



## **Holidays Are Great, but They're Just the Beginning**

One of the most popular things to do around the holidays is volunteering at a soup kitchen. Namely, Thanksgiving is a holiday in which people feel the deeper necessity to provide food for those that need it. Why is this? Is it that Americans see excess food on one day and feel that they finally have enough to give some to charity? Do they feel guilty when giving thanks for all that they have and thinking about those that have far less?

Whatever the reason may be, I want to highlight two points that remain true whether you volunteer more than once a year or not. Volunteering on holidays is a great place to start; we need people to volunteer on the busiest days of the year. But these points will show you that it must go further than that. The first one is foundational; it is the groundwork on which every charity builds their work ethic. The homeless need food every day. While it is helpful for volunteers to help on Thanksgiving or some other days, once or twice or even ten times a year is not enough. There are people who struggle getting three meals in a day, so why would we think that a few days a year would be enough?

The second point to make is that your community needs you. Whether you believe this or not, there are people that could benefit greatly from your service and charity. Just having a friend to talk to brings hope to the homeless and the hungry. Take it a step further and give them something to eat. Give them something to drink. A great way to help the homeless community, I believe, is to make a long-term investment in homeless individuals. Building trust with people is

something that takes time and effort, but is worth it in the long run if you want to make a difference.

One way to build trust is by being consistent. Certain people may remember your name or face after years of volunteering on Thanksgiving, but they will remember your love for them after months of volunteering every week.

So, volunteer on Thanksgiving. Give food to your local charities. But don't let it stop there. Volunteering at soup kitchens and pantries a few times a month gives a unique opportunity to connect with your community, build an environment of trust, and meet a daily need for so many homeless people; one that isn't being met every day.

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