



Volunteer Coordinator Playbook

How to make it a success!

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Introduction

How to use this playbook and get the most out of your volunteers.

So you say you want to be a volunteer coordinator, now what? Volunteering is a delicate mixture of work and play. As an event leader, you will be leading individuals who have freely given their time to benefit the club and advance the spirit of curling. Having fun and socializing while doing good is the key motivator for people to volunteer. This playbook will help set you and your events up for success.

Audience

This Volunteer Coordinator Playbook is written for individuals who currently lead events at Granite Curling Club.

Others who might find this book useful:

→ **Board Members**

→ **Event Leaders**

→ **Individual Volunteers**

→ **New Members**

Volunteer Culture

Granite Curling Club is a volunteer-run organization. The success of GCC is directly tied to the membership chipping in to help when and where they can. Volunteering is a great way to meet club members and foster friendships off of the ice. Every area of the club has opportunities to volunteer from weeding the planter beds to instructing competitive curling there is a role for you.



Annual & Recurring Events

Make sure people know when and where events are happening.

Christmas comes the same time every year and yet it always seems to sneak up on you. Similarly, in volunteer-run organizations such as the Granite Curling Club there are both annual and monthly recurring events that can fall off members' radars and be a surprise when it comes time to look for volunteers. Oftentimes information about annual and recurring events is not easily accessible to the organization, especially for new members. Make it easy for people who want to get involved; as events are scheduled, follow these steps for greater visibility.

1. Event Calendar

You have an event coming up Wednesday, baby! Or maybe Thursday. Hey, what day is that happening? What day is this? The key to engaging new volunteers is keeping the club calendar up to date and making members aware of opportunities to volunteer well in advance. People are busy, make sure to snag an event leader by putting events on the calendar a minimum of 6 months before the event will occur.

Each event calendar listing should include the following minimum details:

- **Event Title:** Give events catchy names, to help trigger interest.
- **Event Dates:** Clearly state the start and end time.
- **Event Coordinator(s):** List out who is leading the event. If the event lead position is open this is a great spot to advertise you need someone. Update the listing as the event coordinator role(s) are filled.
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** Always be recruiting, link out to a [Volunteer Sign Up](#) page. For recurring events maintain a list of standard volunteer roles and post the opportunities at the same time the event is added to the calendar.
- **Event Details:** Think about the new people and visitors, don't assume that people know what the event is and create a link to more information on your website.

CASE STUDY

Every March the Granite Curling Club board holds a calendar meeting to schedule out the ice time for the upcoming season. As on ice events are finalized they are added to the Google calendar that is available on the website. Board meetings, practice ice, leagues, and work parties are also added to the calendar. Keeping a centralized calendar makes it easy for club members to see what is coming up and who to contact if they have questions about an event.

2. Filling Volunteer Leadership Roles

Always be on the lookout for your next great volunteer leader. One way to maximize the volunteer leaders in your organization is to use each event as an opportunity to train new volunteer event coordinators. When you can pair an experienced leader with a leader in training as their backup to learn the ropes of putting on the event.

People can't sign up for what they don't know about:

- Let your leaders know that opportunities are on the calendar.
- Get to know your club members and the types of roles they enjoy doing.
- Provide detailed information about volunteer roles available.
- For complicated events, schedule a committee kick-off meeting for a minimum of 3 months in advance.
- Encourage volunteers to have a backup that they are training to lead in the future.

CASE STUDY

Jill volunteers as a league manager at the Granite Curling Club, she has been managing her league for several years and recently took on Roger, a new club member, as her back up league manager. When it comes time to form new league teams for the 2nd half of the season Jill invites her backup Roger over for dinner to be a part of the process when she is forming teams. Jill can lean on Rogers' knowledge of new club members as she makes the teams and Roger learns what it takes to build balanced teams for a manager's choice league. Jill and Roger schedule themselves to be on different draws so that they can make sure there is always a leader around to make announcements and answer questions.

3. Provide Details for Volunteer Leadership Roles

The unknown is scary, imagine being asked to sign on for an unknown amount of work to be done over an unspecified timeline. Providing concrete details for the leadership roles you are looking to fill makes it easier for people to commit and leads to more confident volunteers.

Follow these best practices for posting volunteer roles:

- Give each role a title.
- Describe the type of work they will be responsible for.
- Estimate the time commitment based.
- Schedule a kickoff meeting for the leadership team to socialize and plan.
- List all volunteer leadership roles for the event.

EXAMPLE VOLUNTEER ROLES

Bar Towel Washing Crew Lead

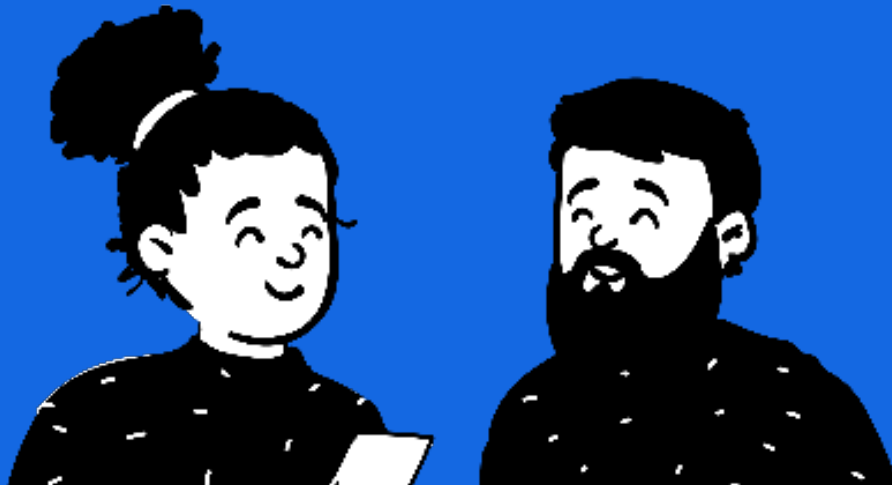
Description: Help keep our bar and kitchen well stocked with fresh bar towels. Recruit and manage a team of members willing to take home dirty bar towels to wash, dry, fold, and return them. Providing our own linen service at the club is one of the ways that we keep the cost of membership down.

Time Commitment: 1-2 hours per week depending on the number of volunteers. Towels need to be washed weekly. Usually, it is one load of laundry.

Bonspiel Kitchen Coordinator

Description: Manage kitchen menu to the budget provided by the bonspiel event coordinator. Ensure there is a lead cook for every meal. Provide food prep instructions. Shop for food supplies. Establish a food schedule. Establish a kitchen volunteer schedule. Track expenses & submit receipts for reimbursement.

Time Commitment: 8 hours of menu planning, 8 hours of shopping, 4-20 hours of cooking, 4 hours of cleaning & 4 hours of expense tracking.



Proposing a New Event

How do you go from idea to approval?

To allow for growth and engagement it is critical to allow volunteer leaders to propose new volunteer events for your organization. Make it easy for members to see what the process to get an event approved is. Create a formalized process but take care to not make it too formal, you want to encourage and welcome ideas from the people who have the passion to get the work done.

Getting your idea approved

You have a great idea for an event at the Granite Curling Club and you are willing to coordinate the work to make it happen here are the steps you need to take to get approval. If your idea requires ice time, do note that the ice calendar is set in March for the season and plan to present your idea for the following year.

1. Get the Idea Out of Your Head

Have an idea? Great! We want to know all about it. Take some time to first write up a short description of your idea and be as specific as possible. Writing down your event idea will help you think through the logistics and prepare you to answer questions from the board on what you want to do.

When writing your description, try to think about:

- What problem are you solving?
- What opportunity have you identified?
- Why is this important?
- How will this idea help advance the purpose of the organization?

EXAMPLE IDEA DESCRIPTION

Launch a new curling tournament format designed to provide a low barrier to bonspiel participation. Take the bonspiel team formation barrier findings and use them to create an individual sign up spiel at the beginning of the season to allow club members to meet new people and form teams for future events. Replace the 25 and Under Spiel with the new format to encourage higher levels of club member participation.

CASE STUDY

Jessica wanted to try out a new bonspiel format to address barriers to team formation that were found during a UW study of adult team formation at GCC. Jessica approached Todd and Ethan two experienced bonspiel leaders and asked if they would be willing to help her with the project. Now with a leadership group assembled and confident that she could pull off the event, Jessica wrote down a short description of what she wanted to do.

2. Share Your Idea

Now that you have your idea down on paper, it is time to get some initial feedback on it. The best way to promote your idea is to share it with the right person or people. A list of club volunteer board members and leaders can be found on the [Club Contact page](#). Find the contact that seems best aligned to the area of the club your idea is related to.

CASE STUDY

Pat has a vision for transforming the weedy flower beds in front of the curling club into well-manicured planters by assembling a work crew to help him clear the beds, lay down landscape cloth, and then a layer of bark to make sure that the weeds don't come back. Pat wrote up his idea and then sent an email to the buildings and facilities contact about the idea. When Pat and the buildings and facilities contact were at the club together next they made a point to grab a beer in the bar and discuss the idea further.



3. Refine and Build Out Your Idea

The idea is out of your head and people are reacting well to it. Now it is time to take it to the next level and really start to think about everything that it will take to make your idea a reality.

Here are some good questions to think through:

- **Description:** What your event is?
- **Timeline:** When you plan to have the event occur?
- **Budget:** Roughly how much will the event cost? How much revenue will the event produce?
- **Club responsibility:** What type of financial support do you need from the club? What type of facility support do you need?
- **Estimated level of effort:** How much time will it take to accomplish your goal?
- **Estimated number of volunteers needed:** How much help do you need to pull this off?
- **Qualifications/Past Experience:** What have you done in the past that qualifies you to lead this event?

Write down your answers to these questions, it does not need to be anything fancy a simple email will work. The main thing is to make sure that you have considered how you are going to make this idea a reality once you get approved.

4. Get on the Agenda

The board at the Granite Curling Club meets every month. The times and dates for the board meetings are posted in advance on the club calendar. Work with your board contact to determine when you should come and present your idea. It may also be that the board member can present the idea for you if you prefer not to speak in front of a group.

- **Pick a date when you will be ready to share the details of your idea.**
- **Request a spot on the board meeting agenda.**
- **Send the details of your idea to the board in advance of the meeting.**
- **Don't worry the board meetings are casual events.**

5. Present your idea

It is the moment you have been working towards and waiting for, presenting your idea to the board for consideration.

- **Get to the board room in advance of your time on the agenda.**
- **Present your idea to the board.**
- **Share your passion for the idea.**
- **Answer questions that board members raise.**
- **After the meeting provide any follow-up details requested.**
- **Wait to see if you have board approval.**

CASE STUDY

Bill is excited to present his idea for setting up an online curling shirt store as a junior fundraiser to the board. He spent some time working with the junior curling board member to help organize his idea and think about the types of questions the board might ask. He found a couple of artists at the club who are willing to donate curling t-shirt art and a site where he can set up the online store with no financial investment needed from the club. Bill presents his idea and answers a few questions, the board votes and approves Bill to move forward with the concept and report back after a couple of months to let the board know how the fundraiser is going.



Planning the Event

What is involved with planning the event?

Volunteer satisfaction is directly tied to a well-organized event. Planning takes longer than expected, start early, get organized, and track your progress. For bonspiels and larger events, we recommend you start planning a minimum of 3 months in advance.

1. Establish Your Event Leadership Group

Assemble your squad to help pull off your event as soon as you can. A good leadership group means you can divide up the work and trust each other to pull off a great event.

- **Determine the level of complexity of the event.**
- **Calculate how many leads you will need.**
- **Recruit your leads, get the word out that you are looking for help.**
- **Consider recruiting a new leader as your backup to train to lead similar events in the future.**
- **Ideally, fill your lead roles 3 months before the event.**
- **It is possible but not ideal for one person to have multiple lead roles for an event.**

CASE STUDY

For a basic bonspiel here are the typical leadership roles:

Decoration Lead: Works with the theme to decorate the warm side of the club

Tournament Lead: Set the draw schedule and update standings

Kitchen Lead: Set the menu and kitchen schedule

Entertainment Lead: Plan and run the off ice entertainment

Awards and Prizes Lead: Trophies, merchandise, raffle items, and swag

Tear Down Lead: Put the club back in order

2. Host A Kick-Off Party Meeting

Start off your event lead team with a gathering. A key motivator for volunteering is hanging out with fellow club members and establishing new friendships. It is important to mix business with pleasure, keep the event casual with a purpose, and have a structured agenda.

Work with your volunteer leads to create a community around the event planning.

- **Ideally, meet over a meal at your home or in the curling club bar.**
- **Get to know your leads and build rapport.**
- **Build a shared sense of mission.**
- **The target date should be three months before the event.**

EXAMPLE AGENDA

- Introductions
- What are you hoping to achieve?
- Rough budget for the event
- Rough timeline for the event
- Next milestone
- Assign action items
- Determine next meeting

3. Shared Documentation and Progress

Determine your plan for how you are going to keep your lead team organized and on the same page. If this is your first time leading an event or the first event of this type, reach out to others who have done it before you to see what they can share. You don't want to recreate the wheel when leading an event anytime you can use what has worked before. Also plan to pay it forward and keep track of the changes you make and new documents your team creates.

- **Create a shared drive to store event planning materials.**
- **Establish a folder for each lead to use.**
- **Agree upon communication protocol (email vs slack).**
- **Leverage existing templates.**
- **Create new templates as needed.**
- **Document the steps you took.**
- **Centralize budget tracking and receipt upload.**

CASE STUDY

Since 2002 Granite Curling Club has been running a 5 and Under Bonspiel. In 2013 when Chris volunteered to run the event he inherited a bunch of paper, a couple of excel workbooks, and a whole lot of history. Wanting to make it easier for future coordinators, he took the time to document the history of the event along with steps to coordinate each part of the bonspiel. Now the club maintains a google drive where each aspect of how to run this unique event is stored.



Recruitment

Time to assemble your volunteers!

You have taken on responsibility for leading an event, now your mission is to fill all of the open volunteer roles to have a successful well-staffed event. This section is designed to assist you in assembling your ideal volunteer squad.

Define Volunteer Roles



Prepare the Sign-up Sheet



Communicate Open Roles



1. Review Volunteer Roles

Before recruiting volunteers, it is important to review the volunteer roles you want to fill to make sure everyone is covered. If available take a look at information from past events to help you build your list. If you are building from the ground up keep track of what you do for the next time you run the event. Review the following steps to help you prepare for recruitment:

Organize Your Intel (20 mins)

- Write out all of the tasks that you need volunteers to complete.
- Group similar tasks together to form specific volunteer roles.
- Add titles to those roles.

Team Up (10 mins)

- Look at each role and ask yourself: How many people do you need in total for this role?

Hint: Consider the number of volunteer shifts and amount of work

Write It Out (2 mins per role)

- Title of role
- Expected amount of time commitment
- Things this volunteer will be expected to do (3-5 short bullet points)
- Skills & training required (even if the answer is none)
- **Save these role descriptions for future events!**

2. Prepare Your Sign-up Sheet

A good sign-up sheet doesn't just tell you who is interested in volunteering. It acts as a tool for the volunteers themselves, and if crafted well it can ease volunteer worries and encourage more sign-ups.

The sign-up sheet should...

- Be easy to find.
- Include volunteer role descriptions.
- Allow sign up by time slot.
- Allow people to see who else has signed up.

Use an existing tool

- GCC has several [Spreadsheet](#) templates
- Find the template that best fits your event
- Post the event on the volunteer page of the GCC website

CASE STUDY

Harriet is considering volunteering at her local curling club's next event, but she is not entirely sure what being a volunteer means. She opens the event sign up sheet to investigate, and sees the roles and time slots clearly spelled out. She notices there is an open role on the event setup team and she reads role description under the title. She sees she needs to be familiar with power tools for this role. Harriet loves power tools! Suddenly excited by the challenges ahead, she signs up to volunteer for the 2-hour slot on Sunday because she knows her partner will be able to watch the kids at that time.

3. Communicate Open Roles

You have identified the help you need now it is time to start getting the word out. We recommend you start advertising the volunteer opportunity at least 3 months before the event. Some people will wait for the last minute to sign up but others plan out their schedules in advance and appreciate being able to prioritize helping at GCC. Think about the diversity at the club and plan several ways to let people know about your opportunity.

Regularly remind club members about open volunteer opportunities:

- ➔ Select at least one digital and physical method to use for recruitment.
- ➔ Use at least one method a week to boost awareness.
- ➔ Have weekly check-ins to assess which methods are working best.
- ➔ Try out new methods if the one you decided on isn't working.

RECRUITMENT IDEAS: WHICH WILL YOU USE?	
DIGITAL	PHYSICAL
GCC website Volunteer Page event posting.	Add your event to the league announcements list.
Club wide monthly email posting.	Post flyers in the bathrooms.
GCC Slack Channel Posting.	Hang posters in the warm room.
List event on the club calendar.	Bring a paper sign up form with you to league nights.
GCC Facebook WarmRoom group posting.	Ask a friend to join – seek people out and ask in person.
BONUS Send out a survey asking people about their skill sets. Then, reach out to those that match your needs.	

4. Before the event: Orient Your Volunteers

Volunteers have signed up for your event (yay!) – now it's time to give them a shout out and make sure they feel part of the team/ know what's going on. Keep up a consistent thread of communication with the volunteers to keep them engaged as the days lead up to the event.

Send out a welcome email within a couple of days of sign up:

- Reiterate the role expectation.
- Remind them of the shift time.
- Thank them for signing up.

Consider gathering the volunteers virtually or in-person before the event. The event can be as short or as long as you would like. The event should include:

- Name tags that include volunteer role
- Introductions
- Instructions
- Snacks & drinks (if in-person)
- Mingling

CASE STUDY

Nelly just signed up to volunteer for an event at her curling club for the first time and she's not sure what to expect. Luckily, Cal sends her an email a few days after signing up reminding her of her roles and volunteer time. Cal also suggests she joins the volunteer mixer the day before the event so she can meet other volunteers and get a better sense of what to expect. After reading the email Nelly breathes a sigh of relief and is excited to volunteer and make new friends!



Go Time

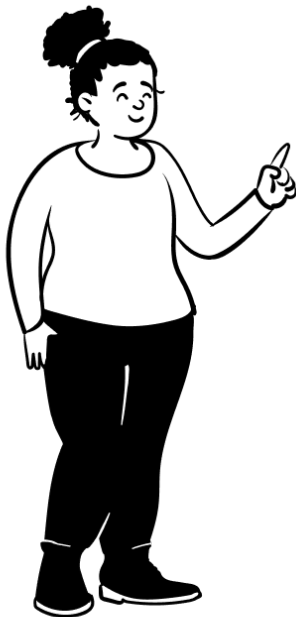
What to do during the event

Mix and match these tips to get the most out of your event. Use your best judgment in choosing the ones that most apply. Sometimes all of them make sense; sometimes only a few. In any case, it's good to have some strategies in your back pocket to make you feel confident you're pulling off a successful event and making your volunteers happy!

1. Don't assume everyone knows you

...or where to find you. The first challenge a new volunteer has when arriving at an event is figuring out where they should be and what they should be doing. This can become frustrating if they can't find a volunteer coordinator or event leader to check-in with, or don't know who to ask for help.

- **Wear a name tag with a special symbol that designates you as a volunteer coordinator.**
- **If you have to leave the area you told volunteers you'd be in when they arrived, designate a person who can stay to direct new volunteers.**
- **Consider wearing a distinctive outfit or article of clothing that will make it easy for volunteers to spot you in a crowd.**



2. Keep your volunteers happy

Volunteers want to have fun at the event too! Their experience will make or break their decision to volunteer happily in the future.

To keep your group of volunteers going strong try to:

- **Make sure they take breaks.**
- **Ask if they're comfortable with a task. If not, find someone who can help out.**
- **Make sure they have drinks and snacks.**

CASE STUDY

At the Granite Curling Club, Robert got together a group of volunteers to clean up the yard and parking lot outside as well as do gardening to spruce things up. Since it was an unusually hot summer day in Seattle, Robert made sure to have a cooler full of cold water and drinks available and specifically told individual volunteers to take breaks for as long as they needed. Because their basic needs were taken care of, Robert's volunteers were so happy with this experience that almost all of them decided to volunteer again the following month.

3. Have a clear start and end time

Volunteers need to plan their schedule or travel to and from the event. Giving them clear times helps set them up for what to expect.

- **Confirm when they arrive how long you expect them to be present and able to help out.**
- **Post a schedule for the roles so volunteers know who is coming to relieve them.**
- **When a role has a flexible start and end time, make sure volunteers know to check in with you before they come in the event the work is already done.**

4. Plan for the unexpected

Your volunteers may encounter a tough situation they can't easily solve and feel uncomfortable and unsure of what to do next. These situations can often be the most frustrating for volunteers.

Having a plan in place will help volunteers feel more comfortable and willing to continue to volunteer in the future.

- **Have someone more experienced nearby new volunteers can easily see and ask for help.**
- **Let the new volunteers know this is the person they can ask for help.**
- **Keep a list of key club contacts in case of ice or warm room emergencies.**
- **Try to have one volunteer with first aid training per shift.**
- **For key roles consider assigning backups.**

5. Have specific tasks for volunteers

Volunteers like to know what they're supposed to do. It's not enough to tell them to "make themselves useful" because not everyone knows what that means to you.

- **Give volunteers clear tasks so they can feel confident and accomplished.**
- **Send out instructions in advance when possible.**
- **Bring a printed copy of instructions**
- **Provide a follow-up task as a bonus they can do if they finish the first one quickly.**

CASE STUDY

Kathy was excited and nervous to do her first volunteer shift with the Adaptive Curling Clinic. The day before the event she got an email from Yolanda reminding her to plan to get to the event 30 minutes early so that she could attend a quick training. Included with the reminder were a couple of links to videos on how to instruct wheelchair curling. Kathy watched the videos and came early the next day ready to learn. Yolanda had time set aside to answer any of Kathy's questions. After training was done Kathy was assigned to work with Tim on Sheet 5 with 4 guests. Kathy's role was to position the rocks for the wheelchair and chat with the guests. Kathy gained a lot of confidence getting to work with Tim and see how he instructed.

6. Designate a “Go-To” person or event leader

It helps to know who when a volunteer has a question they'll get an answer from the right person and not shuffled around delaying their task.

- **When you start the event, tell volunteers who are in charge so they know where to ask questions.**
- **Set up multiple people as volunteer leaders if your event is large or takes place in multiple locations.**



7. Empower others

While it's helpful to have specific tasks, no one likes to be micro-managed.

- **Provide opportunity for volunteers to step up and claim ownership of a task.**
- **When offering a large task, ask them if they feel comfortable with it and if they need any extra help.**

CASE STUDY

At the Granite Curling Club, Zach leant an extra hand to volunteer for an open house. His goal is to one day be on the board and is trying to work his way up by being friendly and knowing the ins and outs of how the club works. At the open house, Susan, the volunteer coordinator, gave him the task of following up with people who just finished curling. He decided to make a fun activity out of it by putting people into groups and having them chat with experienced curlers while playing games in the bar. Because they stuck around longer, Zach was able to follow up with every one of them to answer their questions and got more people interested in joining the club than at a typical open house event. Susan felt great about this and is now thinking about letting Zach be the coordinator for future open houses.

8. Don't wait for volunteers to come to you

Some volunteers may not be as comfortable asking for help when they need it or be as extroverted to seek out assistance immediately.

- **Seek them out to make sure they're doing ok, comfortable with a task, or need anything extra.**
- **If you see someone struggling with a task, have an event leader come over to give them extra motivation or another pair of hands.**

9. Thank your volunteers for coming

It feels good to be needed! Setting volunteers up for success happens all throughout your communication with them. Don't wait until the event is over to show your appreciation.

- **Set volunteers up for a great day by thanking them for coming when they walk through the door.**
- **While work is underway, take time to offer thanks especially if someone is working on a thankless task.**

CASE STUDY

Thomas was two hours into his four hour shift volunteering to wash dishes for the holiday spiel and let's just say the thrill was gone. No matter how fast he washed dishes it seemed like the kitchen crew was getting them dirty again. Just about the time that Thomas was thinking he had made a mistake volunteering Bill the bonspiel manager came into the kitchen and made it a point to thank Thomas again for the hard work he was doing to help make the event a success. Bill checked to see if anyone in the kitchen needed anything, had stories of the compliments he was hearing for the food, and let the group know that this might be some of the best food ever. Thomas was invigorated by the attention and compliments and was able to keep powering through the dishes.

10. Let volunteers you don't need off the hook

Sometimes it's hard to know how many volunteers you'll actually need. If you've overestimated, volunteers may be standing around unsure of what to do next, how they can help out, or if they'll be ok ending their volunteer time that day.

- **If you see volunteers standing around with nothing to do, let them know they can be done and either stick around and enjoy themselves or leave.**
- **If volunteers insist on staying to help out, see if coordinators in other areas need any extra assistance.**

11. Connect new people together

One of the main motivators for volunteers is meeting new people and making new friends! Making a new friend helps volunteers have a positive experience and encourages them to sign up for events in the future.

- **Don't always have the same people working together; add someone new who you think might have fun!**
- **On the day of the volunteer activity, coordinate a round of introductions between the volunteers by asking them to introduce themselves and answer a fun ice breaker question.**

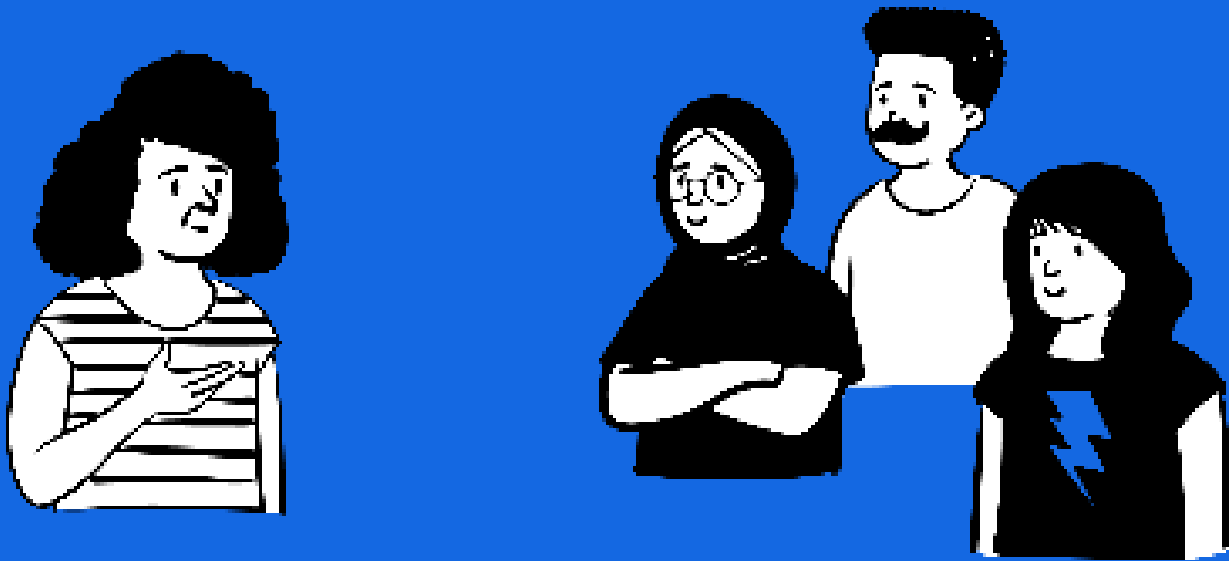
CASE STUDY

At the Granite Curling Club, cliques naturally form together. It's common to see the same people hanging out together. Katie and Jacob were new members looking to make friends at the curling club. They weren't having much luck breaking into social circles until Katie volunteered them both to help out at a bonspiel event. Katie ended up being in the kitchen helping with lunch prep and made new friends she later introduced to Jacob. Now both of them know more people, get invited to more activities and feel even more welcomed at the club.

12. Make it fun!

Above all else, volunteers just want to have fun while they're making an impact! Make it a great experience by trying some of these things:

- **Consider making parts of the volunteer activity a fun competition between friends, like “first to complete X gets bragging rights!”**
- **Consider a fun celebration of your choosing upon completion of the event. For example, a cheer, round of drinks or a reward like a patch or sticker that gives a sense of “social credibility”.**



Event Retrospective

What to do after your event is over

Whether you just finished the best event ever or barely clawed your way across the finish line, assessing the event you just hosted with your volunteer leaders will help make sure the event runs even better the next time. Even though you will be tired, don't wait too long to host the retrospective the closer you are to the event the better your recall of what happened will be.

1. Pick a time and place

Ideally, you will have communicated about the retrospective meeting with your leadership group in advance of the event. If at all possible just plan to stay 1-2 hours after the event concludes to quickly run through what you learned.

Key things to remember:

- Set the time and day in advance.
- Pick a place where you can have food and drinks.
- Invite the full event leadership team and any key volunteers.
- Send out a couple of key questions to discuss in advance.
 - Were event communications handled in an efficient and effective manner?
 - What went well?
 - What unexpected issues came up?
 - What could be done in the future to improve the event?

CASE STUDY

The holiday spiel was finally over the last participants had come off the ice to grab their winnings, the kitchen was clean and the decor taken care of. As planned Brian gathered the bonspiel leaders and key volunteers in the club bar to have a short retrospective. Everyone grabbed something to drink and a bag of chips materialized. In addition to the event leaders, Brian had asked the bonspiel chair from the board to come as well. The group relaxed, enjoying each other's company as they got ready to discuss the event.

2. Start with the good

Your crew just put in hours if not days and weeks planning and pulling off the event, start by celebrating that you made it across the finish line. People will naturally want to start digging into what went wrong or could be improved because those types of inputs make more of an impression on us during the event. Your job as the leader is to get the retrospective started out on the right foot and celebrate the successes.

Key things to remember:

- During the event planning make note of things that went well.
- While the event is underway, keep track of highlights.
- Bring your highlight list to the retrospective.
- Let the group know you are going to spend the first 20 minutes celebrating what went well.
- If people start to go low and focus on what went wrong first, go high and model how to focus on successes.

3. Learn from mistakes

When you look at what could be improved for next time, be careful to not allow participants to slide into a blame game. Acknowledge that everyone worked hard and wanted the event to be a success. Try to take a blame-free approach to catalog what you would change for the next time you run the event.

Key things to remember:

- Timebox the conversation let the group know they have 20 minutes to discuss what could be improved.
- This is not about who did something wrong.
- Focus on what went wrong and why.
- Don't dwell on the bad or belabor the point, discuss enough to get to understanding but keep the conversation moving forward.
- Keep track of who shares and don't allow the loud personalities to monopolize the conversation.

CASE STUDY

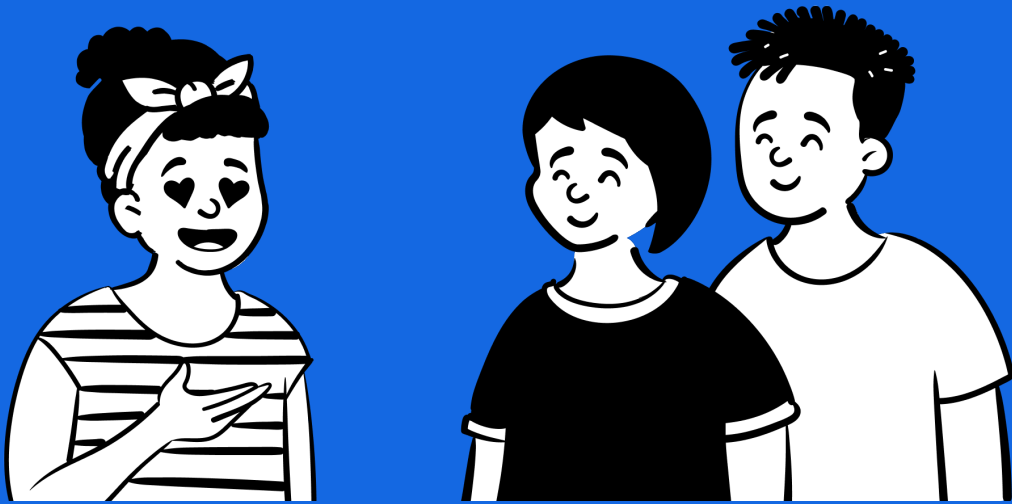
Brian and his team discussed what could be improved for the next bonspiel and they realized that the process of waiting to submit receipts all at once for reimbursement made it so that whoever was purchasing decorations would need to sit on the expenses for potentially months. The group brainstormed ideas and came up with a proposal for the treasurer board chair to allow for monthly reimbursement as long as the receipts were all submitted through the bonspiel manager so that they were tracked correctly against the budget. Brian documented the idea and took on the responsibility of talking about it with the treasurer. The group was energized that they had come up with a potential solution to a problem and kept talking about ways to improve.

4. Share what you learned

Make sure your meeting has a note-taker, prepare for the meeting and bring along some paper and a pen for your note-taker, or if you get a note-taker in advance ask them to bring their laptop. Try not to have the meeting facilitator also serving as the note-taker, it is easier to concentrate on conversation and group participation when you are not also trying to take notes. Share the outcome with the board chair responsible for the area your event was associated with.

Record the following:

- Any issues with the event.
- All event wins.
- Any recommendations for future events.
- Next steps and action items.



Recognition

Make sure your volunteers come back

At Granite Curling Club, where everyone is a volunteer, it is easy to lose track of the need to recognize and thank people for the work that they do. Spending the time to acknowledge the time volunteers spend, their achievements, and overall impact on the club is important. People want to know that they are making a difference in the community. As a volunteer event leader, it is important that you dig deep and make the extra effort to recognize those that have come to help.

1. Track participation

Ideally, the volunteer sign-up sheets for the event should do most of the tracking for you. Pay attention to last-minute volunteers or day of individuals who may not have officially signed up to help. The purpose of tracking participation is to make sure the club can demonstrate the impact of our volunteers and recognize them specifically.

Tips to remember-

- Print out the volunteer sign up list and bring it to the event or pull up to reference during the event.
- Encourage last minute volunteers to sign up on the sheet even retroactively.
- Thank people for signing up.
- Add people to the list who did not sign up themselves.
- Should someone need to drop out or be unable to serve their shift make a note of that as well.

2. Send a thank you card

Everyone loves to get personal mail. How many of you check your mailbox daily hoping to find a note amidst the bills and advertisements? Sending a handwritten note to your event volunteers is a surefire way to make an impact and let them know they have made a difference. If you don't have time to send paper cards, emails work as well but need to be heartfelt and individualized for the biggest impact.

Keys to a great thank you card:

- Handwrite the note and use the volunteer's first name.
- Make your note specific, call out the tasks they did to make the event a success.
- Try to send the note within a month of the event.
- Let them know they helped you as the event leader.
- Sign your name with a personal closing.

CASE STUDY

Jet got home from a long day at work and was surprised to see a hand-addressed card waiting in their mailbox for them. They opened the card and saw that it was a thank you note from Joan for the work that they had done last month on the club bar towel washing crew. Jet had been covering for Jen while she was on vacation and they had been washing towels twice a week to ensure that the club had enough towels for the bar and kitchen. Joan had sent a note to acknowledge the extra work Jet was putting in.

3. Other ways to give recognition

Publicizing volunteer recognition around the club is a great way to spread awareness amongst the members for volunteer opportunities. In addition to sending Thank you notes, while most impactful, are not the only way to recognize volunteers around the club.

Here are some other ways you can spread awareness to the club members about the efforts:

- **Add a thank you list to the league announcements.**
- **Add the volunteers' names to the volunteer board.**
- **Feature a volunteer thank you list on the club website.**
- **Write up a thank you article to be included in the next club email.**



Good luck!

We hope this guide serves you and your organization well. For more information, or to access an online version, please visit: <http://github.com/krfrank/volunteer-coordinator-playbook>.

– **Alison Buchanan, Klare Frank, Jami Odell, Jessica Schultz**

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Credits

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