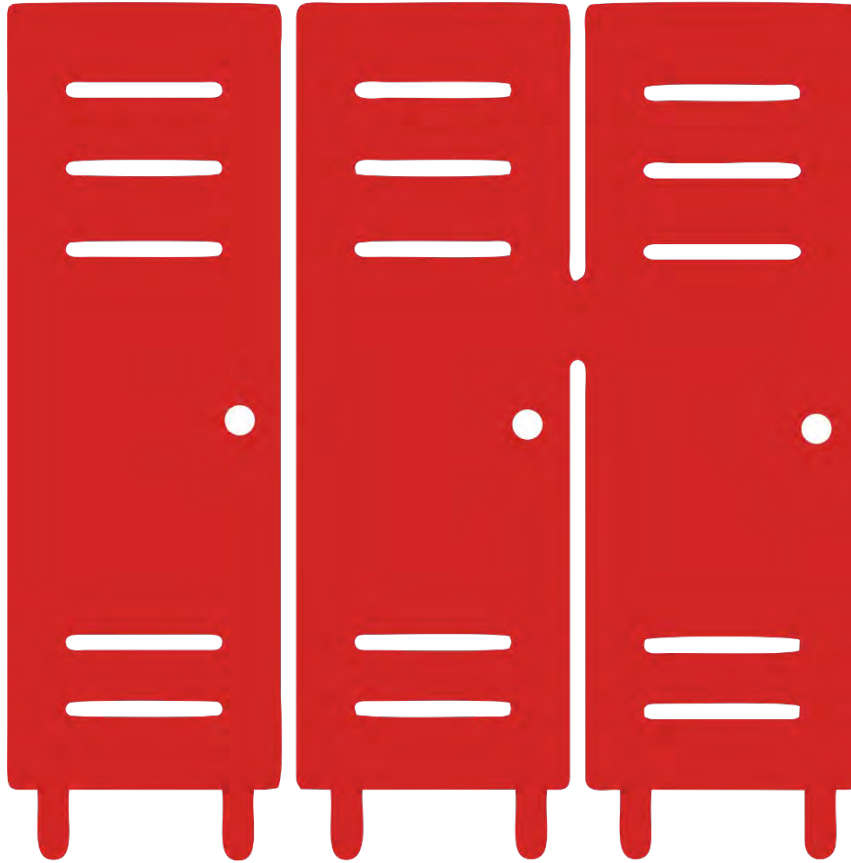
PLAY #5 - Goal Line: Community Impact *Strengthening community impact through meaningful volunteer engagement*

When volunteer teams understand their purpose and take time to reflect on their experiences, their service becomes more meaningful. Volunteers strengthen relationships with their teammates, gain a deeper understanding of community needs, and are more likely to stay engaged in future service opportunities. At the same time, nonprofits build stronger connections with volunteers and increase awareness of their mission. Together, these outcomes help build lasting partnerships that move communities forward.

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THE LOCKER ROOM



YOUR SPOT FOR BONUS PLAYS TO WIN:

- × **The Post-Game Huddle:** What, So What, Now What
- × **Sideline Starters:** ice breakers & team building
- × **Situational Coaching:** adapting to volunteers' knowledge, skills, and commitment
- × **2-Minute Drills:** just-in-time training for the moment
- × **End Zone Insights:** measuring and evaluation results
- × **Calling the Plays:** game-ready communications for employee volunteer teams and nonprofits

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TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING



THE POST-GAME HUDDLE: What, So What, Now What?

In the Post-Game Huddle stage of the *Huddle Up!* Framework, teams take a few minutes to reflect on their volunteer experience. One simple and effective way to guide these conversations is the **What? So What? Now What?** reflection tool that helps volunteer teams talk about what they experienced, why the work matters, and how they can stay engaged in their community.

The questions in this section can be used by nonprofit and employee team leaders to guide a short reflection conversation after a volunteer project. Reflections can be brief, often 5–10 minutes, but they help volunteers connect their service experience to a deeper understanding of the impact their teamwork can create.

WHAT? -----

- Why does this organization exist?
- What happened? What did you observe?
- What was your role?
- What issue is being addressed or population is being served?
- What were your initial expectations?

SO WHAT? -----

- How was your experience different from what you expected?
- What did you learn about the people/community?
- What are some of the pressing needs/issues in the community?
- How does this project address those needs?
- What specific skills did you use or learn at your community site?
- How does your understanding of the community change as a result of your participation in this project?
- Talk about any disappointments or successes of your project. What did you learn from it?

NOW WHAT? -----

- What seems to be the root causes of the issue addressed?
- What other work is currently happening to address the issue?
- What would you like to learn more about, related to this project or issue?
- What follow-up is needed to address any challenges or difficulties?
- What information can you share with your peers or the community?
- How can you continue your involvement with this group or social issue?
- How can you educate or raise awareness about this group or social issue?
- Complete this sentence: Because of this volunteer project, I am...

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TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING



SIDELINE STARTERS: Ice Breakers and Team Builders

GENERAL ICEBREAKER GUIDELINES FOR FUN AND KNOWLEDGE:

- × Start with fun icebreaker questions to warm up the volunteer team and get the discussion flowing.
- × Vary your icebreaker questions for team members who know each other and those who don't.
- × Use icebreaker questions to learn more about skills of the volunteers in the team.
- × Connect the icebreaker question(s) to your organization's work.

SAMPLE ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS: CONNECTED TO YOUR MISSION/WORK

- × Preschool/reading: what was your favorite children's book and why?
- × Education program: what was your favorite subject in school and why?
- × Food pantry/soup kitchen: what is your favorite food?
- × Animal shelter/pet event: if you woke up tomorrow as an animal, what would you be and why?
- × Senior program: if you are sitting on a bench in the park, who would be sitting with you and why?
- × Landscaping project: what is your favorite season and why?
- × Shelter program: where do you feel the safest? What makes it safe?

SAMPLE ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS: GENERAL QUESTIONS

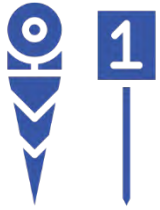
- × Pick something out of your pocket, wallet, or purse and share why it is important to you.
- × Think of one word that describes _____ and share with the group.
- × Why are you part of the volunteer team today?
- × If you could choose a hobby regardless of time or money, what would it be?
- × What aspect of your personality adds the most value to your work, community, and home?
- × What was the best or worst day of your life?

OTHER SIMPLE IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEER TEAM BUILDING

- × **Create a one-time or ongoing memory wall at your company or organization celebrating volunteerism.** Provide a space or materials for volunteers to sign their name and/or share a note about the experience; take team photos and post them on the wall.
- × **Create fun or custom volunteer name badges** that team members can wear and take with them to remember the experience.
- × **Make your photo ops action-oriented** rather than just in front of your organization sign.
- × **Get social ... create a special hashtag just for volunteer teams,** share photos online to thank volunteers and encourage them to share/post as well.

HUDDLE UP!

TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING



SIDELINE STARTERS: Ice Breakers and Team Building

PREFLECTION AND REFLECTION TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITY

Use this simple preflection and reflection activity to set the stage and wrap up your volunteer team activity. This simple tool can be used by the team off-site before and after volunteering, or on-site at the nonprofit organization.

- Objective is to build trust, understanding, and establish group values.
- Tools needed are white board/pens or sticky notes and pens.
- Ask each team member to shout out or write down short answers to these questions before the volunteer experience:
 - What do you expect to do today?
 - What skills do you want to use or learn today?
 - How does the organization benefit the community?
 - What do you think is the number one need of this organization?
- Repeat the short answer sharing after the volunteer experience to evaluate what was learned:
 - What did you do today?
 - What skills did you use or learn today?
 - Why is this organization important to the community?
 - How are the organization's needs being met?
 - What did the experience teach you about the issue(s) at hand?

at the nonprofit organization

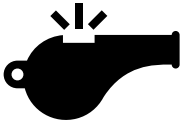
What did the experience teach you about the issue(s) at hand?



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TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING



SITUATIONAL COACHING:

Adapting to Volunteers' Knowledge, Skills, And Commitment

Situational Leadership in Volunteer Teams

Volunteer leaders often work with teams that have different levels of experience, confidence, and familiarity with the project. The Situational Leadership Model reminds us that there is no single “best” leadership style for every situation. Instead, effective leaders adjust how they guide their team based on the group’s readiness for the task. During a volunteer project, leaders may move between four approaches:

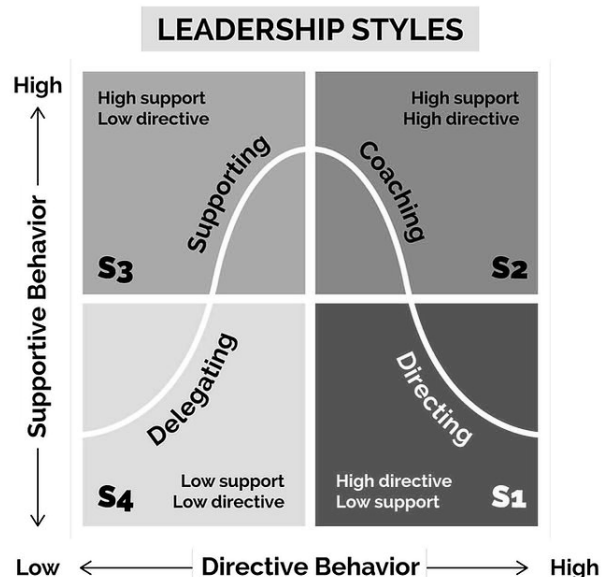
- **Directing** – clearly explaining tasks and providing step-by-step guidance when volunteers are new or unsure of what to do.
- **Coaching** – offering direction while encouraging questions, ideas, and learning as volunteers begin to gain confidence.
- **Supporting** – allowing volunteers to take more ownership while providing encouragement and assistance when needed.
- **Delegating** – trusting experienced volunteers to work independently and take responsibility for parts of the project.

By adjusting their leadership style, nonprofit hosts and employee volunteer leaders can help teams work effectively, learn from the experience, and feel confident contributing to the mission. Flexible leadership helps teams stay engaged, confident, and focused on the shared goal.

Ask yourself:

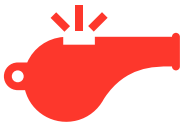
- How are you managing your volunteer teams?
- How can you use this model to gauge volunteer team engagement?
- Where does a one-time, episodic volunteer team versus a repeat volunteer (team) fall on this spectrum?

Every team faces unexpected situations. The following coaching moments can help volunteer leaders quickly adjust their approach and keep the team focused on the goal.



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SITUATIONAL COACHING:

Adapting to Volunteers' Knowledge, Skills, And Commitment

TIME OUT: Coaching Moments for Nonprofit Hosts

Volunteer leaders sometimes need to adjust their approach quickly. Consider the scenarios below and how you might guide the team using the Huddle Up! Framework.

Scenario 1: Limited Preparation from the Volunteer Team

A volunteer team arrives enthusiastic and ready to help, but communication before the project has been minimal. You shared project goals and instructions in advance, but most volunteers appear unfamiliar with the details. Pause and consider:

- How could a short *Huddle Up!* kickoff help clarify expectations?
- What leadership approach would help the team get started quickly and confidently?
- What key information about the mission or project should volunteers understand before beginning?

Nonprofit Leadership Tip: In situations like this, start with a directing or coaching approach. Provide clear instructions, explain the purpose of the project, and check for understanding before the team begins working.

Scenario 2: More Volunteers Than Expected

A company brings a few extra volunteers who were not included in the original plan. You now have more people than tasks available. Pause and consider:

- How could you quickly reorganize teams or roles?
- Are there smaller tasks that could be added to keep everyone engaged?
- How might you use this opportunity to encourage teamwork and problem-solving?

Nonprofit Leadership Tip: When plans change, flexibility is key. Consider breaking volunteers into smaller groups, creating rotating roles, or inviting experienced volunteers to help guide others.

Scenario 3: Volunteers Become Disengaged

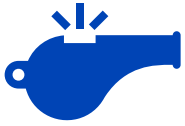
Partway through the project, some volunteers appear distracted or unsure how their work connects to the organization's mission. Pause and consider:

- What quick reminder could reconnect the team to the purpose of the project?
- How might you highlight the impact of the work being done?
- Could a brief conversation or story help re-engage the group?

Nonprofit Leadership Tip: Sometimes volunteers simply need to understand why the work matters. Sharing a short story or example of the organization's impact can quickly re-energize a group.

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TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING



SITUATIONAL COACHING:

Adapting to Volunteers' Knowledge, Skills, And Commitment

TIME OUT: Coaching Moments for Employee Volunteer Team Leaders

Employee volunteer leaders also play an important role in helping their team have a meaningful experience. Not every volunteer arrives with the same level of enthusiasm or experience. Creating a welcoming, supportive environment can help hesitant volunteers become active participants in the team's efforts.

Scenario 1: Team Members Are Reluctant to Participate

One or two employees appear reluctant to participate in the volunteer project. They may seem disengaged, unsure of what to do, or hesitant to get involved. Pause and consider:

- How might you help the volunteer feel more comfortable with the activity?
- What encouragement could help them see the purpose of the project?
- Are there smaller or simpler ways for them to contribute?

Employee Volunteer Team Leadership Tip: Start by welcoming their participation and helping them ease into the activity. Sometimes volunteers simply need a little context or a clear task to feel confident contributing. Pair them with a teammate, offer encouragement, and briefly explain how the work supports the nonprofit's mission. Once volunteers begin participating and see the impact of their efforts, their engagement increases.

Scenario 2: The Project Feels Routine

As the project continues, some volunteers begin to treat the work as a simple task rather than a community experience. Pause and consider:

- How could you encourage your team to think about the broader impact of the project?
- What questions might prompt reflection about the organization's mission?

Employee Volunteer Team Leadership Tip: Pause briefly and remind the team why the project matters. A quick comment such as *"Let's think about who benefits from this work"* can help volunteers see the bigger picture and stay engaged.

Scenario 3: Encouraging Post-Game Reflection

The project is wrapping up, and everyone is eager to head home. Pause and consider:

- How could you encourage a brief reflection before the team departs?
- What simple question could help capture the experience?

Employee Volunteer Team Leadership Tip: Reflection doesn't have to take long. Even a short reflection helps volunteers connect their work to the nonprofit's mission and the community impact.

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TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING



2-MINUTE DRILLS FROM THE NONPROFIT COACH:

Just-In-Time Training for the Moment

Huddle Up! + Nonprofit Just-In-Time Volunteer Training = Learn, Do, Reflect

- × Just-In-time training gives the what and how right before a task.
- × *Huddle Up!* adds the why and so what in a few short moments.
- × Both emphasize timely, purposeful, and focused engagement — not lengthy orientation.
- × Adds emotional connection and learning to the efficiency of JIT.
- × When combined, you get prepared volunteers who understand what to do and engaged teams who understand why it matters.

Why It Works

- × Reinforces learning and confidence.
- × Builds empathy and connection to mission.
- × Fits within the just-in-time training window—no extra prep needed.
- × Volunteers leave informed and inspired.

Where *Huddle Up!* Fits in the Just-In-Time Flow

- × Learn: 2-minute purpose + task overview
- × Do: Hands-on volunteering with coaching
- × Reflect: 5-minute group wrap-up

Just-In-Time Training Step	<i>Huddle Up!</i> Enhancement and Time Needed
Pre-Activity Briefing	Set the stage: (+ 2 minutes) Share your mission, goals, and one impact fact. Ask, “What do you hope to get out of today?”
Task Demo / On-Site Training	Include a short story or context: (+ 1 minute) “Here’s why this process matters.”
During Hands-On Volunteering	Encourage observation: (no extra time needed) Notice collaboration, challenges, and surprises.
End-of-Activity Wrap-Up	Reflect and connect: (+5 minutes) Ask “What? So what? Now what?” or “What did you learn about our community today?”

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TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING ■



2-MINUTE DRILLS FROM THE NONPROFIT COACH:

Just-In-Time Training for the Moment

Sample Script: Just-In-Time *Huddle Up!* Flow

Before the quick training: “Welcome! In a few minutes, you’ll learn the steps for [task]. But first, here’s how your work fits our mission. [Insert 1-sentence mission story.] Think about what teamwork looks like for your group today — and what you hope to take away.”

After the quick training: “You’ve got the steps — now let’s put them into action! As you work, notice what you’re learning about our community or about each other.”

At the end of volunteering: “Let’s huddle up! What surprised you? What did we accomplish together? How do you see this connecting to the bigger picture?”

Benefits to Integrating the *Huddle Up!* Framework into your Just-In-Time Training

- × Enhances learning retention: Reflection helps volunteers remember procedures and mission context.
- × Increases confidence: Volunteers know both what to do and why it matters.
- × Improves satisfaction: They leave feeling like contributors, not just helpers.
- × Reduces staff prep time: The framework builds reflection into training — no separate session needed.

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TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING



END ZONE INSIGHTS: Measuring and Evaluation Results

***Huddle Up!* Impact & Engagement Metrics Toolkit**

Here are quick tools for nonprofits and company leaders to measure participation, reflection, and impact after group volunteer experiences. Each template could be used in Excel, Google Forms, or printed as a checklist.

***Huddle Up!* Pulse Check (Quick Survey Template for Companies and Nonprofits)**

Below are suggested questions for a short form to capture insights **right after the volunteer project.**

How connected did you feel to the mission or community need today?

Very connected Somewhat connected Not very connected

What's one thing your team learned about the community today?

(Open-ended text question)

How did today's project strengthen your team's sense of purpose or collaboration?

A lot Somewhat Not much

What surprised you most about this experience?

(Open-ended text question)

Would you volunteer with this organization again?

Yes Maybe No

Tip: Collect responses immediately post-event for authenticity either via QR code or quick group discussion.

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TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING



END ZONE INSIGHTS: Measuring and Evaluation Results

Huddle Up! Impact Recap (Joint Nonprofit + Company Summary Sheet)

A one-page shared summary of the volunteer day for both storytelling and record-keeping. Use this template to share results on social media, internal reports, or recognition events.

Project Title / Date	
Partner Organization(s)	
# of Volunteers	
Total Hours Served	
Community Impact	
Learning Reflections	
Quotes or Highlights	
Next Steps / Future Opportunities	

Sample Internal Reflection Questions for Companies

- Did employees report increased connection to the community?
- Did this experience support team-building goals?
- Are employees interested in future volunteer opportunities?
- Did employees share their experience internally or externally?

Sample Internal Reflection Questions for Nonprofits

- What did volunteers seem to learn or better understand?
- Did volunteers demonstrate increased engagement or curiosity?
- What questions did volunteers ask during or after the project?
- Were volunteers interested in returning or staying involved?

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END ZONE INSIGHTS: Measuring and Evaluation Results

Huddle Up! Engagement Snapshots

Purpose: For organizations that want to **measure volunteer team engagement over time**. Each quarter or event cycle, both the nonprofit and company rate themselves. Compare changes to track growth in engagement and learning.

Scale used: 1 Strongly Agree, 2 Agree, 3 Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 Disagree, and 5 Strongly Disagree.

Sample Quarterly Company Summary Template

Metric	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<i>Participation, % of employees involved</i>	12%	14%	11%	21%
<i>Connection to Mission - volunteers' sense of understanding community needs</i>	3	2	1	2
<i>Team Reflection, % of volunteers who engaged in reflection or feedback</i>	72%	81%	79%	68%
<i>Strong Partnership Strength, communication/collaboration company + nonprofit</i>	3	2	1	2
<i>Retention/Repeat Engagement, likelihood of recurring service or partnership</i>	3	3	2	3

Sample Nonprofit Annual Summary Template *(Optional Data Tracking Tool)*

Metric	2024	2025	Notes
<i># of Companies Engaged</i>	12	18	<i>Growth after launch of Huddle Up!</i>
<i># of Volunteers</i>	240	310	<i>Growth after launch of Huddle Up!</i>
<i>% Returning Teams</i>	45%	60%	—
<i>% Volunteers/Companies Reporting Increased Awareness</i>	75%	82%	<i>Via pulse check (page 18, 22) or another tool</i>
<i>Volunteers Increased Understanding</i>	3	1	<i>Improved reflection participation</i>

HUDDLE UP!

TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING



END ZONE INSIGHTS:

Measuring and Evaluation Results

Score a Touchdown with Huddle Up! Outcome Measurement

Traditional volunteer metrics focus on outputs — what was completed during a project. *Huddle Up!* expands measurement to include **outcomes**, which reflect changes in volunteer knowledge, awareness, behavior, and connection to the community. By capturing both outputs and outcomes, organizations can better understand the full impact of volunteer engagement.

Sample Outcome Measurements for Volunteer Teams

Below are indicators that companies and nonprofits can track to use to track/score engagement.

Knowledge & Awareness Outcomes

- Increased understanding of the nonprofit's mission
- Increased awareness of the community issue
- Improved understanding of who is impacted and how

Attitude & Connection Outcomes

- Stronger emotional connection to the cause
- Increased sense of community responsibility
- Greater appreciation for nonprofit work

Behavior & Engagement Outcomes

- Intent to volunteer again
- Participation in future volunteer opportunities
- Increased advocacy (sharing with others)
- Interest in donating or supporting the organization

Team & Workplace Outcomes

- Improved team communication
- Stronger relationships among employees
- Increased employee engagement
- Enhanced sense of purpose at work

HUDDLE UP!

TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING



END ZONE INSIGHTS:

Measuring and Evaluation Results

Sample of an Outcome-Based Survey for Volunteer Team Members

(1 Strongly Agree, 2 Agree, 3 Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 Disagree, and 5 Strongly Disagree)

After this volunteer experience, I:

- Have a better understanding the mission of the organization
- Have greater awareness of the community issue addressed
- Feel more connected to my community
- Understand how my actions can make a difference
- Feel more motivated to volunteer again

After this volunteer experience, I am likely to:

- Volunteer again with this organization
- Seek out additional volunteer opportunities
- Share this experience with others
- Be interested in learning more about this issue

Please share your experience:

What stood out to you most from this experience? _____

What did you learn about the organization or community? _____

How did this experience impact your perspective? _____

What impact do you think your team made? _____

What would you like to do next to stay involved? _____

Storytelling + Data Integration Tips

Use data for more than reports — for community storytelling. Ideas include:

- Pair one number (impact stat) with one story (volunteer quote).
- Use “Because of this project...” statements to make data human.
- Include results in newsletters, social posts, and recognition events.

HUDDLE UP!

TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING



END ZONE INSIGHTS: Measuring and Evaluation Results

Sample: *Huddle Up!* Company/Team Leader Outcome Estimates

Based on your observations, feedback, or internal surveys, approximately what percentage of participating employees experienced the following as a result of their volunteer activity? (Select one per row)

Outcome Area	0–10%	11–25%	26–50%	51–75%	76–100%	Not Sure
Increased understanding of the nonprofit’s mission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increased awareness of the community issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Felt more connected to the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expressed interest in volunteering again	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrated stronger team connection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How confident are you in these estimates?

- Based on formal employee survey data
- Based on informal feedback (conversations, observations)
- General estimate
- Not sure

What is one example or observation that reflects how employees benefited from this experience?

HUDDLE UP!

TURN VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES INTO REAL TEAM BUILDING



END ZONE INSIGHTS: Measuring and Evaluation Results

Sample: *Huddle Up!* Nonprofit Outcome Estimates

Based on your observations, feedback, or internal surveys, approximately what percentage of participating employees experienced the following as a result of their volunteer activity? (Select one per row)

Outcome Area	0–10%	11–25%	26–50%	51–75%	76–100%	Not Sure
Demonstrated understanding of your mission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asked questions about your work or impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Showed strong engagement during the project	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expressed interest in returning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made connections between work and community need	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How confident are you in these estimates?

- Based on formal employee survey data
- Based on informal feedback (conversations, observations)
- General estimate
- Not sure

Follow-up actions observed; select all that apply:

- Volunteers asked how to return
- Volunteers signed up for future opportunities
- Volunteers shared experience on social media
- Volunteers expressed interest in donating
- No follow-up observed



CALLING THE PLAYS: Game-Ready Communications for Employee Volunteer Teams and Nonprofits

[Huddle Up! Company Rep Script & Messaging Toolkit](#)

Here are practical templates and talking points for company representatives leading employee volunteer teams. These messages will help teams prepare for their volunteer experience, connect with nonprofit partners, and reflect on their impact afterward.

Sample Message to a Nonprofit When Exploring a Volunteer Opportunity

Subject: Exploring a Volunteer Partnership with [Company Name]

Hi [Nonprofit Contact Name],

Our team at [Company Name] is interested in supporting your organization through a volunteer project, and we'd love to learn more about how we might work together.

As we begin planning, we're hoping to better understand:

- Current volunteer needs or projects where a team could help
- The goals or outcomes you hope volunteers can support
- Any preparation that would help ensure a successful experience

We also like to build in a short "Huddle Up" moment with our volunteers before and after our volunteer projects to help employees better understand the impact of their work and the mission of the organizations we support.

If you're open to it, we'd appreciate the opportunity to talk about how our team could contribute in a way that's helpful to your organization.

Thank you for the work you do in our community. We look forward to connecting.

Best,
[Name]
[Title]
[Company Name]



CALLING THE PLAYS: Game-Ready Communications for Employee Volunteer Teams and Nonprofits

[Huddle Up! Company Rep Script & Messaging Toolkit](#)

Sample Message to the Nonprofit Partner After Opportunity is Confirmed

Subject: Team Volunteer Opportunity— Planning for Impact

Hi [Nonprofit Partner Contact],

Our team is looking forward to volunteering with your organization on **[date]**. We're excited to support your work and make the day meaningful for both your organization and our employees. As we prepare, we'd love to connect briefly about:

- The goals or outcomes you hope to achieve that day
- Any preparation or supplies we can assist with
- Key information about your mission or the community you serve that we can share with our team

We also plan to start and end the day with a short volunteer huddle reflection activity to help our employees better understand the impact of their work and reflect on what they learn.

Thank you for partnering with us — we appreciate the opportunity to support your mission.

Best,
[Name]
[Company / CSR or Employee Volunteer Lead Title]

Sample Message to Employee Volunteer Team Before the Opportunity

Subject: Let's Huddle Up for Our Volunteer Opportunity!

Hi Team,

We'll be volunteering with **[Nonprofit Name]** on **[date]**, and we're excited to spend the day supporting their mission. This experience is about more than completing a project — it's also an opportunity to connect with our community and with each other as a team. Before we arrive, take a moment to think about:

- What do you hope to learn from this experience?
- What skills or strengths can you bring to the team?
- What questions do you have about the organization or the community they serve?

We'll start and end our volunteer opportunity with a short volunteer huddle to learn about the nonprofit, the work we'll be doing together, and reflect on our connection and impact.

Looking forward to a great day of teamwork!

[Team Lead Name]



CALLING THE PLAYS: Game-Ready Communications for Employee Volunteer Teams and Nonprofits

[Huddle Up! Company Rep Script & Messaging Toolkit](#)

Sample Message to Employee Volunteer Team After the Opportunity\

Subject: Reflecting on Our Volunteer Opportunity

Hi Team,

Thank you for volunteering with **[Nonprofit Name]**. Your time and teamwork helped support an important community mission. As you think back on the experience, consider:

- What did you learn about the organization or the issue they address?
- What stood out to you during the project?
- How did our team work together to support the day's goals?

We'll be sharing photos and highlights soon, along with updates from the nonprofit about the impact of the project.

Thank you for representing our company and our community so well.

[Team Lead Name]

Sample Message to the Nonprofit Partner After the Volunteer Project

Subject: Thank You for Partnering with Our Team

Hi [Nonprofit Contact Name],

Thank you for welcoming our team to volunteer with [Organization Name] on [date]. Our employees appreciated the opportunity to support your work and learn more about the impact your organization has in the community. The experience was meaningful for our team, and we appreciated the chance to work alongside your staff and volunteers. Our team especially enjoyed [mention a specific activity or moment if possible].

Please extend our thanks to everyone who helped organize and lead the project. We look forward to staying connected and finding ways to continue supporting your mission in the future.

Thank you again for the work you do to strengthen our community.

Best,
[Name]
[Title]
[Company Name]

Short optional comments/call-to-action: 1) We'll also be sharing highlights from the day with our employees to help them better understand the impact of your work. **2)** If there are updates you'd like us to share with our team about the impact of the project, we would be happy to pass those along.



CALLING THE PLAYS: Game-Ready Communications for Employee Volunteer Teams and Nonprofits

[Huddle Up! Company Rep Script & Messaging Toolkit](#)

Sample Talking Point: Volunteer Opportunity Kickoff

(30-second message for the employee volunteer team lead)

Before we get started, let's take time for a quick huddle. Today isn't just about completing a project — it's also about learning more about the community and the work this organization does every day. We'll check back in after the project for a short reflection on what we experienced and how our efforts contributed to their mission.

Sample Talking Point: Post-Game Reflection

(Use shortly after the volunteer project wraps up)

Before we wrap up today, let's take a quick post-game huddle. A few minutes of reflection can help us connect what we did today to the impact it has in the community.

Think about what stood out to you during the experience, what you learned about the organization or the issue they address, and how our team worked together today.

If you'd like to go deeper, you can use the What? So What? Now What? reflection questions in The Locker Room (appendix, page 10) to continue the conversation with your team.

Sample Talking Point: Sharing the Impact with the Team

(Use during a staff meeting or team meeting after the volunteer day)

Recently our team volunteered with [Nonprofit Name], and it was a great opportunity to support an important community mission. One of the things we're doing through our volunteer experiences is taking a few minutes to reflect on what we learn from these opportunities — not just what we accomplish. If you participated in the project, we'd love to hear:

- What stood out to you about the experience?
- What did you learn about the organization or the community they serve?
- What impact do you think our team made that day?



CALLING THE PLAYS: Game-Ready Communications for Employee Volunteer Teams and Nonprofits

Huddle Up! Nonprofit Messaging Toolkit

Here are sample communications to help nonprofits turn group volunteer visits into meaningful, team-building experiences that support their mission and strengthen relationships with corporate partners.

Sample Message to a Company Exploring Volunteer Opportunities

Subject: Volunteer Opportunities for Your Team at [Nonprofit Name]

Hi [Company Contact Name],

Thank you for reaching out about volunteer opportunities with ****[Nonprofit Name]****. We appreciate your team's interest in supporting our work in the community. Based on the information you shared, here are a few volunteer projects that may be a good fit for your team:

- [Project Option #1] – brief description
- [Project Option #2] – brief description
- [Project Option #3] – brief description

To help make group volunteer visits more meaningful for both volunteers and the organization, we often include a short volunteer huddle before and after the project. This allows volunteers to better understand our mission, the community need being addressed, and the impact of the work they're doing together.

If one of these opportunities sounds like a good fit, we'd be happy to discuss next steps and begin planning your team's volunteer experience. Thank you again for your interest in supporting our mission — we look forward to connecting with you.

Warm regards,
[Your Name, Title]
[Nonprofit Name]

Sample Message to the Company Contact Pre-Opportunity

Subject: Planning Details for Your Team Volunteer Experience

Hi [Company Contact Name],

We're excited to welcome your team from [Company Name] to volunteer with us on [date]. To help make the experience smooth and meaningful for everyone involved, we'd like to confirm a few details together:

- Project goals and expected outcomes
- Team size and any relevant skills or experience
- Arrival/departure time and parking details
- Materials or preparation needed in advance
- Preferred communication method for day-of updates

We also like to start and end volunteer projects with a short volunteer huddle conversation so teams can better understand our mission and reflect on the impact of their work.

Thank you for partnering with us — we look forward to a great day of teamwork and community impact.

Warm regards,
[Your Name/[Your Title]
[Nonprofit Name]



CALLING THE PLAYS: Game-Ready Communications for Employee Volunteer Teams and Nonprofits

Huddle Up! Nonprofit Messaging Toolkit

Sample Message to Employee Volunteers Before the Volunteer Opportunity

Subject: Welcome, [Company Name] Volunteers!

Hi [Company Name] Team,

Thank you for volunteering with [Nonprofit Name]! We're excited to have your team join us on [date] to support [brief project description]. Here's what to expect:

Schedule: [start–end time]

Location: [address]

What to wear: [closed-toed shoes, weather-appropriate clothing, etc.]

Project Overview: [Brief description of the volunteer activity]

We'll begin the day with a short Huddle Up kickoff to share our mission and explain how your work connects to community needs. At the end of the project, we'll take a few minutes to reflect on what the team experienced and accomplished together.

We look forward to working with you and making a meaningful impact together!

Thank you,
[Your Name/[Your Title]]
[Nonprofit Name]

Sample Message After the Project - Follow-Up Thank You

Subject: Thank You for Volunteering with [Nonprofit Name]

Hi [Company Contact Name / Team],

Thank you for volunteering with [Nonprofit Name] on [date]. Your team made a real difference — together you [insert impact summary].

We're grateful for the time and energy your employees shared with our organization. Experiences like this help raise awareness of our mission and strengthen partnerships that support our community. If your team would like to stay involved, we'd be happy to explore additional opportunities to volunteer or support our work.

Thank you again for your partnership and teamwork.

Warm regards,

[Your Name, Your Title]
[Nonprofit Name]
[Contact Information]

Optional add-on if the nonprofit has photos: We've attached a few photos from the day in case your team would like to share highlights internally.



CALLING THE PLAYS: Game-Ready Communications for Employee Volunteer Teams and Nonprofits

Huddle Up! Nonprofit Messaging Toolkit

Sample Message to the Company: Volunteer Impact Update

Subject: The Impact of Your Team's Volunteer Day

Hi [Company Contact Name],

We wanted to share a quick update following your team's volunteer project with [Nonprofit Name] on [date].

Thanks to your team's efforts, we were able to [output examples: prepare five community garden beds for the upcoming season, package 200 weekend meal bags for students, sort and organize 500 pounds of food, or prepare 150 literacy kits for young learners].

Because of this work, [outcome examples: low-income families will have increased access to fresh produce from the community garden this season, students will have reliable weekend meals to support their health and learning, young children will have access to books and literacy activities that support early reading development].

These contributions help us continue serving [brief reminder of mission/community impact], and your team's time and energy made a meaningful difference.

We're grateful for the opportunity to partner with [Company Name], and we hope your employees enjoyed learning more about the work happening in our community. If your team would like to stay involved or explore future volunteer opportunities, we would love to continue the conversation.

Thank you again for your partnership and support.

Warm regards,

[Your Name, Title]

[Nonprofit Name]



CALLING THE PLAYS: Game-Ready Communications for Employee Volunteer Teams and Nonprofits

Huddle Up! Nonprofit Messaging Toolkit

During the Volunteer Opportunity

1. Set the stage and start strong with a short welcome:

- Share your mission in one sentence.
- Describe how this project connects to community needs.
- Thank volunteers for showing up — and invite them to share why they came.

Tip: Ask “What brought you here today?” — it sparks engagement and ownership.

2. Connect the why before you begin:

- Link today’s activity to your organization’s larger goals.
- Share a real story or stat that shows the issue in action.

Example: “Every welcome home kit you assemble helps a family move from crisis to stability.”

3. Reflect together after the project, gather the group for five minutes and ask*:

- What surprised you today?
- How did you see teamwork in action?
- What will you share about this experience?

Even a quick reflection helps people feel invested — not just involved.

4. Remember to close the loop in follow-up messaging:

- Share results (photos, impact numbers, or thank-you messages).
- Tag the company and post on social media if appropriate.
- Follow up with a quick thank-you email and invitation to come back.

**If you’d like to go deeper, you can use the What? So What? Now What? reflection questions in The Locker Room (appendix, page 10) to continue the conversation with your team.*



CALLING THE PLAYS: Game-Ready Communications for Employee Volunteer Teams and Nonprofits

Huddle Up! Nonprofit Messaging Toolkit

During the Project Opening Script (2 minutes)

Welcome everyone! We're so glad to have the [Company Name] team with us today.

Before we jump in, I'd like to share a little about our mission and how today's project supports the work we do in the community. [Brief impact statement.]

As you work together today, take a moment to notice what you learn about this issue and how your team collaborates. At the end of the project, we'll take a few minutes for a quick reflection about the experience.

Thank you again for being here — let's get started!

Closing Script (2 minutes)

Thank you for your time and energy today! Because of your efforts, [share a measurable outcome]. Before we head out, think about one thing* that stood out to you today — something you learned about this issue, the organization, or the way your team worked together. Your support helps strengthen our community, and we truly appreciate your partnership.

Optional Handout: Mini Reflection Prompts

Create a handout with your nonprofit's mission, contact, information, etc. and share these prompts for a brief team conversation or for volunteers to jot down their thoughts.

*Reflect Together**

- *What surprised you about today's project?*
- *What did your team learn about this issue or our community?*
- *How did your team work together to solve challenges?*
- *What's one takeaway you'll share with colleagues back at work?*

**If you'd like to go deeper, you can use the What? So What? Now What? reflection questions in The Locker Room (appendix, page 10) to continue the conversation with your team.*