



Group Service Projects at the Downtown Emergency Service Center

Overview:

One of the best ways for a group to give back to the community is to bring a group to our facilities and provide tangible help. We have a series of different projects with different levels of engagement with our clients. Each project will start with a short orientation and end with a post-mortem to discuss how the participants were affected by the day.

Volunteer groups are approved on a project availability basis, with one month advance notice needed. Projects typically work best for 5-15 volunteers and occur either in the morning or afternoon, with Saturdays occasionally available. All volunteers must be 18 or older and complete confidentiality/liability forms before beginning. Re-occurring groups can be arranged on a monthly or quarterly basis. Though not always available, below is a list of our most regular occurring group project needs. Thanks for your consideration!

Contact: volunteer@desc.org or complete online inquiry at http://www.desc.org/volunteer_group.html

A Fresh Coat of Paint

Group Size 5 – 30

Time 3-6 Hours

Client Interaction: ★★

Skills: Attention to detail, ability to use ladders and be on feet a few hours at a time

Help DESC keep our facilities and living environments looking clean and updated with a fresh coat of paint. We provide all the supplies (paint, rollers, gloves, etc.), and your group brings the enthusiasm. We might be painting a lobby or dining room of one of our supportive living facilities or focus on the halls, giving a new coat to the walls or doors. Some of our clinical facilities and shelters could also use a touch up, but we can't do it unless you help.

No prior experience painting necessary though know it can be messy and there is a minimal level of engagement with clients as they go about their day.

Move-In Kit Assembly

Group Size 5 – 12

Time 2-3 Hours

Client Interaction: ★

Skills: Detail orientated ability to follow listed instructions, and lift at least 15 lbs.

When a client is first introduced to their new home, they often don't have the basic necessities to succeed

in their new apartment. So we help them feel welcome by providing a move in kit with bedding, dishes, cookware, and basic bathroom items. We rely on donations of these items, and your group will help sort, organize and then assemble some move-in kits that will be used when the next apartment opens up.

No prior experience is necessary. We work in a garage in the Eastlake area, so dressing for the weather is important, and though it is clean, you shouldn't wear white. Tasks may include lifting, unloading, sorting and assembling household items. Then we load the completed boxes into a vehicle so that staff may deliver to various locations where the move-in kits are needed. We may also hand carry some of the move in kits to DESC supportive housing projects located within a three block radius. It should be a productive and fun day of work together to help welcome residents to their new homes!

Magic Meals

Group Size 3 – 10

Time 1-3 hours including meal preparation

Client Interaction: ★★★★★

Skills: Ability to procure and prepare food, serve, and clean up

Many of our disabled residents and shelter guests struggle with limited resources that can impact their nutrition. While each of our 10 housing projects and several drop-in centers and shelters offer some meal service, it is often not enough for our participants' daily needs. By providing a magic meal, volunteers get an opportunity to interact directly with residents or shelter guests as well as provide for this basic need. We ask that you provide the ingredients for the meal including, typically a protein, vegetables, a small fruit choice, starch and drink! With careful shopping and some menu tips from us, this can be as little as \$1 per person. For a shelter meal this will cost about \$150. Most every project has a convection and warming ovens and stove tops. We also have all the food trays, dinnerware and many cooking utensils. We will assist your group in providing a nutritious, special meal that will be a real treat to our residents.

Deep Clean

Group Size 5 – 30

Time 2-4 Hours

Client Interaction: ★ to ★★★★★ depending on project

Skills: Comfortable getting a bit dirty, ability to work independently

Most of our supportive living facilities have a kitchen and common areas shared by all the residents. Even though we have a hard working housekeeping staff at DESC, periodically, it is nice to get into the corners and under things to really keep the place healthy and ship-shape. We will provide all the cleaning items, rubber gloves and dust masks, and you provide the elbow grease!

Filing and Sorting at Administration

Group Size 2 – 10

Time 1-4 Hours

Client Interaction: ★

Skills: Detail orientated, respect confidentiality, work independently

At DESC we run a 'lean mean machine'. We provide emergency shelter, mental health care, addiction treatment and supportive housing for over 9000 men and women each year. With so many vulnerable people to serve and limited resources, DESC tries to keep its administrative expenses as low as possible. This is balanced by the need to keep up-to-date, organized records, as many of our funding sources conduct regular audits. You can help by assisting us in a mega filing bonanza!

Tasks include: Organizing our client files, checking for signatures, auditing cash receipts, revisions and more. Just remember, it's classified. Many of these records contain highly sensitive information, so bring your best security manners with you. This project will be in an air-conditioned environment. Past volunteer organizations who have performed similar administrative duties found that it gave them surprising insight to the size and breadth of our organization, as well as the multitude of services that are offered to our clients. It also frees staff to spend more time helping our clients. It's a win-win!

Decorating a project

Group Size 2 – 5

Time 1-2 Hours

Client Interaction: 

Skills: Ability to procure decorations and assemble at one of our projects

One of the biggest goals of each housing project at DESC is to provide residents a sense of home and community. Providing holiday or seasonal decorations is one such way we can provide this to those we serve. Whether Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentines Day, or Springtime (to name a few), anytime is a great time to get together and help decorate our buildings. We ask that you provide the decorations (can cost as little as \$30 from area "Dollar stores") and set them up with help from residents and staff. This a great project for helping us brighten the lives of those we serve.

Donations Processing

Group Size 2 – 15

Time 1-4 Hours

Client Interaction: 

Skills: Ability to help sort, clean, organize & label various donations. Able to lift at least 15 lbs.

DESC is thankful to receive weekly donations of clothes, food, hygiene supplies, and household items. We use these items to meet the basic needs of our programs and services while saving money in the process. Sorting through and organizing our donations is a large undertaking and we would love your help. This project can be flexible to your schedule and time commitment often depends on the amount of items we need to process each week. Client interaction would be minimal as the location of most of our donations storage is in enclosed rooms and closets. This can be a fun project for a small group while providing a good sense of the scope of donations a non-profit utilizes.