



Top 13 ways to recruit volunteers

by Nella Uitvlugt

Perhaps you've discovered that bulletin announcements don't do much good when it comes to recruiting volunteers. So what next? I'd like to share a few of the ideas that have worked for me over the years that I've been responsible for recruiting volunteers for a Friendship group:

1. Ask your pastor and church board to pray for you as you search.
2. Look for people in the congregation that may be overlooked by others. Hint: they may be back-row sitters, or up in the balcony.
3. Ask them to come to one meeting, just to visit. When they see the program, it will help them overcome their fears.
4. Tell stories. Share the difference Friendship makes in the lives of mentors, friends, families.
5. Once you have one other volunteer from your congregation, ask that person to find one more volunteer. And so on.
6. Visibility = volunteers. Write about the group for your church newsletter.
7. If any friends attend worship on Sunday, see if you can find a family for each person to sit with (no more than one friend per family). The family will get to know the person, and then you can ask them to be a mentor--or they may beat you to it and volunteer!
8. Is there anyone in the congregation that is a Special Ed teacher or a social worker? Ask them to visit, and ask whether they have ideas for volunteers.
9. Be enthusiastic. If you act like this is a great opportunity, someone will catch your vision.

10. If a friend comes from another church, ask the church to find a mentor. I tell the church I want to build a bridge between the Friendship group and their church. Mentors in your group may also have family or friends who would like to volunteer.
11. High schoolers can make great volunteers. Emphasize the importance of attending faithfully, and offer to write them a letter of recommendation for school or a job if they do.
12. Recruit people for particular roles that use their gifts: musician, storyteller, arts & crafts coordinator, snack server, organizer of materials, event & party planner, transportation coordinator, and so on. This will help you avoid group leader burnout, too!
13. Show the Friendship video, which is posted at www.friendship.org. Sometimes this encourages people to know that the program is not intimidating.