

What is Make A Difference Day?

Make A Difference Day is the most encompassing national day of helping others -- a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors. Everyone can participate. Created by USA WEEKEND Magazine, Make A Difference Day is an annual event that takes place on the fourth Saturday of every October. The next one is Saturday, October 24, 2009.

Millions have participated. In 2008, 3 million people cared enough about their communities to volunteer on that day, accomplishing thousands of projects in hundreds of towns. Your project can be as large or as small as you wish! Look around your community and see what needs to be done. After participating Oct. 24, please send in an entry form so you will be counted among the millions of volunteers and be considered for an award.

Who takes part in Make A Difference Day?

Anyone. Young and old, individuals and groups, anyone can carry out a volunteer project that helps others. It might be as ambitious as collecting truckloads of clothing for the homeless, or as personal as spending an afternoon helping an elderly neighbor or relative. USA WEEKEND features volunteers and their projects in articles and photos.

What are the rules?

If you want to participate, just help someone else on the next Make A Difference Day, Saturday, October 24, 2009. If you cannot participate on Saturday for religious reasons, you may do your project on Sunday.

For example, expand your regular tutoring by creating a special event for the students, such as a trip to the library where they volunteer, or the recruitment of new students.

If you don't volunteer now, here's an occasion to get started. You could clean up an elderly neighbor's house, or organize your block to replant and repair a local park. You could visit lonely, institutionalized kids or the elderly. You can join in on someone else's project listed on this Web site. If you need more than one day for your project, still plan to do a good part of your volunteering on Make A Difference Day. For example, if you are rebuilding a community soup kitchen, you may have to do some wiring the week before or some painting the week after, but a significant part of the construction needs to take place on that Saturday.

If your volunteers are together only Monday-Friday (such as schools and workplaces), still plan to do a good part of your volunteering on Make A Difference Day. For example, if students collect food for the homeless during the school week, get a special group of students and teachers together on Saturday to hand-deliver the food to homeless people or a shelter. If it rains or snows, Make A Difference Day goes on. If your project is outdoors, have a contingency plan, or forge ahead.

