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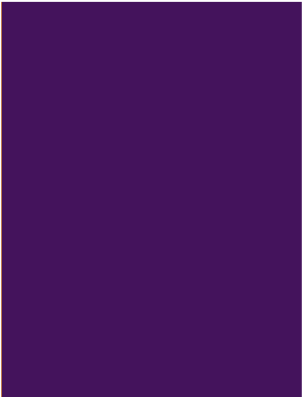
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Sponsored by America's Fraternal Benefit Societies

GUIDE

## On the first Saturday in May,

fraternalists and nonfraternalists alike come together for JOIN HANDS DAY to make a difference in their communities through helpful projects that connect youths and adults. **JOIN HANDS DAY** gives fraternal benefit societies and volunteer organizations the opportunity to reach out to people they don't know, to connect generations and to develop new relationships. **JOIN HANDS DAY** also is the only day on the national Seasons of Service calendar that targets and develops youth/adult relationships through neighborhood volunteering.

## The many reasons to participate...

- You'll help to improve your community.
- You'll motivate both youths and adults to become more active in your society/organization.
- You'll increase teamwork, morale and trust among your participants ... and boost retention.
- You'll build relationships with other organizations and/or businesses.
- Volunteers will join you to work on specific causes of mutual interest or concern.
- Members of your community will learn about your society/organization and its good work.
- You'll garner positive media attention for your society/organization and your business as a whole.
- Benefit for youths—learning the value of volunteering and personally making a difference in their own communities.
- It's fun and rewarding!

## Our Sponsors

America's fraternal benefit societies are the creators and sponsors of **JOIN HANDS DAY**. These mutual-aid, not-for-profit organizations are a distinctive, charitable force of nearly 9 million people in 30,000 local chapters, making it one of the nation's largest member networks. Fraternal benefit societies provide their members with leadership, social, educational, spiritual, patriotic, scholarship, financial and volunteer-service opportunities. America's fraternal benefit societies are represented by their own trade association, the American Fraternal Alliance ([www.FraternalAlliance.org](http://www.FraternalAlliance.org)).



AMERICAN  
FRATERNAL  
ALLIANCE

Operating in America for more than 150 years, fraternal benefit societies long have demonstrated their fraternal purpose through a commitment to volunteer service. **During the last 10 years, they have contributed almost \$3.17 billion to charitable and fraternal programs.** In addition, fraternalists volunteered more than 780 million hours toward community-service projects in that same time period.

As the sponsors of **JOIN HANDS DAY**, fraternal benefit societies are your best resources for an activity on the first Saturday in May. Visit the **JOIN HANDS DAY** Web site at [www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org) to find a fraternal in your state.

## Join Hands, Touch Lives

Take part in **JOIN HANDS DAY** and showcase the good work your volunteers do every day, 365 days a year.

# PLAN YOUR PROJECT.

## TEN STEPS:

### 1 Start a JOIN HANDS DAY Committee

Designate a project leader from your society, organization, or group's chapter, lodge, etc. This person will be responsible for registering the project, finding youths and adults to participate and assigning tasks. They also can help recruit volunteers from your society/organization and any outside groups or youth clubs, as needed.



### 2 Brainstorm Project Ideas

To help you get started with your brainstorming, review the following list of project ideas to stimulate discussion about activities that may be right for your group.

#### Homelessness/Poverty

- Sort clothes at a shelter for homeless people.
- Prepare sandwiches and personal care kits for homeless people.
- Provide childcare, while homeless parents attend classes or look for employment.
- Organize a food drive.

#### Environment/Animals

- Write letters to local politicians, newspapers, etc., on local environmental issues.
- Walk dogs at a local animal shelter.
- Volunteer at a recycling center.
- Bicycle path maintenance/highway clean-up.
- Paint a flagpole and donate a flag.

#### Health Issues

- Deliver meals to homebound people.
- Have a health-screening fair.
- Visit hospital patients and bring flowers, door decorations and reading materials.
- Work with local eyeglass stores to start a recycling program.

#### Schools/Education

- Have a book drive for school libraries or disadvantaged children.
- Advocate for more resources for local schools — lobby legislature and school board.
- Paint a mural on a school wall.

#### Help Others

- Record books for people with vision disabilities.
- Build wheelchair ramps.
- Run errands, paint or do yard work for people with physical limitations.

For additional project ideas and to download a copy of “50 Great JOIN HANDS DAY Projects That Work,” visit the JOIN HANDS DAY Web site at [www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org) or contact the JOIN HANDS DAY Action Center at 630-522-6322.

## Choose a Project

Since there are hundreds of fun and worthwhile ways to improve your town, neighborhood or community, when selecting the right project, choose one that is:

- Big enough to be worthwhile and challenging.
- Small enough to be done with the time and effort available.
- A reasonable fit with everyone's talents, experiences and resources.
- Involves both youth and adult members.

**To focus your discussion, consider...**

### Your members:

1. What social issues are your members and volunteers concerned about? The environment, troubled youth, historic preservation?
2. To what charities and causes do your employees and members already give time and money?
3. Do your members and volunteers have skills that might make them effective for a particular cause?
4. Consider your society's/organization's current community-service projects. Could you expand any project for this **JOIN HANDS DAY**?

### Your community:

1. What are the most pressing social issues?
2. Who needs the most help?
3. Could you partner with another group, such as your local volunteer center or youth group (i.e., Girl/Boy Scouts of America, local Girls/Boys Clubs)?

## Spread the Word

- Contact the media in advance and distribute press releases detailing your project and its impact on the community. You can download a sample release from the **JOIN HANDS DAY** Web site at [www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org).
- Publicize your society's/organization's **JOIN HANDS DAY** participation. Go to [www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org) to order signs to post in your workplace, or to download the **JOIN HANDS DAY** logo to make your own fliers.
- Distribute a memo from your home office, encouraging your members, employees and/or chapters/lodges/etc., at every level to get involved and volunteer for a current project or to plan one of their own.
- Invite your governor, mayor, local, state and federal legislators, and/or other VIPs to your **JOIN HANDS DAY** event.
- Order (or make) signs and banners, T-shirts, other wearables and giveaways. Go to "Plan a Project" on the **JOIN HANDS DAY** Web site ([www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org)) and click on "Merchandise" to place your order online.



## Recruit Volunteers

1. Hold a **JOIN HANDS DAY** planning meeting for your members/employees. Encourage them to bring family members, as well.
2. Pass around a sign-up sheet to record pertinent contact information, such as name, phone number and e-mail address. Assign people to specific tasks.
3. Create projects that encourage youth and adult participation.

### Volunteer Groups

Many groups have been involved in **JOIN HANDS DAY** over the years, including:

- 4-H Clubs, Camp Fire and scouting troops.
- Student groups at schools, colleges and universities.
- YMCA/YWCA clubs.
- Church, synagogue or other faith-based groups.
- Local businesses, chambers of commerce.
- Police and fire departments, other government agencies.
- Volunteer centers.

### Find other organizations

If you're in need of a partnering group, refer to these resources:

- As the sponsors of **JOIN HANDS DAY**, fraternal benefit societies, and their more than 36,000 local chapters, are your best resources for a partnering group. Visit the **JOIN HANDS DAY** Web site at [www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org) to find a fraternal in your local area.
- Last year's **JOIN HANDS DAY** participants. Go to [www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org) for a list of past participants and local fraternal benefit society chapters, lodges, etc.
- Local volunteer centers. To locate a volunteer center near you, call **1-800-VOLUNTEER** or visit [www.1-800-volunteer.org](http://www.1-800-volunteer.org).
- Local volunteer organizations, such as the United Way, American Red Cross or the Salvation Army. National service programs, such as AmeriCorps and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), organize projects in communities around the country. Find your local contact through the Web site at [www.nationalservice.org](http://www.nationalservice.org).

## Nail Down the Details

- Define specific tasks to be completed, time requirements and deadlines (see sample timeline).
- Determine the logistics: locations, supplies needed, transportation.
- Match skills of members and volunteers to particular aspects of the project.
- Arrange for a photographer and/or videographer to document your **JOIN HANDS DAY** activities.
- Develop a short orientation or information session for volunteers.
- Be sure to express appreciation to everyone involved as the project wraps up.

### Assign volunteers and gather materials

1. Who will register the project online at [www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org)?
2. What exactly will volunteers do on **JOIN HANDS DAY**?
3. How will youths and adults be involved in equally important ways?
4. How many volunteers will be needed for each task?
5. Who will do prep work and when?
6. Who will clean up and when?
7. Who will be your main project coordinator and contact person?
8. Who will arrange for refreshments?
9. What materials are needed to complete the project?
10. Who is supplying the materials?
11. Where will the materials be kept?
12. How will you pay for the materials? Or are the materials donated?

## Hold a Kickoff

Consider organizing an area kickoff event for all projects in your area. Volunteers come to this event first before going to their specific sites. The purpose is to inspire and encourage volunteers, as well as attract media attention and provide a platform for the mayor and other VIPs.

- Provide light snacks and refreshments.
- Invite the governor, mayor, local, state and federal legislators and other dignitaries. If an official proclamation has been arranged, have the mayor or other dignitary read it to those assembled.
- If possible, arrange for a local TV news anchor or other recognizable person to serve as emcee. Invite the media and provide news media kits.
- Arrange for a professional photographer and/or videographer, if possible.

## Handle Logistics

**Think ahead, provide information and plan for emergencies**

1. Get directions to the site. Be specific and provide maps.
2. Is the site accessible by public transportation? By people with disabilities?
3. Is there a first-aid kit on site? What is the chain of communication if someone is injured?
4. Where is the nearest hospital or medical center?
5. Are projects inside or outside? What will volunteers do if it rains?
6. Where are the closest restrooms?
7. Where can volunteers eat lunch? Will the sponsoring group provide lunch or should participants bring their own? Are beverages available?
8. Will water be available throughout the day?
9. Can the site handle enough workers for your project?
10. How long does it take to get from the kickoff location to the service site?

**Once the logistics have been worked out, you're almost ready. But don't forget a few essentials:**

- Be sure the supplies you need are available before you begin.
- Make sure you have enough work for all of your members and volunteers.
- Give volunteers clear instructions.
- Alert local media and public officials to your plans for **JOIN HANDS DAY**.
- Plan a recognition event for your employee and member volunteers. Highlight your **JOIN HANDS DAY** activities in your annual report, internal newsletter, or plan a special luncheon. Distribute certificates of appreciation to your participants. (**JOIN HANDS DAY** certificates are available online at [www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org).)
- Evaluate your **JOIN HANDS DAY** project. Does the project's success warrant a larger project next year?
- Register your project on [www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org).



## Prepare for Unexpected Risks and Accidents

Responsible planning of a **JOIN HANDS DAY** project includes giving careful attention to preventing injury or harm, and to issues such as liability, insurance, medical treatment authorization and assumption of risk. The American Fraternal Alliance is not responsible for injuries and damage due to accidents that happen at or in connection with any local project. It is important that you know and follow the policies of your fraternal benefit society and/or participating organizations.

### Safety Tips

Watch for potential hazards. Project leaders should be observant and intercede when necessary. Accidents can happen to people of any age.

- Look for strings on clothing and ropes on playground equipment. These could result in injury.
- Watch for broken paved areas, uneven boards or ground where people could stumble.
- Carefully pick up sharp objects that could cut or scratch a person's skin.
- Provide masks when working in areas with dangerous fumes or excessive dust.
- Suggest volunteers wear sturdy shoes, not sandals, for better foot protection.

## Have Fun!

Complete your entire project on **JOIN HANDS DAY**, and have fun! Be sure to take time afterwards to briefly gather with your project group, share your experiences and celebrate your achievements. Tell us about your project's plans and success by registering at [www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org). And don't forget to e-mail or mail your photos to the **JOIN HANDS DAY** Action Center.





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**America's Fraternal  
Benefit Societies**

**Open to Everyone**

**Fraternal Benefit Societies  
Clubs • Lodges • Groups • Individuals  
Congregations • Businesses  
Youths and Adults Volunteering Together**

**To learn more about JOIN HANDS DAY  
and to plan your own project, contact:**

**JOIN HANDS DAY  
Action Center**

**1301 West 22nd Street, Suite 700**

**Oak Brook, IL 60523**

**Phone: 630-522-6322**

**Fax: 630-522-6326**

**E-mail: [actioncenter@joinhandsday.org](mailto:actioncenter@joinhandsday.org)**

**[www.joinhandsday.org](http://www.joinhandsday.org)**

**JOIN HANDS DAY**

**FIRST SATURDAY IN MAY**

**JOIN HANDS DAY**

Action Center  
1301 W 22nd Street  
Suite 700  
Oak Brook, IL 60523

