

Lotsa Helping Hands Open Communities

Communities are created in local towns or neighborhoods, providing a place for people who need help to ask for it and for volunteers to lend a hand. Here are some tips to get started with an Open Community.

- 1 Set up your Community** Getting started is simple and free. Visit lotsahelpinghands.com and click on the Get Started tab. When filling out the form be sure to choose **Open** as your Community Type.
- 2 Update your Community Description** In the **About** Section of your Community, update the description you wish for others to see when they search for a Community in your area. Consider sharing the types of activities your Community will provide help for (e.g., meals delivery, yard work, rides to appointments).
- 3 Create your Community's Message** Think about what you want to call your Community and how best to describe it. For example, "Helping Hands of Springfield – a Community of volunteers here to help anyone who might need an extra hand."
- 4 Find other Leaders** You can have multiple Leaders and Coordinators in your Lotsa Community. Designate someone to handle recipient needs and others to coordinate local outreach.
- 5 Identify Local Groups for Outreach** Local organizations are a great way to spread the word to interested volunteers as well as to those who may need help. Consider schools and PTA groups, your local Mayor's office, religious groups, local assisted living facilities, youth volunteer groups, even local retailers.
- 6 Host a Launch Party** Consider hosting a gathering to share what your Community is planning. Invite people to join the Community and sign up to be notified when volunteers are needed.
- 7 Keep in touch with Volunteers** Use the **Announcements** section to keep volunteers up-to-date on what's going on in your Community. By clicking the "Send a copy of this message via email to all Community Members" box when you create an announcement, you can be sure that all of your volunteers are aware of new volunteer opportunities.
- 8 Promote it!** However you wish to describe your Community – be consistent with how you promote it. We've got sample materials you can use to share your Community with others in your town or neighborhood. Consider making an announcement with your local media and town listserv.
- 9 Encourage Others to Ask for Help** It's not always easy to ask for help. Consider the best ways to invite members in your Community to ask for it. Work with local support groups or even the local hospital to encourage those who need help to raise their hand.
- 10 Share it!** We'd love to hear from you. The best way to spread the word about our free service at Lotsa Helping Hands is to share the great examples of Help with our larger community. Head over to our Facebook Page, or share your Story through our Story Project. Participate in our Webinars to learn and share best practices.

