

Sunshine Special

The Sunshine Special is a heartwarming event which focuses on children, especially the fostered, underprivileged or disabled. It can be an annual event held any day that is most convenient, and as many times during the year as the individual club desires. What's important is that the event be carefully planned and effectively implemented so that its purpose — to bring happiness to children — is successfully achieved.

Each club should imaginatively utilize the resources available to organize the event. Your club may decide to seek the cooperation and endorsement of other organizations or business groups in the community.

First, organize a committee. Be sure to cover all important areas of event-planning including: finance, publicity, invitations, transportation and refreshments. Second, decide the time and place for the event. Finally, conduct the event, and have fun!

Sunset Special

A variation of the Sunshine Special is the Sunset Special which consists of an outing for elderly people.

Your club may provide refreshments and an opportunity for fellowship for the participants.

Environmental Awareness

Exchange Clubs across the country have focused their efforts on preserving our environment. Basic recycling programs, Adopt-A-Highway, park clean-ups and tree planting are a few suggestions. Contact your local chamber of commerce to determine the specific needs of your community.

Within your own club, however, efforts can be made to improve the environment. For example, assign a member to act as the "recycler." He or she can pick up remaining papers from meetings including ballots, agendas, newsletters and announcements. These papers can either be reused at the next meeting, or disposed of in a clean paper recycling bin. Another suggestion: conserve paper. Get in the habit of printing on both sides of the paper. Post general announcements on a community board. Make telephone calls instead of writing a note to remind your members of upcoming meetings and activities.

Family Days

Exchange's Family Days program helps to heighten the respect for the concept of family as well as foster a greater appreciation of family living among our citizens. It is a special gathering to which all club members and their families are invited. Attendance is not limited to immediate family members. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins should also be invited.

The event can include entertainment and special competitive events designed to allow entire families to work together for a common cause. Family Days can also become an inter-club event involving several Exchange Clubs within the community or geographical area.

Sponsor a Youth Sports Team

By sponsoring a youth sports team you are providing an opportunity for more children to participate in youth sports by keeping the cost of such programs low. You are also encouraging children in your community to be healthy, active and stay out of trouble. Many times your club name and/or logo will be imprinted on the team uniforms. Your donation will go toward the purchase of t-shirts/uniforms, caps, and awards for the team at the end of the season. Your club could even receive a commemorative team photo to display at your club meeting place.

Helping Homeless Shelters/Soup Kitchens

There is always work to be done to help the less fortunate. Exchanges can volunteer their time renovating and doing general cleanup of shelters and other such service buildings. Your club can hold a food drive for nonperishable food donations. Collections can also be held for toys, winter clothes, personal items, etc., that can then be donated to a needy shelter. Contact your local shelter or soup kitchen to find out what services and goods are most needed.

Home Safety Check Program

Exchange Clubs, working independently or with a local social service agency, can visit the homes or apartments of older residents and check for potential safety hazards, making necessary repairs at no charge to the seniors. Areas to be checked include electrical wiring, lighting, fireplaces, space heaters, smoke detectors, locks, handrails, stairs, medication expiration dates and others.

Club members could also assist seniors by installing items such as wheelchair ramps and easy-to-operate door handles and sink faucets, which enable older residents to maintain their independence longer.

Meals on Wheels

The Meals on Wheels program takes food to seniors who are unable to leave their homes. It provides both nutritional meals and a friendly face to a lonely senior. Be a driver, or donate funds. For more information, contact your local meals on wheels organization.

Pet Therapy

The Pet Therapy project is a great project for brightening the day of nursing home residents who may not get much company. Set up a visit with your local nursing home and simply take your pets along for the residents to enjoy. It offers them some great company and a cuddly, affectionate cat, dog or other friendly animal to pet.

Habitat for Humanity

Contact the local Habitat chapter in your area, to help build simple, decent, affordable houses for those who lack adequate shelter. If you're not sure where a local Habitat chapter might be contact the Habitat Help Line at 800-422-4828, Ext. 2551 or 2552. Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit nondenominational christian housing ministry. Homeowners are selected based on their need for housing, their ability to repay their mortgage and their willingness to work in partnership with Habitat. Houses are sold through a no-profit mortgage. The soon to be homeowners and volunteers build the houses themselves, under trained supervision.

City Beautification

Organize a city beautification project in your community to make it more enjoyable and safe for the children and adults. A clean and beautiful city makes good business sense and results in a healthy economy. It attracts highly skilled workers and investment, and enables us to live, work and play in well maintained, safe and pleasant surroundings. There are several ways to do this such as planting trees and flowers, planting a community garden in a vacant lot or making it into a playground. Contact your city officials to see where help is needed.

Blood Drive

Setting up a blood drive is easy. Contact your local Red Cross and work with their representative to find a suitable location. The committee for this event will need to recruit donors within the organization and schedule them for their appointments. The club should also work with the Red Cross to publicize the drive.

Adopt-A-highway

The Adopt-A-Highway program provides an opportunity for your company or organization to be recognized for sponsoring the clean up of a section of highway. Often times bags and gloves are provided and the city will pick up the full bags. Benefits of the program include recognition from thousands of people driving by your sign every day and an everlasting, positive impression on the community. Contact your local department of transportation for more information.