

LUKE CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

So You're Interested in Volunteering! Now What?

1) What Kind of Service Fits Your Interests?

Do you love animals? Working with children or the elderly? Being outdoors? Think about what kinds of things interest you. Here are some possible categories:

- Animals
- Arts and Culture
- Education
- Elderly
- Environment
- Government
- Health
- Homeless/Hunger
- Legal
- Political
- Youth & Family



2) How Much Time Can You Commit?

Are you interested in:

- A one-time service opportunity?
- An ongoing service opportunity?
- A summer service opportunity?

Are you available on Saturdays? Sundays? Weekdays? What times?

Ongoing and summer opportunities give you a chance to make a greater difference and a much better sense of the type of volunteer work you enjoy. However, they also require greater time commitments, so think about what will work for you.

3) Research Possible Service Projects

There are several places you can look for information on service projects that will fit your interests and schedule. Here are a few ideas:

- Look for the Luke Center monthly service flyer that's posted around campus and on the web at www.punahou.edu/lukecenter (click on the "Service Opportunities" link). It lists community agencies that are looking for support.
- Stop by the Luke Center to ask for more ideas.
- Look on the internet at www.volunteerhawaii.org or at www.volunteermatch.com.

4) Prepare to Contact the Agency

Once you find something that interests you and fits your schedule, you need to contact the agency. You can use the phone or computer at the Luke Center to call or email. If you are the person who will be volunteering there, most agencies prefer that you contact them, not someone else (such as your parent or friend). Before you call or email, make sure you know what you want to say. Also know the:

- name of your contact at the agency,
- reason for your call, and
- best way for the agency to get in touch with you.

If you are going to call the agency on the phone, keep a sheet of paper in front of you with the above information on it, along with enough space to take notes.



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Make sure your parents know about the volunteer opportunity and that the volunteer opportunity is safe and appropriate for your age.

5) Make the Call

If you decided to call the agency rather than send an email, call from a quiet place.

When someone answers the phone, speak clearly and tell the person your name and school or organization.

If you do not have a contact name, briefly state what kind of information you are looking for and ask to be put in touch with the appropriate person.

If your contact is not there, find out when s/he will be available and try to call back at that time. Also leave your name and contact information, the time when you can be reached, and the reason for your call.

Do not give up if your contact doesn't get back to you right away.

6) Once You Reach Your Contact

When you reach your contact, tell him/her your name, school or organization, and the reason for your call.

If you're on the phone, write down important things your contact says. If you miss something, don't be afraid to ask for clarification. After the call, add any notes that you remember from the conversation.

Make sure you know the best way to get in touch with your contact, and s/he knows the best way to get in touch with you.

7) Starting Your Volunteer Work

- Be on time. Go early on your first day to find the right place.
- Dress appropriately. Different service activities require very different clothing. If you are volunteering in an office, dress professionally. If you are doing an outdoor project, wear clothes that can get dirty, sunscreen, a hat, and closed toe shoes. If you are tutoring kids or doing arts and crafts with the elderly, dress comfortably and modestly (use Academy dress code as a guide). If you have questions about what to wear, ask your contact at the agency.
- Be responsible. Even though you are not getting paid, people are depending on you to fulfill your commitments. If something comes up and you absolutely can't make it, call the agency as soon as possible to let them know.
- Ask questions. If you are not sure how to do something, ask.
- Have fun! Enjoy your volunteer experience and all the new things you are learning.



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