

As a Holiday Project Team Leader, you are the key to our success. Because of you, thousands of people in institutions will be visited – people who might not have any other holiday visitors or receive any cards or gifts. You provide a special gift for the people you visit, for those who work at the institutions, and for the volunteers who will join you, in search of a fulfilling holiday experience.

These guidelines are organized in a convenient checklist format. Follow each step and place a check in the box when it is complete.

BEFORE THE VISIT

Get trained. Training is easy. All you have to do is:

1. Read these guidelines.
2. Have a conversation with a Team Leader Trainer by contacting The Holiday Project.

Choose a facility to visit. Report your choice to The Holiday Project. This will ensure that the facility has not been chosen by another Team Leader.

Call the facility to set up the date and time of the visit. Be sure to call early. It takes time to reach people at the facilities. Generally, at a nursing home, the person to contact works in the Activities Department. At a hospital, the person works in the Volunteer Department.

When talking to the facility, also ask the following questions:

1. How do visitors get to the facility by car?

2. Where should visitors park?

3. How do visitors get to the facility by Metro?

4. How many residents will be at the facility on the visit day? _____

5. How many floors/wings are there? _____

6. Is there a room available for visitors to gather for Opening and Closing Meetings?

7. Are there any security requirements or special sign-in procedures?

Report the date and time of your visit to The Holiday Project. This will enable Holiday Project managers to enroll others to join you. The Holiday Project recruits volunteers from former visitors, our web site, VolunteerMatch and other online volunteer sites, local Volunteer Centers, and through other organizational partnerships. **The sooner your visit is listed on our website, the higher the probability you will get more visitors from our recruiting methods.**

E-mail or leave a voicemail message including:

1. Your name
2. Your phone number (to be given to people interested in joining you)
3. Your e-mail address (to be given to people interested in joining you)
4. Name of the facility
5. Facility address
6. Facility zip code (very important if you want your visit listed on the Internet)
7. Date of visit
8. Time of visit

Make a Visit Plan. Decide how your visit will progress.

1. The first 15 minutes, plan to greet visitors, make name tags and have visitors sign in.
2. Plan to lead a 15-20 minute Opening Meeting.
3. Allow 1-2 hours for visiting. Decide how much time visitors will spend on each floor/wing.
4. Allow 15 minutes for a Closing Meeting.

Create a flyer and/or a sample email message with all the information visitors will need to know. Include:

1. Date
2. Start and end times
3. Name and address of facility (as it is written on the outside sign)
4. Directions by car and parking information
5. Directions by Metro
6. RSVP information

Enroll visitors. Although we will support you, you are responsible for enrolling your visitors. Past Team Leaders have informed us that visits are most successful when there is a ratio of approximately 1 visitor for every 10 residents. Ask everyone – friends, family members, coworkers, etc. Imagine that you are inviting people to the best party they will attend all year.

1. As people express interest, give them the flyer or send the e-mail you created with all needed information.
2. Consider posting your flyer on public bulletin boards near the facility and at local stores.

3. As people enroll, make a list and include phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

In addition to those you enroll, The Holiday Project will probably be referring people to you from those who contact us in response to our general promotions and you will probably receive both calls and emails directly from people wanting to join you.

☐ Pick up your supplies and gifts from The Holiday Project.

1. Contact The Holiday Project and arrange to pick up gifts and a supply packet with name tags, a marking pen, pens or pencils, and other materials. Let The Holiday Project know how many residents will be at the facility on the day of your visit so bags can be packed with the appropriate number of gifts.

2. If you choose, you can provide your own gifts and/or cards, as long as you have similar items for everyone you visit. If you choose to do this, do NOT give patients/residents food, sharp objects or cosmetics that they may mistakenly eat or drink. The Holiday Project does not provide gifts for staff at the facility; however, you are welcome to bring cookies or candy to give to those who will be working on the visit day.

☐ Confirm everyone. Four to seven days prior to the visit:

1. Call the facility to confirm. Get the name of the person you will report to on the visit day.

2. Call everyone on your list. Leave messages reminding people of the date and time to arrive. Let everyone know residents at the facility are looking forward to the visit and their presence will make a difference. Invite visitors to dress in festive holiday attire.

ON THE VISIT DAY

☐ Be the first to arrive.

1. Check in with the facility.

2. Find the room where you will lead the Opening Meeting. If it is not the lobby, ask the first person to arrive to be a front door greeter who directs visitors to the meeting room.

3. Ask the second person to arrive to assist people in making name tags and signing-in on the sign-in sheets.

☐ Lead an Opening Meeting. The purpose of the Opening Meeting is to tell volunteers about The Holiday Project, give them an introduction to the facility and the residents and thank them for volunteering.

1. Introduce yourself and have each visitor do so as well.

2. Say something about The Holiday Project i.e. your history of participating, about how many people are being visited for the holiday, etc. Spend a few minutes talking about the importance of our visit.

3. Ask who has visited in the past and determine which visitors are first-timers. Ask a few experienced visitors to say a few words about their experiences of visiting.

4. If possible, ask a representative from the facility to greet the group and tell everyone about the types of people that reside at the facility.

5. Remind visitors of the following:

- They are visiting people in their homes. They should knock on doors and ask if people want a visitor.

- They can spend as much or as little time with each person as is comfortable. One visitor may spend just a few seconds and the next person may spend 10 minutes.
- When entering people's rooms, look for conversation helpers such as photographs, craft projects and collections. They can ask residents questions to engage them in conversation. If appropriate, they can touch people – offering a handshake, a hug, or even a kiss.
- They may encounter people who are either unconscious or semiconscious. Because we will never know if these people realize we are visiting them, we act as if our visits make a difference. A few minutes of soft conversation and hand-holding may have an impact, even if we do not see it.
- Photographs of residents are not allowed.

6. Evaluate your Visit Plan. If you have more visitors than you anticipated, divide the group into two or three sub-groups and appoint a leader for each one. Have each subgroup begin the visit on a different floor or wing. If time allows, all subgroups can visit all floors or wings. Those we are visiting will enjoy the wealth of visitors. If you have fewer visitors than you anticipated, do not visit the entire facility. No one enjoys being rushed and you want to make sure both the visitors and those visited have a quality experience.

7. Explain your Visit Plan, letting visitors know the floor plan of the facility and how long the group will spend on each floor/wing. Let visitors know what time to be back for the Closing Meeting.

Conduct the visit.

1. Move from floor/wing to floor/wing as a group.
2. It's OK if people are left behind; be sure to let them know where the group will be visiting next and they will catch up.
3. Allow enough time on each floor/wing to both visit with people in the community areas and their rooms.
4. No matter what the holiday, try to visit with everyone who wants a visitor.
5. It is always a festive idea to sing holiday songs as visitors proceed throughout the facility. Just be sure to spend time talking to people as well.

Hold a Closing Meeting. Take 15 minutes at the end of the visit.

1. Invite visitors to talk about their experience and the people they met.
2. Thank everyone for attending.

AFTER THE VISIT

Download the Team Leader Completion Report. Complete it, attach your Sign In Forms and mail it to The Holiday Project.

Send a thank-you note to your contact at the facility. Believe us, that person will be thrilled to receive it.

Send thank-you notes to those who joined you for the visit.

Acknowledge yourself. If you visited just one person this year, remember that is one more person that had a visit because of you