

Connecting Through Service: A Step-by-Step Guide to Volunteering



**XAVIER SOCIAL
JUSTICE NETWORK**

Seeking justice through advocacy and volunteering



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Who Are We?

Welcome!

The Xavier Social Justice Network is a passionate community dedicated to promoting equality, inclusivity, and social change both within the school and in the broader community. We are a diverse group of individuals united by our commitment to empowering one another while fostering a culture of empathy and understanding. Founded on a shared vision from Xavier's parents and staff, our members come from various backgrounds, bringing unique perspectives that enrich our collective mission.

Grounded in our Christian faith, we find inspiration in the teachings of Jesus Christ, who calls us to care for the marginalised and uphold the dignity of every person. Through living by the principles of Ignatian spirituality, we emphasize social justice as a pathway to personal growth and reflection. We believe in the power of dialogue and collaboration, engaging with the wider community to support local initiatives and provide direct service to those in need.

Together, we aim to create a platform where every voice is valued and heard, championing the belief that meaningful change begins with compassionate action.

How the Network Operates

At the Xavier Social Justice Network, we play a vital role as a referrer to various social service organizations that align with our mission of promoting equity and justice within the community. By connecting individuals with these organizations, we help to create pathways for meaningful volunteer opportunities, empowering the Australian community to engage actively in social change. Our commitment to supporting these partnerships enhances access to resources and services, ultimately fostering a collaborative environment where everyone can contribute to a better, more just society.

Friends of the Network

Friends of the Network are valuable allies of the Xavier Social Justice Network. While not everyone can volunteer, there are many ways to stay engaged, such as fostering awareness, sharing resources, and advocating for social justice.

As a Friend of the Network, you remain part of our community, receiving updates on activities and opportunities to get involved, whether through events, discussions, or spreading the word. Your support amplifies our efforts and strengthens our pursuit of equity and justice.

Volunteering

If you're interested in learning more about volunteering with the Xavier Social Justice Network, please complete the entire registration form and return to XSJN@xavier.vic.edu.au. We will then arrange a time for you to chat with our network coordinators, where you can learn about our mission and the various volunteering roles we offer.

Serving with Purpose

Volunteering Commitment

Volunteering plays a crucial role in advancing our mission by bringing in additional resources, diverse skill sets, and a range of perspectives that enrich both our services and those of our partner organizations. We encourage our volunteers to thoughtfully assess the time commitment they can realistically make and engage in open discussions with our team before proceeding. If you find that you need to step back from volunteering, that's perfectly understandable; remaining part of our network is equally valuable. Should you decide to pause your volunteering, please let us know as soon as possible.

Confidentiality

While volunteering with us, you may encounter confidential information pertaining to those we support, referral agencies, fellow volunteers, or staff that we expect to remain private. All volunteers are required to uphold confidentiality and adhere to our Privacy Policy, signing to acknowledge their agreement to these terms.

Child Safety

At Xavier Social Justice Network, we are committed to maintaining a child-safe environment. All volunteers are required to read and comply with Xavier College Child Safety Policies, including our Child Safe Statement, Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, and Child Safe Code of Conduct. Volunteers must hold a Working with Children Check (WWCC).

Our Partnerships

Volunteering is at the heart of what we do. We partner with incredible organizations offering a range of supportive programs that are on the frontlines of social justice causes. We encourage you to look for opportunities that match your skill, personality make the experience work for you.

Our Volunteers take on various roles, from general tasks like meal assistance in dining rooms and soup vans to specialized activities such as mentoring and skills-based volunteering.



Your Journey Awaits

Starting your volunteer journey offers a great opportunity for personal growth and community engagement. To ensure a rewarding experience, take time to reflect on your abilities, interests, and needs. This self-exploration helps you identify both the skills you can offer and the causes you are passionate about.

Most volunteers typically focus on one partner program, but some choose to support multiple causes. When selecting a role, it is important to consider:

- Your motivation for volunteering
- The skills you bring
- The time you can commit

The following activity will help you discover a fulfilling opportunity that aligns with your values, passions, and availability.

Steps in Your Volunteering Journey

Step 1. Discover Your Passions

Step 2. Understand your Values

Step 3. Consider your skills and availability

Step 4. Take action

Step 5. Reflect on your Impact

(Reference: Boroondara Volunteer Resource Centre., 2025)

Step 1:

Discover your Passions?

Reflect

Take a moment to think about issues that resonate with you. What topics or situations make you passionate or concerned?

☐
☐
☐

Migrant Services

Indigenous

Disability

☐
☐
☐

Climate Justice

Homelessness

Right to Education

☐
☐
☐

Young People

Gender Equality

Advocacy

Discern

From the list below, select the box next to the type of volunteering work you like to undertake?

☐
☐
☐

Administration

**Food Preparation and
service**

Online

☐
☐
☐

Companionship

Grant writing

Tutoring

☐
☐
☐

Mentoring

Writing and editing

**Fundraising and
events**

Step 2:

Understand your values

From the list of social justice issues, write down the issue you care about, and for each issue ask yourself: what values do they represent to me? Why do I feel drawn to these issues?

| Social justice issue | What values do they represent to me? | Why do I feel drawn to these issues? |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| e.g. Right to Education | Equality / empowerment | Having experienced the transformative power of education myself, I want to help others attain the same opportunities. |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Step 3:

Consider your Skills

Now consider your strengths and abilities, which can stem from your experiences in work, studies, personal life, sports, and hobbies. It's common to overlook our strengths, but reflecting on them can highlight the unique skills we've developed through our various experiences. These skills can be valuable in any volunteer organization.

List the skills you can bring to your volunteering role:

e.g. problem solving, active listening.

Step 3:

Your availability

Creating a weekly planner is a practical step for identifying the time you have available for volunteering. By mapping out your typical week, you can clearly see your existing commitments, such as work, family, and studies.

This visual layout will help you assess how much time you can realistically dedicate to volunteering without feeling overwhelmed. As you plan, consider whether you'd enjoy a consistent weekly commitment or if you'd prefer to engage in occasional volunteer opportunities.

On the next page we have provided a weekly planner. This is a structured approach not only clarifies your schedule but also opens doors to fulfilling ways to give back to your community

Step 3:

Your weekly planner

| Day | Morning | Afternoon | Evening |
|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Monday | | | |
| Tuesday | | | |
| Wednesday | | | |
| Thursday | | | |
| Friday | | | |
| Saturday | | | |
| Sunday | | | |

Step 4:

Engage Actively!

Explore Opportunities: Now, you are ready to research volunteer organizations or projects aligned with your top values. Consider how each opportunity connects to what you care about.

You can find a list of our amazing opportunities
Scan this QR code for a full listing or



visit our website :

<https://xavier.vic.edu.au/our-people/our-xavier-social-justice-network>

Take action: Choose one volunteer opportunity that resonates with your values and commit to a timeframe for getting involved.

Apply: To apply for your chosen volunteer role, connect with the Xavier Social Justice Network Coordinator via email XSJN@xavier.vic.edu.au or telephone on 0427 413 503. We will then arrange a time for you to chat and connect you with your chosen organization.

What happens next? The organization may reach out to you for a conversation or interview to learn more about you and assist with any necessary background checks, such as a Police Check or Working with Children Check. These checks are typically free.

Step 4:

My volunteering opportunities

Use this list to help you keep track of the roles you are interested in pursuing and to follow up on.

| Role | Organisation | Application Status | |
|------|--------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Applied |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Waiting response |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Accepted |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Applied |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Waiting response |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Accepted |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Applied |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Waiting response |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Accepted |

Step 5:

Reflect on your Impact

Recording your time and effort in social justice volunteering can help you understanding the impact of your contributions. By keeping a detailed account of your activities, you can see how your involvement is making a difference in your community. This practice not only reinforces a sense of accountability but also allows you to reflect on the skills you are developing, such as leadership and teamwork. These insights can guide your personal and professional growth, showcasing how volunteering shapes your capabilities and character. On the next page we provide a simple example you can uses in your new volunteer role.

Reflective Journal

Using the Network's journal for reflection enhances your volunteering experience. It provides a space to express your thoughts and feelings about your contributions, aligning with our commitment to the *Magis* and inspiring you to pursue greater depth in your actions.

Regular reflection helps set meaningful goals, maintain motivation, and find inspiration during tough times. Sharing your reflections can also encourage others to get involved and raise awareness about social justice issues. Overall, documenting your volunteer work enriches your journey and strengthens our collective impact on social change.

Step 5:

Record your time

| | |
|--------------|------|
| Organisation | Date |
| Achievement | |
| Time | |

| | |
|--------------|------|
| Organisation | Date |
| Achievement | |
| Time | |

Step 5:

Notes

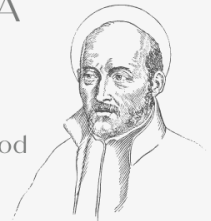
A large, empty rectangular box with a double red border, intended for taking notes. The box is centered on the slide and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

Take Some Time to Reflect

We encourage **Reflection** in volunteer service as it embodies the Ignatian values of discernment, empathy, and social responsibility, which encourage you to engage deeply with the volunteering experiences and the help connect with your community. Through reflection, individuals can explore how our faith informs their actions, discovering a greater sense of purpose and alignment with their core values.

The Ignatian Examen serves as a helpful guide for reflection, starting with gratitude for volunteering opportunities and relationships. It prompts you to review significant experiences, recognize your emotions, and evaluate your choices, guiding future actions. This approach enhances your experiences, deepens your understanding of social justice, and creates lasting community impact.

THE EXAMEN IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA



1) Be still

Remember that you are in the holy presence of God

2) Give thanks

Name the moments from the day for which you are grateful

3) Reflect

Review each moment of your day, reflecting on the people you encountered and the feelings and thoughts you experienced.

4) Pray

Talk with God about the good parts of your day and the things you would like forgiveness for.

5) Hope

Look forward to tomorrow and the opportunity to become your best self.



Building Bridges: My Journey of Volunteering

by Anne Ablinger

As a Xavier parent for ten years, I had skirted around the edges of volunteering with Network. I had attended various forums and dinners and was inspired by the work people were doing and the stories they shared. I had previously worked in the kitchen at Sacred Heart Mission in St. Kilda, so I decided to commit to one of the many organizations that the network partners with. I decided to explore the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project (BASP).

BASP's focus is to provide housing and support for asylum seekers and refugees in Melbourne. I have worked in education in the western suburbs of Melbourne for over 30 years, and I wanted to contribute my skills. I have witnessed and appreciated the benefits that multiculturalism brings to communities.

I arranged through the Network to meet with BASP, they told me I could offer as much or as little help as I wanted—no pressure at all! We talked about the different groups they support and ended up focusing on an Iraqi family that I could connect with. I feel lucky to have met them and proud to call them my friends.

Noor is a single mother with two sons. We chat weekly and meet for coffee when possible. I assisted Noor by taking her boys to karate lessons and attended school meetings to support her.



Building Bridges: My Journey of Volunteering

Over the summer, we organized a family camp that kept the boys active and gave Noor some respite. We often discuss the joys and challenges of parenting teenage boys.

Noor shares her experiences of living in Iraq and the challenges she faced there. She is very grateful to now live in Australia, where she feels safe raising her sons. Noor embodies courage, bravery, commitment to her family, patience, and humility. The benefits my family receives from having Noor and her sons in our lives are invaluable. Our lives have become richer thanks to the connection facilitated by BASP. The Network offers a diverse range of volunteering opportunities that cater to everyone's interests. It allows us to show our boys how privileged they are and demonstrates that small acts of kindness can lead to significant change.



The Network proudly recognizes its partnership with BASP, celebrating shared values that enhance community impact and foster relationships.

Advocacy in Action

We recognise that it is not enough to assist those in need – we are not truly engaged in social justice unless we seek to change the structures that keep people in poverty and social isolation.

We therefore seek to influence hearts and minds to strive for a more just world through advocacy and raising awareness on social justice issues.

Events

Advocacy events each year are:

- Palm Sunday 'Justice for Refugees' Walk
- XSJN Dinner
- Dare to Be Different Forum
- Jesuit Mission's Maytime Fair



We welcome opportunities to be engaged in other advocacy that accords with our vision, mission, principles and values

Stay in Contact

The Xavier Social Justice Network office is open Monday – Wednesday, 9:30 am – 4:30 pm.

Newsletter and Social Media

We invite you to deepen your connection with us! By subscribing to our newsletter and following us on social media, you'll stay informed about updates, volunteer opportunities, and important announcements. Our newsletter provides insights on making a difference in our community. Our social media channels offer a vibrant space to engage with fellow members, share experiences, and participate in meaningful discussions about social justice.

Website: www.xavier.vic.edu.au/our-people/our-Xavier-social-justice-network for updates on programs, events, and resources.

Social Media: Follow us on social media

Facebook: www.facebook.com/XavierSocialJusticeNetwork

Instagram: www.instagram.com/XavierSocialJusticeNetwork

Contact Information

For any questions, suggestions, or further information, please reach out to us:

Email: XSJN@xavier.vic.edu.au Phone: 0427 413 503

Office Location: Xavier College Senior Campus – Faith and Service Department, South Wing.

135 Barkers Rd, Kew VIC 3101



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Follow us on Social Media



www.facebook.com/XavierSocialJusticeNetwork



www.instagram.com/XavierSocialJusticeNetwork

Acknowledgement of Country

The Xavier Social Justice Network acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.