

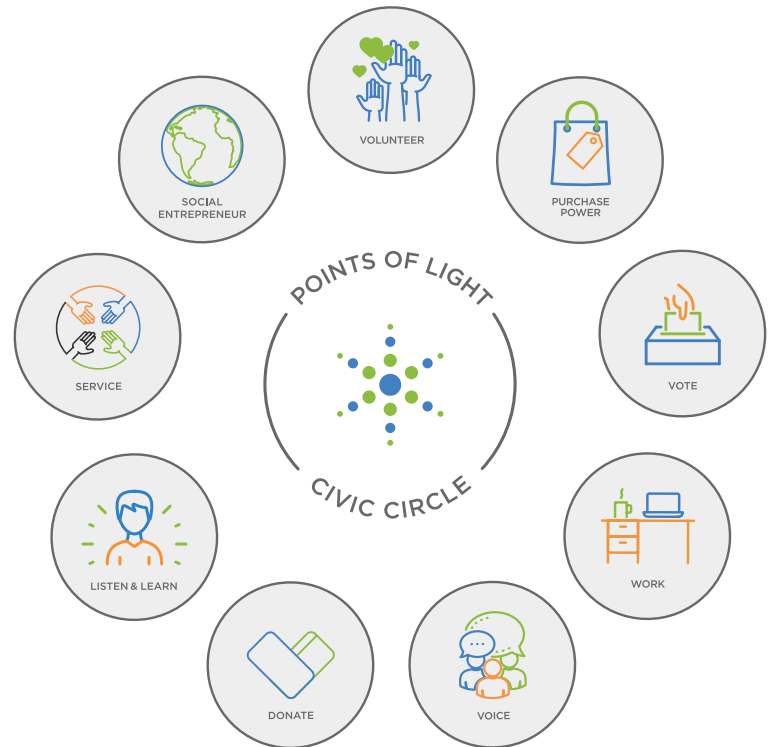
Volunteer Team Builder Conversation Guide



Through volunteering, we can become more informed about issues impacting our communities. It can also help us understand the root causes of a problem while engaging with others to learn from their experiences. But the impact doesn't have to end when the project is over.

When we think about civic life today, we know that people want to live an integrated life that reflects their values. Today's engaged person may express their desire to do good by utilizing their purchase power, raising their voice, choosing where they work based on a company's values or even making a donation. There are many additional ways to be engaged. **Points of Light's Civic Circle** represents your power to lead, lend support and take action for causes you care about.

In this guide, we'll walk through how to incorporate deeper understanding and reflection into the volunteer experience, so at the end of a project, you and your colleagues will find inspiration for further engagement.






PROJECT ORIENTATION: BEGIN WITH PURPOSE

The project kickoff sets the tone for what lies ahead. While it's important to cover logistics, roles and responsibilities, below are tips for embedding a greater sense of purpose from the start:

- **Why does this matter?** While what you're doing matters, why you're doing it is at the heart of the project. Ask a representative from the organization you're volunteering with (or this can be you) to share:
 - Greater context for the issue or cause being supported (*i.e., the barriers to education that impact students in the community*)
 - How the organization is working to combat these issues (*i.e., creating opportunities for local students to gain access to technology and mentorship to support their learning*)
 - How the tasks being completed during the project align with the needs of the organization and the issue or cause (*i.e., more vibrant learning spaces foster creativity and greater academic performance*)
- **Encourage conversation and questions.** This may be a volunteer's first time supporting a particular issue or cause. By bringing questions to the organization's staff and encouraging conversation with each other, you're fostering a sense of belonging while acknowledging there's more we can all learn.
- **Set the stage for deeper engagement.** Share the *Points of Light Civic Circle* with the group to encourage further support beyond volunteering. You can even work with the organization in advance to generate specific ideas using examples on the last page.

PROJECT CLOSING AND DEBRIEF: END WITH MEANING

It's important to bring everyone together at the end of a project to show appreciation for the collaborative work, celebrate the group's accomplishments and promote a sense of belonging. But it's also the space to reflect on what's been learned and how colleagues can continue to stay involved, including other opportunities represented in the *Points of Light Civic Circle*. Here are some reflection questions to get you started:










<p>What?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What were your initial expectations of this experience?• What did you know about this issue, community, people impacted or organization before the project?• What have you learned as a result of this experience?
<p>So What?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why do you think organizations like this one need to exist?• What are the interconnected issues that are impacted or influenced by the issue you are trying to address?• How have your views about this issue, community or organization changed as a result of this project?• How was this experience different from your expectations?• How have you connected with someone else on a personal level during this experience? What insights did you gain or share with them?• Is there anything about this experience that surprised you about the issue, the people or community impacted, or even yourself?• How has this experience broadened your perspective or helped you develop more empathy towards others?
<p>Now What?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can this experience help you approach future interactions with a deeper understanding of the challenges that others may be facing?• What more would you like to learn related to this issue, community or organization?• How can you share what you've learned or experienced today with others?• Thinking about the <i>Points of Light Civic Circle</i>, what more can be done to support this issue, community or organization (i.e. volunteering, donating, using your voice, listening and learning, etc.)? Visit this CarMax site for helpful strategies to flex your empathy muscle.

Keep the momentum going after the project by connecting with the volunteers within the next few days. When you reach out:

- Say “thank you” for volunteering.
- Share a brief recap of the events of the day and any photos taken. (Make sure everyone in the photos, especially clients or beneficiaries from the organization, have given consent to have their pictures taken).
- Provide ways to continue to stay involved – these can be the ideas shared during the debrief, ideas from the organization and ideas represented in connection with the *Points of Light Civic Circle*.

POINTS OF LIGHT CIVIC CIRCLE

Explore other ways to get involved to support what you care about. Here are some examples leveraging the *Points of Light Civic Circle* to get you started

Civic Circle Action	Description	Example
 Donate	Sharing personal resources to advance a cause	Donating new school supplies for students
 Listen & Learn	Staying informed, thinking critically and educating yourself before acting	Doing research on the issues impacting education in the community
 Purchase Power	Making spending decisions that reflect your values or advance a cause you care about	Shopping from a company that invests in the education of under-resourced communities
 Service	Committing time, energy and talent to support members of a community and contribute to the public good	Join a local school board or join a civic committee
 Social Entrepreneur	Identifying a need that has not been met by traditional institutions, structures and systems, and using an entrepreneurial spirit to drive change	Invest in or support a social entrepreneur that's addressing the technology gap in education
 Voice	Influencing your network to raise awareness, promote, protest, advocate or advance a cause or social issue	Have a conversation at the dinner table with your family to discuss what you learned about education issues in your community and how you can be part of the solution
 Volunteer	Offering time and talent to advance a cause or support resolution for a societal issue without personal gain	Vote for local or state measures that advance education
 Vote	Engaging in the political process, from participating in national, state and local elections to supporting efforts that increase engagement in these elections	Committing time, energy and talent to support members of a community and contribute to the public good
 Work	Making choices about employment based on the values and purpose of the place you work or how you can leverage workplace giving programs to support a cause	Visit the CarMax Cares page on The World to access giving programs such as matching gifts and donation drives



POINTS OF LIGHT

This guide was developed in partnership with Points of Light. You can learn more about how you can lead, lend support and take action for causes you care about and to lead a civic life at <https://www.pointsoflight.org/civillife>.