



**TEXAS  EXES<sup>®</sup>**

*care*

**ABOUT THE PROJECT**

**2012**

**Handbook**



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## Texas Exes Chapters and Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT

Alumni of the University of Texas are accomplishing many great things in chapters/networks around the globe. Texas Exes Chapters/Networks reach out to alumni and get them engaged all year. The Texas Exes wants all chapters/networks to join together for a cause and make even more of a difference in their community. Texas Exes and the Department of Diversity and Community Engagement are partnering for a national service initiative, Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT, during the month of February—an opportunity for UT alumni to serve not only the University and the Association, but also the members of your own communities.



## Introduction

The Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT is a program designed to unite alumni nationwide for a day dedicated to giving back in February 2012. Does your chapter/network participate in a service project in your local community already? Maybe you are interested in getting involved but aren't sure how to get started.

This handbook is designed to guide you through planning a service activity, help you plan and run a successful event, partner with other service organizations, and promote your service activity.

If you already have a service activity in place, or you conduct projects throughout the year, you could simply reschedule one of them to happen in the month of February, and register the event with the Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT.

Additional information and resources are available at [www.texasexes.org/care](http://www.texasexes.org/care). For questions, contact the Texas Exes at (512) 471-8080, or send an e-mail to Laura Carpenter ([carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu)).

## What is Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT

- A partnership between Texas Exes and the University of Texas' Division of Diversity and Community Engagement.
- Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT is an extension of the premier service event at The University of Texas at Austin, designed by students to benefit the many Austin neighborhoods surrounding the campus.
- The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement will be available to help promote the chapter/network's activities, select projects, etc.
- Within the month of February (at the discretion of the Chapter/Network) alumni from each Texas Exes Chapter/Network across the country will organize and participate in a service activity in their community.
- During this month of service, our combined efforts will have a tremendous impact on our communities, help spread the pride we have for the University of Texas, and show once again how UT alumni are changing the world.



## Why participate in Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT?

- Great PR for the Chapter/Network
  - Shows Longhorns giving back to their local communities.
  - Highlights UT and Texas Exes all over the country
  - Reminds your local community of the good things your members are doing
- Brings in new alumni that may not have previously been involved with the Chapter/Network
  - Chapters/Networks who participate in community service events note that alumni not previously involved with the group are participating in these types of community service activities.

## How Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT can work within your Chapter/Network

To ensure that your chapter/network's Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT event is a success, consider following these suggested steps:

1. Appoint a TEXAS EXES CARE Chair to lead the chapter/network's activity.
2. Choose a service activity to pursue. (see below for suggestions) Register your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT with Laura Carpenter ([carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu)) and let her know what service activity the chapter/network is planning to host or participate in. Include the date, location, short description of the activity, and an email contact.
3. Begin marketing the event on emails/website/Facebook/Twitter/YouTube/LinkedIn/other social media channels/calendars etc. Many websites, chambers of commerce, and tourist commissions, publish online calendars of events within the community.
4. Execute your planned service activity.
5. Report to Laura Carpenter ([carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu)) with number of alumni involved, the success of the event, and send any pictures from the event.



## Choosing a Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT Activity

Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT Activities will come in many different shapes and sizes and vary in the amount of time they require. There are some projects that may only involve a few people sprucing up a small park for only a couple of hours, while others involve a large number of people doing something on the citywide scale. Some projects will be sponsored by single organizations, while others may involve wide-ranging partnerships of sister alumni associations or other organizations. Whatever the project, each unites the University of Texas Alumni around a common goal.

The number and types of community service activities your Chapter/Network can participate in are diverse and varied. Try to pick a service group/project in which the chapter/network may develop a long-term partnership. It may benefit the chapter/network to stay with the same service organization/project in order to form a strong relationship.

Remember that because you are a part of the Texas Exes and are therefore under the Texas Exes 501 (c)(3) umbrella, you cannot affiliate with a religious or political organization. Keep this in mind when choosing your service project.

### Examples:

- Host/sponsor a blood drive or volunteer with the local Red Cross
  - Volunteer at a local hospital or nursing home
  - Volunteer at a Children's Hospital, or work to improve a common area with new toys, crafts, books, and movies
  - Volunteer with Habitat for Humanity
  - Sponsor a team in a community run/walk\*  
Sponsor a donation drive for a local women's shelter or homeless shelter, food bank, or soup kitchen
  - Clean out your closets and donate the items to local Goodwill or Salvation Army stores
  - Volunteer at a local library or school
  - Clean up a local park or recreational area
  - Participate in the Adopt-A-Highway program. (This is a great idea because you could get your local Chapter/Network name/logo on a sign!)
  - Get involved with Special Olympics or a similar program
  - Collect school supplies for local needy students
  - Coordinate a book drive
  - Volunteer to walk the dogs at a local humane society
- \*it may be difficult to find a community run/walk within the time requested for this national service month



## Something to keep in mind:

Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT is a service initiative and not intended to be a fundraiser for the benefitting organization. It is also important to look at service projects where the Chapter/Network can donate time or services to their local community rather than help raise money. As you know, any funds raised must benefit your chapter.

## Helpful Web Sites

National nonprofits are continuously looking for volunteers and already have established a network of resources and projects in which your organization can participate. Here is a list of several nonprofit agencies that may have an office in your area:

Adopt-A-Highway	<a href="http://www.adoptahighway.com">www.adoptahighway.com</a>
American Cancer Society	<a href="http://www.cancer.org">www.cancer.org</a>
American Library Association	<a href="http://www.ala.org">www.ala.org</a>
American Red Cross	<a href="http://www.redcross.org">www.redcross.org</a>
Big Brothers Big Sisters	<a href="http://www.bbbsa.org">www.bbbsa.org</a>
Children's Miracle Network	<a href="http://www.childrensmiracletnetwork.org">www.childrensmiracletnetwork.org</a>
City Cares	<a href="http://www.citycares.org">www.citycares.org</a>
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation	<a href="http://www.cff.org">www.cff.org</a>
Dress for Success	<a href="http://www.dressforsuccess.org">www.dressforsuccess.org</a>
Habitat for Humanity	<a href="http://www.habitat.org">www.habitat.org</a>
Keep America Beautiful	<a href="http://www.kab.org">www.kab.org</a>
Leukemia and Lymphoma Society	<a href="http://www.leukemia.org">www.leukemia.org</a>
Make-A-Wish	<a href="http://www.wish.org">www.wish.org</a>
March of Dimes	<a href="http://www.modimes.org">www.modimes.org</a>
Relay for Life	<a href="http://www.relayforlife.com">www.relayforlife.com</a>
Ronald McDonald House	<a href="http://www.rmhc.com">www.rmhc.com</a>
Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals International	<a href="http://www.sPCA.com">www.sPCA.com</a>
Special Olympics	<a href="http://www.specialolympics.org">www.specialolympics.org</a>
St. Jude's Children's Hospital	<a href="http://www.stjude.org">www.stjude.org</a>
Susan G. Komen Foundation	<a href="http://www.komen.org">www.komen.org</a>
Toys for Tots	<a href="http://www.toysfortots.org">www.toysfortots.org</a>
United Way	<a href="http://www.liveunited.org">www.liveunited.org</a>



## Making Your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT a Success

### ***Getting Started***

Texas Exes Cares About THE PROJECT can be a rewarding and transforming experience, so having a well-planned initiative is crucial. Work with your partnering organization to make it a positive experience for everyone. Rely on them to help you in planning a successful Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT. The following tips will help you succeed in that goal:

**PLAN AHEAD.** Allow plenty of time to develop, organize, and carry out your project. Establish time lines. Ask your partnering organization for a checklist of everything you need to do to help you organize your activity. A sample checklist is located on page 14.

**DEFINE GOALS.** Participants are often more productive and feel better about giving their time and resources when they are given concrete assignments, and they can see the results. Remember a small project that effectively gets things done is better than a large, poorly run project.

**PARTNER WITH A SERVICE ORGANIZATION.** Ask your fellow chapter/network leaders if they have any established relationships with service organizations in your community and consider partnering with them. That partner may also help promote the event and may also have ideas for a good service initiative.

**INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY.** Use the Texas Exes Cares About THE PROJECT to involve or reach out to the community. This is an opportunity to show others how the Texas Exes are passionate and community-minded individuals!

**BE THOUGHTFUL IN CHOOSING YOUR ACTIVITY.** When selecting your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT, think about how your accomplishments will be meaningful and beneficial to the community. Doing so will help attract sponsors, volunteers, and the media. Think of a project that might not get done without the added help of your Texas Exes Chapter/Network.

**BE ADAPTABLE.** Select a project that can be easily scaled in size. The number of volunteers you have could determine what you can accomplish in one day. Remember that a project regardless of size — small or large — still benefits the community.

**SUBMIT YOUR SERVICE ACTIVITY TO TEXAS EXES.** Register your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT with the Texas Exes so the association will



know about the exciting work you will be doing in your community and can make it known to the media and other alumni. Visit [texasexes.org/care](http://texasexes.org/care) to download the form and return to Laura Carpenter ([carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu)) to register your project. The sooner you register your project, the sooner the Texas Exes can begin to help you promote it!

**WEAR BURNT ORANGE.** Imagine the power of seeing people at your location and at locations all across the country wearing burnt orange and working to improve their communities.

### ***Working With Volunteers***

Your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT's success will depend heavily on the involvement of your participants and how you manage them. Here are some tips for managing effectively:

**RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS EARLY.** Many people are willing to participate in service projects; they just need to be asked. Here are some helpful tips:

- Make sure Texas Exes Care Chair includes information about the event in the Chapter/Network's broadcast e-mails, social media channels, website, local newspapers, local calendars etc.
- Have volunteers sign up in advance of your event so that you have a good sense of the size of your project and the kind of support you will need (equipment, supplies, food, and any other materials).
- People respond positively to someone they know, so ask chapter members to recruit a friend.
- Be sure that the project is outlined clearly and give a realistic estimate of the amount of time requested from each volunteer. If there are different shifts, make sure alumni know ahead of time what their choices are.
- During the event, encourage your volunteers to wear burnt orange. Show the community what group is conducting the service activity!

**COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION.** Ask your volunteers to fill out a signup sheet that includes their basic information (name, address, phone number(s) and e-mail address). Send out reminders to volunteers in advance of the project. Encourage your volunteers to tell you if they have any specific interests or special skills they could apply to your service activity.



**CONSIDER USING TEAM LEADERS.** Take advantage of assertive volunteers and assign them to be “team leaders.”

**MEET BEFORE THE PROJECT.** It will be helpful and beneficial to organize a team meeting with your partnering organization and volunteers prior to your event to work out any last-minute logistical details and most importantly to get everyone on the same page and excited about the difference the Texas Exes are about to make in your community.

**TREAT YOUR PARTICIPANTS WELL.** Ask your partnering organization if they are bringing food and beverage to help keep everyone hydrated and energized. If not, you may be able to have it donated by a sponsor. At the conclusion of the event, you may distribute evaluations so participants can provide feedback on how to improve the experience in the future. A sample evaluation form can be found on page 12.

Lastly, do not forget to thank the volunteers.

### ***Organizing the Day***

Now that you and your partnering organization have already planned your event and recruited your participants, it’s time to focus on the details that will make sure your day runs smoothly. Here are some tips to help you make that happen:

**DISTRIBUTE A DETAILED SCHEDULE.** With the guidance of your partnering organization, plan out a detailed event schedule. It’s important to stick to this schedule, as it will help you coordinate all of the different pieces to your day. Depend on your partnering organization to tell you when to schedule times for things like breakfast, lunch, breaks and cleanup. Consider including times for reflection and evaluation.

**THINK THROUGH LOGISTICS.** Here are some questions to think about when planning:

- Is Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT activity site easy for the participants to get to? Can you provide a map?
- Is this Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT accessible to people with disabilities? Has that been communicated to all?



- Is the site and Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT “family friendly?”
- Who is managing Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT site? Do you have that persons contact information?
- Should participants bring their own food or will your partnering organization be supplying food and beverages?
- If the building or venue is normally closed, will the facilities (i.e. bathrooms) be open and available for use? If not, you will need to plan accordingly. Are facilities even available for use if your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT site is not at a building?
- If your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT is outside, what happens if it rains? Do you have a contingency plan?

**USE CHECKLISTS.** Work with your partnering organization to create a list of roles and responsibilities, including contact information, and distribute it to the key leaders (i.e., team leaders and/or volunteer coordinators). Also, consider providing specialized checklists to people who are managing volunteers, food, supplies, etc. to help them do their jobs well.

**EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.** Think about contingencies. Be prepared for early or late arriving participants, lower-or higher-than-expected participant turnout and weather problems.

**CAPTURE YOUR TEXAS EXES CARE ABOUT THE PROJECT.** It is important to keep detailed records of your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT. It is a good idea to capture testimonials and photos from participants which will come in handy when planning and promoting future Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECTS. Visit [www.texasexas.org/care](http://www.texasexas.org/care) to upload your photos at the conclusion of your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT.

Each Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT will be different, but successful events typically have the following elements:

**REGISTRATION.** Texas Exes wants to know who participated in your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT. In addition to reporting, having participants sign in will help you assign tasks, which also builds a sense of excitement and purpose among everyone. Items to include at registration are a sign-in sheet, any other promotional items and schedule of events.

**KICKOFF CEREMONY.** Regardless of the size and scope of your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT, consider having a kickoff ceremony at the beginning of your day. This ceremony can be small and low-key, but it is an



opportunity to gather everyone together and energize the group about what you want to achieve and the goals you have set for that day. You can use this time to explain the significance of your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT and to showcase the work of your Chapter/Network, perhaps even singing “The Eyes of Texas.” Keep the ceremony short and focused.

**PICTURES.** Capture these great moments so that you can share them afterwards. We encourage you to post photos to the Texas Exes Care about THE PROJECT website so others can see your completed Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT. Not only should you plan on posting these photographs on your Web site, but you should also use them in your marketing materials, as this is a great public relations opportunity.

**SURVEY PARTICIPANTS.** It is important to ask for participants’ feedback on how they viewed their experience before they leave. Collect this feedback through conversations or have a form ready for them to provide you with this information. This will be valuable to you as you plan future events. A sample evaluation form can be found on page 13.

**TIME FOR CLOSING REMARKS.** Consider concluding your activity with participants being given an opportunity to share their experiences, relax, and enjoy themselves. Use this opportunity to take a group photo with everyone in their burnt orange.

### ***Report Your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT Service Project***

It is important to send information about how many participants were involved, the success of the event, and send them any pictures from the event to Laura Carpenter ([carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu)).

- Capturing photos of people participating in your service activity is a great way to document what an impact your chapter/network is making in your area. Send copies to Laura Carpenter ([carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu)).
- Send your sign-in sheets to Laura Carpenter ([carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu)). After the events, the Chapters team will update the contact information based on the sign in sheets. This is the best way to keep the alumni list in your area up-to-date.



**Sample Evaluation Form  
(Name of service project)  
Chapter/Network Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT  
February \_\_, 2012**

1. How would you rate your overall experience?

1      2      3      4      5

*Poor*

*Excellent*

2. What did you find most rewarding?

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3. What were the most positive aspects of Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT?

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4. What were the least positive aspects of Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT?

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5. How did you hear about the Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT? (Choose one)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend          | <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter Facebook Page/Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter Emails  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chapter Website | _____  |

6. How can we improve the Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT for next year?

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*Thank you for your participation! These comments will help us in planning future events.*



### **Social Media Promotion**

Take advantage of the variety of social media tools to promote your event. Before you deploy your social media marketing plan however, the first thing you should do is make a list of the social media tools that you use or have access to. Examples are your Facebook page, your chapter/network Facebook page, and related Facebook sites that you “like”; Twitter accounts and forums that you comment on; your blog or blogs that you read; and LinkedIn groups, etc.

Additionally, decide the purpose of each message you send via your social media channels to promote your event. Do you want to recruit volunteers, look for a worthy Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT, or generate coverage or buzz about your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT?

Here are some ways to use social media at every stage of your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT. Choose what works for you.

**PROMOTE YOUR TEXAS EXES CARE ABOUT THE PROJECT.** After selection your chapter/network’s activity, consider how you want to promote it. Take before-and-after photos and video to showcase the Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT. A Flip camera is an easy, inexpensive way to make a Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT video.

Promote your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT on your Facebook page or on related Facebook pages, like those belonging to your partnering organization. On your chapter/network Facebook page, create an “event” page and post photos of the Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT as it develops.

You can also engage the social media outlets of the organization for which you are doing the Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT. If you are working on a hospital garden for instance, post photos and information on the hospital’s Facebook page. If they have a blog, ask them if you can give them information and photos for the blog.

**SHARE YOUR TEXAS EXES CARE ABOUT THE PROJECT.** Following the event, share the story – the before-and-after photos, video, and photos you took as the project unfolded – in E-newsletters, Web site, *The Alcalde*, etc. Send your Post Event Report to Laura Carpenter ([carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu)). Post videos to YouTube and link to it from your chapter/network webpage, or your other social media. Don’t forget to share this story with your partnering organization you helped out because it has communication outlets that it can use to share the story with its audience.



### ***After Your Event***

Even though your activity is finished, there is still work to be done. Below are some helpful tips to ensure your future events are even more successful.

**THANK YOUR VOLUNTEERS.** Without the help from your volunteers, your event could not be a success. It's important to show your appreciation by thanking all those that were involved (volunteers, sponsors, partnering organization, team leaders/supervisors, and anyone else that played a role or contributed in anyway).

**REVIEW & DEBRIEF.** Participants and key organizers should meet soon after the event to discuss the Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT's successes as well as things that you could build on or do better the next time. It might be helpful to gather input from the host site and to review the evaluations thoroughly.

**SHARE YOUR SUCCESS.** Submit press releases, articles, photos, and other information about your completed event to your local newspaper.

Texas Exes wants to hear the success stories that were shared by your participants. Be sure to also send Laura Carpenter ([carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu)) any of this information and upload your photos to your chapter/network webpage.

You should also consider posting this information on your own Web site and social media outlets. If applicable, ask your host to consider positing it on their Web site and social media outlets as well. This is a great public relations opportunity.

Please forward along those stories as well as any helpful information from your evaluations on what the Texas Exes can do better to help with future programs by sending an e-mail to Laura Carpenter ([carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu](mailto:carpenter@alumni.utexas.edu)).



## Check List

### Three Months before Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT

- Appoint a Care Chair
- Select a service activity
- Register your Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT with Texas Exes staff
- Develop Partnership with service organization
- Set goals
- Promote Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT
  - Include information in weekly chapter/network e-mails
  - Update chapter/network Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts
  - Update chapter/network webpage
  - Involve the Community

### 60 Days before Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT

- Recruit volunteers and team leaders
- Assign duties to participants and team leaders
- Promote Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT
  - Include information in weekly chapter/network e-mails
  - Update chapter/network Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts
  - Update chapter/network webpage
  - Involve the Community
- Consider planning Kickoff Ceremony or Closing Ceremony



### **Week before Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT**

- Provide Detailed schedule for the day of the Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT
- Facilitate Team Meeting before Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT
- Review Duties

### **Day of Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT**

- Wear Burnt Orange
- Take Registration
- Take Pictures
- Pass out evaluation forms

### **After Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT**

- Evaluate the project and participant experience
- Celebrate your success
- Ask for Feedback
- Thank Volunteers
- Thank Texas Exes Care About THE PROJECT participants
- Debrief
- Spread the word of your success
  - Include information in a weekly chapter/network e-mails
  - Update chapter/network Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts
  - Update chapter/network webpage
- Report back to Texas Exes