



Celebrate 12 Days of Caring

Alternative Holiday Volunteer & Donation Opportunities

The holidays are one of the most popular times of year to volunteer and even though the needs of the community are great, many of the projects listed with the Bloomington Volunteer Network fill up quickly. Below are some other ways you can give back on your own or with friends, family, and co-workers during the holidays or any time throughout the year.

- 1. Deck the Halls** - Offer to decorate an assisted living home, group home or nursing/rehabilitation center in your neighborhood for the holidays. Providing festive entertainment, like a tree-trimming party or Christmas carol sing-along is sure to brighten their season.
- 2. Make Treats for Non Profit Agencies** - Contact your favorite nonprofit organization that provides a much needed service and make snacks, a lunchtime meal, or a batch of your signature holiday sweet-treats for the employees of that organization.
- 3. Grant a Wish** - Find a "Wish Tree" or "Angel Tree" and purchase a gift for someone less fortunate. Take a look at the list and purchase items that will support the services they provide year-round.
- 4. Give an Alternative Gift** - Make a special donation of material goods or supplies to a local organization in honor of a friend or family member. Give that person a card describing the organization and the donation made in their name!
- 5. Shop an Organization's Wish List** - Next time you're out shopping, use the Bloomington Community Wish List as your shopping list and add something extra to your cart to support a local nonprofit. Donations of canned goods and holiday meal items to an area shelter or food bank are always welcome. Don't forget pet food & supplies for our local animal support services!
- 6. Adopt a Service Person** - Help make being away from home a little easier by sending a holiday greeting card to our armed service men and women or adopt a local veteran or family who has a loved one overseas in the military. Visit one of these websites for ideas: www.ourmilitary.mil, www.adoptaplatoon.org, www.forgottensoldiers.org.
- 7. Think Green** - Take a moment to consider your impact on the environment. Carpool with someone on your way to work or school, be sure to recycle, and go out of your way to pick up litter around you.
- 8. Share the Warmth** - Quilt a blanket, knit a hat & scarf, or create a draft-stopper to help keep a family warm during the winter season. Participate in one of the projects that share the warmth. Not so crafty? Locate an organization that needs coats and shoes this winter and then start collecting! Don't forget the hats and gloves!
- 9. Donate** - Support your favorite non-profit financially. There are many places where you can donate that really need your help. Not sure how to make the biggest impact? Visit monroeunitedway.org to find out how your dollars can make lasting change for families who live in Monroe County.
- 10. Support Utility Payment Assistance** - There is a great need during the winter months for utility payment assistance so that families and individuals can keep their heat and lights on. Donate financially to a local agency that assists those with utility payment needs. For more information, call United Way's 2-1-1.
- 11. Brighten Someone's Day** - With the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, it's easy to get caught up in the whirlwind. Take a moment to make someone's day better by holding the door open, feeding a parking meter for a stranger, thanking the store clerk for their help, saying hello to a neighbor. Small gestures can go a long way to making the season better for everyone.
- 12. Commit to Volunteer All Year Long** - While it is great to volunteer during the holidays, your help is needed all year long. Make a commitment to volunteer at least four more times in the New Year. The agency you are working with will be grateful, and you will know that you have truly made an impact. Sign up for the weekly VolunteerBloomington! email newsletter to stay connected year-round! Log on to www.bloomingtonvolunteernetwork.org/ VolunteerBloomington to subscribe.

City of Bloomington Volunteer Network

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