

A Manual to Make Adopt a Crag a Success

To assist youth team coaches and volunteers in planning a successful event, the Access Fund has developed this manual.

These recommendations are based on the experiences of past organizers and include examples, where possible. Our goal is to make the organizer's job easier by building on those experiences. We recognize that some of these suggestions may not suit your particular needs. This manual is a work in progress, and we hope you will send us comments and suggestions to help us improve this guide. Thank you for your participation. If you would like another copy of this manual, you can either download it from www.accessfund.org or contact our office for a hard copy:

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Please be sure to read through the materials and **register your event as soon as you have a date**. Registering your event no less than 6 weeks out from the project date will ensure enough time for us to send you support materials.

I look forward to working with you this year. Let's continue to make Adopt-a-Crag a success for the entire climbing community. Please contact me with any questions or for additional information.

Thanks to all of you!
~Kristo

Who is the Access Fund?

The Access Fund is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to keeping climbing areas open and conserving the climbing environment. The organization works in cooperation with climbers, other recreational users, public land managers, and private landowners to promote the responsible use and sound management of climbing resources throughout the United States. The Access Fund encourages an ethic of personal responsibility, self-regulation, strong conservation values, and minimum impact practices among climbers.

What is Adopt a Crag?

Every year, nationwide, the Access Fund supports event organizers who lead trail restoration projects and clean-ups at their climbing areas as part of the largest climber volunteer effort in history. Adopt-a-Crag originated in 2000 as part of the Access Fund's Kickin' Access campaign which celebrated our 10th Anniversary. Originally incorporated as an event that took place in the month of September, Adopt-a-Crag has evolved into a year-round event to support stewardship projects at any crag and any time of year. September has become the "Adopt-a-Crag Celebration" month as the majority of events continue to occur during this time. Adopt-a-Crag is the climbing community's opportunity to foster a spirit of volunteerism and stewardship across the country. Joshua Tree to Rifle, Yosemite to Cathedral Ledge, climbers congregate at their favorite climbing areas to give back to the routes and rocks they've come to love. In recent years, Adopt-a-Crag has consistently hosted 100+ events in 30+ states, relying on the help of thousands of participating climbers who annually build

and restore 100+ miles of trail, haul-out 1,000 bags of trash and complete thousands of conservation initiatives. This year, we hope to host over 120 Adopt-a-Crag celebrations. You can help us reach our goal by planning an Adopt-a-Crag event in your community!

What Will Happen at Your Local Adopt a Crag Youth Project?

The Access Fund will sponsor over 120 Adopt-a-Crag events around the country this year. Events will differ based on their locations and specific needs, but each will feature an element of **conservation**, a sense of **giving back**, and a spirit of **celebration**. Planned activities include: visual impact mitigation, litter removal, erosion control, trail construction, and wildlife documentation.

Who Leads Adopt a Crag?

The Access Fund, with the help of dedicated corporate partners, sponsors Adopt-a-Crag. Title Sponsor **Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)**, Presenting Sponsor **W.L. Gore**, and Supporting Sponsor **Clif Bar** provide key funding for Adopt-a-Crag, and allow the Access Fund to offer volunteer incentives and snacks to each event. Your youth climbing team is key in planning and organizing your local events.

Why an Adopt a Crag Youth Project?

Adopt-a-Crag Youth Projects are not just Adopt-a-Crags that young climbers attend. They serve to develop skilled leaders, empower young climbers and make them feel valued, bring people together



to problem solve, and take ownership over their favorite climbing areas. Adopt-a-Crag Youth Projects build on the belief that the best learning comes from doing. Adopt-a-Crag Youth Projects empower young climbers to take leadership in providing service to their climbing community.

What Are the Goals of an Adopt a Crag Youth Project?

- Provide young climbers with the awareness, appreciation, understanding, skills, and commitment to address conservation issues.
- Conserve climbing resources and maintain climbing areas.
- Encourage cooperative efforts and build partnerships between climbers and land managers and property owners.
- Inspire and empower young climbers to become responsible, productive, and participatory members of the climbing community.
- Provide a venue for thousands of individuals to give back to their local climbing areas through conservation.

What Are the Benefits of an Adopt a Crag Youth Project?

- *Increased cooperation.* Adopt-a-Crag is about giving back to the climbing areas we use on a regular basis. From the signs in the parking areas, to the established trail systems, to the rocks and boulders where we devote endless hours, climbers are frequent land-users, and it is important that we make an effort to maintain and

care for that land. Adopt-a-Crag encourages climbing communities to engage local land managers, landowners, park service employees, and forest rangers in conversation about ways to preserve and protect their favorite climbing areas. An Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project is an effective means of encouraging group participation, providing opportunities for young climbers to examine how life choices can be made to help create a more caring, connected, and respectful way of living. Everyone on your team can *participate* and *contribute* to an Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project, and enhance its final outcome.

- *Enhanced understanding of the environment.* Adopt-a-Crag Youth Projects foster informed action. Climbers investigate climber-related impacts and make informed, responsible decisions. The lessons learned about resource conservation often have a profound effect on a climber's sense of stewardship for the environment.

- *A model for sustained community environmental action.* Adopt-a-Crag is designed to accommodate different community goals and compositions. Effective partnerships and processes are likely to continue beyond the initial activity.

- *Improved community environments through effective, innovative actions.* The first step in planning an Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project is to determine the needs of the land owner or manager. This critical step ensures that the participants carefully consider their proposal before taking action. This approach promotes critical thinking and decision making skills among the participants, helps ensure that a broad range of projects are considered, and sees that the selected activity fulfills the needs of the land owners and managers.

- *A more effective learning experience.* Students learn by doing in an Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project. The experiential learning process involved in carrying out an Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project is adaptable to urban and remote settings. The learning experience is shared by all participants and often yields the following three very important results:

- 1) climbers gain a deeper conceptual understanding through active learning,
- 2) the entire climbing community takes a shared responsibility in the education of young and new climbers, and
- 3) the climbing environment is improved.

Adopt-a-Crag Youth Projects benefit climbers, the climbing community, and the climbing environment.

The Need to Organize



Getting started on your Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project can be a daunting task. From the conception of an idea to the realization of your goal, being organized is the key to success. People, time, money, and resources need to be identified, and good planning and goal setting from the initial stages of your project increase the chances that your Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project will be successful.

Getting young climbers involved from the ground up, with your guidance, will enhance the meaning of the project. Members of your youth team will learn skills in organization, cooperation, respect, and many other skills that prove to be valuable assets throughout their climbing career and beyond.

Doing an Adopt a Crag Youth Project

Step One: Assess Crag for Amount of Work

Step Two: Get Permission from Land Managers or Property Owners

Step Three: Develop a Plan

Step Four: Form Partnerships

Step Five: Advertise & Promote the Project

Step Six: Day of Event! Give Back and Have a lot of Fun

Step Seven: Congratulations! Follow-up and Evaluate

Step One: Assess Crag for Amount of Work

A crag assessment is the first step in an Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project. Together, you and your team can identify the needs in your climbing community and determine which project should, and can, be done. By assessing the needs at your local crags your team will gain a better understanding of their own perspectives as they evaluate their attitudes toward environmental issues and propose solutions to climbing-related impacts. They will also begin to appreciate that taking action can lead to improving their environment.

Events will differ based on their locations and specific needs. Planned activities could include: visual impact mitigation, litter removal, erosion control, trail construction, and wildlife documentation. Based on your group's interests and the needs of the community your team should be ready to develop a list of potential Adopt-a-Crag Youth Projects (see Potential Adopt-a-Crag Youth Projects Worksheet, Appendix 1).

Choosing a Priority

Now that you have a list of areas and activities, deciding which project you'll choose is a matter of evaluating or assessing your priorities. Items to consider include:

- Value to climbing area
- Educational benefits
- Level of interest
- Feasibility (cost, sponsorship, technical capabilities, resources – number of volunteers, number of hours)

To select a priority project, ask your team to consider questions such as

1. Which idea might be the most feasible?
2. Which ideas do we like the best on a scale of one (low) to five (high)?

3. Which idea has the potential to improve the environment the most?
 - What will those benefits be? What types of resources do we need?
 - Can we afford it?
4. Which idea might help us learn the most?
5. After you find out what projects are needed and feasible for your area, consider the following:
 - Is adequate parking nearby?
 - Can the press reach the site?
 - How is the weather in September, and are there alternative locations for bad weather?
 - Is there a building nearby, which could be used for exhibits, information, rain shelter, etc.?
 - Are there restroom facilities?

Once these questions have been discussed, have your team reach a consensus for selecting the project that meets your priorities and resources.

Step Two: Get Permission from Land Managers or Property Owners

As with any work on public or private land, get permission first. If you go in with all the above information, you stand a good chance of having a successful project. By talking to your land manager or property owner first, you are ensuring that the project is approved and the necessary permits, insurance, and liability issues are complete. The more prepared you are, the easier it is for land managers and property owners to help you. Give them time to review your list. Make sure that there are at least two phone contacts for them if they have questions. Ask them for their thoughts or ideas on any of your suggestions. You

may want to suggest a date to sit down with them for a review, or to visit the area. Make your package short, maybe 2 to 4 pages, try to include a map with the highlighted trails and areas, and don't go over board on detail.

For projects on public land may be helpful to look at some of the guidelines agencies use to identify sites for participation in Adopt-a-Crag. A public land manager might consider the following questions in determining whether Adopt-a-Crag will work for a site:

YES NO

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is there a valid need for a volunteer work day? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Is there support for a volunteer day at the local level (site personnel and/or community organizations)? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does the site have ability to get volunteers? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are there projects where volunteers can make a significant contribution in one day? |

Examples include:

- Trail maintenance
- Building new trails
- Chalk Clean-up
- Installing signs
- Planting trees and shrubs
- Trash and Litter Clean-up

What is the maximum number of volunteers that can be accommodated at the site?

What resources (tools, materials, equipment, and preliminary work) must be provided site for implementation of the project?

Step Three: Develop a Plan

Now that you and your group have selected where and what your Adopt-a-Crag Youth

Project is going to be, it's time to develop an Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project plan. It is essential to involve everyone in the planning process. They will need to work together to set goals and decide who's going to do what. As a result, from the start of the project to its conclusion, everyone will have a sense of shared responsibility and ownership in accomplishing their Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project. In developing an action plan, your group should discuss and record plans for carrying out the project. The use of a planning worksheet (see Action Planning Worksheet, Appendix 2) will help you to be organized and stay focused on your goals and objectives while formalizing a thorough plan of action. Your action plan should:

Set Goals

Help your team get started by asking, "What do you hope you'll accomplish by doing this project?" After your team shares their answers, guide them to come up with goals and specific, concrete objectives they will need to accomplish along the way. Your goal may be to spend an afternoon removing litter from your local crag, or it could involve a complex strategy that includes fundraising, building public support, or even organizing an on-going project of monitoring. Whatever the goal(s), be explicit, and make sure your entire team agrees. In addition, you will want to decide if you want to open your project to volunteers from the community or if you want to make it a project for your youth team members only.

Pick a Day

Although any day is a good day for an Adopt-a-Crag, weekends are your best bet for a big turn-out. There may be factors in your community that make other days more suitable for your event. Set your dates so they have minimum conflict that could reduce your volunteer



base. Check with other volunteer groups and see if you can combine events, or if you can advertise your projects through them, and that you will return the favor. Provide alternate or rain dates in case of weather related problems. Most important of all, select the day and time that works best for you.

Establish Timelines and Delegate Tasks.

Have your team list the tasks that need to be accomplished to meet each objective. Next, work with them to identify a tentative completion date for each task and decide who is going to do what (see Sample Timeline, Appendix 3).

Step Four: Form Partnerships

Consider Adopt-a-Crag an avenue for building alliances and partnerships and to plan for the future. As your event begins to take shape, keep in mind that Adopt-a-Crag aims to raise awareness about the Access



Fund and the issues affecting local climbing areas. Partnerships are the key to any successful event. Be sure to include the following groups in your event:

- Public land management agencies
- Local climbing organizations, local land trusts, and conservation organizations
- Climbing gyms, outdoor retailers, and local manufacturers
- Local media
- Local businesses such as restaurants, coffee shops, etc.

Partnerships work best when responsibilities are assigned according to interests and abilities. For example, trail managers are well versed in logistical matters and outdoor retailers are experts at promotions and advertising.

Step Five: Advertise & Promote the Project

You and your group should think of ways to share and promote your Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project. People in your community will be interested in learning about your project and may want to help you in your efforts. Television, radio, and newspaper reporters love to cover stories of young people taking action in the community, and an Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project has all the elements of attracting interest, because *those* young people are enhancing and improving their surroundings. Here are some ideas for expanding your reach.

- *News releases in local newspapers*
- *Public Service Announcements (PSAs)*
- *Donated or sponsored advertising space in local newspapers and magazines*
- *Media coverage by newspapers, radio, and television stations*
- *Media sponsorship by a radio station, television, or cable station*
- *Posters and/or flyers distributed around town to local businesses*
- *Mayor's Proclamation*

How to get press coverage for Adopt-a-Crag Youth Projects

- Include the news media and local public officials such as the mayor and city council members in your Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project.
- Invite state conservation and/or environmental officials to meet and speak with your group, including your partners, and get their endorsement of your project.
- If you choose a project that is a one-day event, and you would like to encourage community-wide participation, you may find that PSAs, news releases, posters, flyers, and media coverage are your most effective methods of promotion.

Step Six: Day of Event! Give Back and Have a Lot of Fun

Structure the day. A successful Adopt-a-Crag has these 3 ingredients:

- **Enjoyment.** Don't take it too seriously, use a little humor, provide food, encourage friendly competition, and a fun element afterwards (BBQ, climb, regroup at the local café or gym).
- **Education.** Offer to teach some new skills, demo new tools, or ask the ranger to provide an interpretive talk at the lunch break.
- **Accomplishment.** Match crew leaders and their groups to tasks that are within their capacity and the time available. Avoid leaving a job half-finished or rushing at the end.



Day of event checklist

- Notify of the police if necessary. Place signs, orange cones, or flagging to notify others.
- Ensure that proper insurance, permits, and liability waivers have been obtained.
- Pack first aid kit(s) with pain relievers, sun block, etc., along with **plenty of water.**

Orientation

Communication is the key, so start with introductions of the agency staff, the crew leaders, and the individuals (unless the group is huge).

- Pick a “staging area” and keep it staffed at all times. Keep first aid supplies, water, and, if possible, provide rest room facilities.
- Have the volunteers sign in and complete waiver forms if required as they arrive. Get names, addresses and emails.
- Make everyone aware of safety issues, such as: work in pairs, wear

rubber gloves, don't pick up hazardous wastes, lift with your legs not your back, etc.

- Make a map of where people will be working and keep track of everyone involved in the clean up.
- Count heads and assign crew leaders, leaving one person to bring up the late arrivals.

Step Seven:

CONGRATULATIONS!

Follow up and Evaluate

Did your Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project plan work? Have you met your goals? How have your efforts improved the climbing environment? How has your team's experiences enhanced their understanding of the climbing environment? Take the time to evaluate effectiveness of your Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project and thank all the people who have worked to make your project a success. As with all of the other steps in the process, it is important to get your youth team involved in these final tasks.



Thanking Sponsors, Supporters, and Partners

Be sure to send letters of thanks to all of your sponsors, supporters, and partners. It took many hands to make your Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project a success, and you'll want to thank everyone who donated time, resources, money, manpower or moral encouragement.

You may want to consider awarding a Certificate of Thanks to your supporters. We recommend that you use artwork, comments or pictures and customize your certificate to reflect your project, as this always means so much more to those who have given support.

- Provide this information to the media in a press release. This step will likely result in a well deserved pat on

the back for the people who helped in the project and make the public more aware of climber's commitment to stewardship.

Getting Your Team to Assess How They Did

Ask your team to look at their plan again and assess the project's success. Give them time to reflect on their experience and discuss how their project has impacted the community, their awareness of the environment, and their overall educational experience. It's also important for students to consider their feelings about the project. Was this an enjoyable experience or not? Which aspects of the action project motivated them and which did not?

Sample Questions to Assess Your Project

1. What was the goal of your project?
2. Did you accomplish your goals?
Explain. (Be sure to describe the project's accomplishments, even if they weren't part of the original objectives.)
3. What was the most successful part of your project? What was the least successful part?
4. If you repeated the project, what, if anything, would you do differently?
5. How do you feel about your involvement in the project?
6. Have your feelings and opinions about the issue you worked on changed since you began the project?
7. What did you learn during this project that you'll be able to apply to other situations?
8. What advice would you give to other teams who are planning an Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project?

Keep Good Records. It is very important to keep good records of the time you put into the project preparation, the events' day itself, and the number of volunteers/hours generated. This information will help in planning the next event, and can be used to show your team's commitment. Please

share this information with Access Fund (www.accessfund.org/adopt) which tallies the volunteer work hours and miles opened to build credibility for all climbers.

Reporting Back to the Access Fund

Let the Access Fund know how your project turned out. The Access Fund wants to hear about how your efforts have paid off, what your team learned, and which activities were useful in making your

Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project a rewarding educational experience. Sharing what worked and didn't work helps others who are interested in doing an Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project (see Appendix 4: Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project 2006 Post Event Evaluation).

Appendix 1: Potential Adopt a Crag Youth Projects

Based upon the team's interests and the results of the assessment, your team should now be ready to develop a list of potential Adopt-a-Crag Youth Projects that would benefit the climbing environment of your community. Use the space below to formulate your list of ideas.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Project Notes:

Appendix 2: Action Planning Worksheet

1. What climbing related impacts will your project focus on?

2. What is the goal of your project and your strategy to accomplish this goal?

3. What are the specific objectives that will help you reach your overall goal?

Objectives

1.

2.

3.

4. How will you connect your Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project to your team's activities?

5. What are the potential dates of your project?

6. List the tasks that need to be accomplished to meet each objective. Include a tentative completion date for each task, the names of people responsible, the supplies and equipment needed, any funding/donations needed, and ideas about where you might get materials and funding/donations.

Task	Person Responsible	Supplies/Equipment	Funding/Donations	Completion Date

7. Write the names of people and organizations that may be able to provide you with useful information, specific skills, expertise, or other help.

8. List ideas for how to publicize and generate support for your project.

9. Describe how you will measure your success.

Appendix 3: Sample Timeline

This timeline is based on a three-month plan. It is possible to organize an event in less time. Please don't be intimidated by this plan, which is based on a more complex Adopt-a-Crag.

Three Months Out

- *Talk to the local land manager/owner and obtain approval for your event*
- Check to see if permits and/or liability and insurance waivers are necessary
- Hold initial organizing meeting and organize a planning committee
- Select the date, time and duration of the event, and secure the site
- Design the overall event plan
- Once you have finalized the details, **register your event with the Access Fund**. Registering your event no less than 6 weeks out ensures that we can get support materials to you on time and advertise your event in our Enews and on our webpage.
- Secure commitments from participating organizations
- Write a detailed budget and begin fundraising (if necessary)
- Design posters and flyers
- Send press releases to your local media, including public radio stations

Two Months Out

- If you have not already done so, **register your event** to insure that you receive Adopt-a-Crag Posters, Nalgene water bottles, CLIF bars, and clean-up materials to help bolster your community's support.
- Advertise the Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project to your community. Use local ranger stations, climbing shops and gyms, gas stations, and trail head signboards to place notices of the event. The club event calendar, community or agency web sites, and local newspapers should be used to get the word out. Set up a phone tree and call a week in advance to remind people.
- Follow-up with the press, in an effort to publicize your Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project

One Month Out

- Double check plan with those involved
- Follow-up with media
- Arrange for garbage cans, bins, and trail building/maintenance equipment at the clean up site. Also ask people to bring trucks and wheelbarrows to haul trash and debris.
- Arrange in advance for the ultimate destination of the debris collected and the means to get it there. (Your friends' and neighbors' pick-up trucks generally work quite well.)

Day of Event

- Notify of the police if necessary. Place signs, orange cones, or flagging to notify others.
- Ensure that proper insurance, permits, and liability waivers have been obtained.
- Display your organization's newsletter, event calendar, and membership applications, along with Access Fund *Vertical Times*, membership brochures, and stickers.
- Pack first aid kit(s) with pain relievers, sun block, etc., along with **plenty of water**.

Orientation. Communication is the key, so start with introductions of the agency staff, the crew leaders, and the individuals (unless the group is huge).

- Pick a "staging area" and keep it staffed at all times. Keep first aid supplies, water, and, if possible, provide rest room facilities.
- Have the volunteers sign in and complete waiver forms if required as they arrive. Get names, addresses and emails.
- Make everyone aware of safety issues, such as: work in pairs, wear rubber gloves, don't pick up hazardous wastes, lift with your legs not your back, etc.
- Make a map of where people will be working and keep track of everyone involved in the clean up.
- Count heads and assign crew leaders, leaving one person to bring up the late arrivals.

Structure the day. A successful Adopt-a-Crag has these 3 ingredients:

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- **Education.** Offer to teach some new skills, demo new tools, or ask the ranger to provide an interpretive talk at the lunch break.
- **Accomplishment.** Match crew leaders and their groups to tasks that are within their capacity and the time available. Avoid leaving a job half-finished or rushing at the end.

Post-Event

- **Provide Recognition.** The sign-up sheets and notes you took will help you give credit where credit is due. Send thank you notes to your volunteers.
- **Keep Good Records.** It is very important to keep good records of the time you put into the project preparation, the events of the day itself, and the number of volunteers/hours generated. This information will help in planning the next event, and can be used to show the club's commitment. Please share this information with Access Fund, which tallies the volunteer work hours and miles opened to build credibility for all climbers.

Provide this information to the media in a press release. This step will likely result in a well deserved pat on the back for the people who helped in the project and make the public more aware of climber's commitment to stewardship.

Appendix 4: Adopt a Crag Youth Project 2006 Post Event Evaluation

Name of Event* _____

Date of Event* _____

Location of
Event* _____

Youth Team Information

Youth Team _____

Contact: Name* _____

Phone Number* _____

Email* _____

Total Number of
Volunteers* _____

Volunteer Hours (Number of volunteers x Number of hours of work performed by each person)*

**Total
Hours**

Trail building: New trail construction, trail maintenance, leadership training, etc.
 Number of volunteers _____ x Number of hours _____ =

Crag Clean-up: Non-trail building stewardship projects
 Number of volunteers _____ x Number of hours _____ =

Preparation: club administration, communications, advocacy meetings, fundraisers
 Number of volunteers _____ x Number of hours _____ =

Do you feel that you achieved your event goals? Please explain

How can the Access Fund improve Adopt-a-Crag Youth Projects?

Will you host an Adopt-a-Crag Youth Project Next Year? Yes ___ No___ If no, why not?

What kind of media coverage did your event receive and how many stories per media?

θ Newspapers, #: _____ θ TV stations, #: _____

θ Radio stations, #: _____ θ Cable stations, #: _____

θ Assoc. Press wire service, #: _____ θ Local "freebee" papers, #: _____

θ Magazines, #: _____

What did you like most about participating in Adopt-a-Crag Youth Projects 2006?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteerism | <input type="checkbox"/> Accomplishing a significant amount of work in a day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restoring/Enhancing the area | <input type="checkbox"/> Working with members of the climbing community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creating awareness about the site | <input type="checkbox"/> Building community support for the site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) | |

To finalize the results from Adopt-a-Crag 2006 and to share you good ideas with other organizers, please send any additional information you may have regarding your event. You may include items such as **local news releases, press clippings, and pictures** of your volunteers.

*mandatory fields

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