

Be Your Own Advocate - Ways to Solve and Overcome Frustrations

Ask Questions! Talk to your site coordinator, and other students; ask them for suggestions on how to get to know the people at your organization better.

Say hello first! You may not realize it but people who are at the site may be just as hesitant to greet you, not because they do not want to get to know you, but rather because you are a new face.

Learn people's names! Knowing a name can go a long way, so make an effort to remember someone's name. It is the first step in getting to know people and make any environment more comfortable (for you and others).

Show Interest! Many people at various sites see people come and go regularly, so truthfully, if you are expecting to form a meaningful relationship with someone, you need to prove that you care about whom they are.

Be Patient! Remember that friendships, or any relationships, do not happen overnight. They take time. It is through constant effort and time that relationships are developed. Also, do not expect that it is the organization's responsibility to make you comfortable. It is your responsibility to get to know the people you will be working with at your organization.

Beyond the Course: Continuing Your Community Involvement

Community involvement does not end with service-learning. You can continue working with your community organization after you've completed your course. You can take another service-learning course, or you can look into other volunteer opportunities to stay connected with the community and explore new avenues of involvement. Visit www.tnstate.edu/servicelearning for more information.

Talk to your community organization supervisor or the staff at the Center for Service Learning and Civic Engagement, to find out how you can continue working with the community. If you are interested in staying with the same organization, it may be possible for you to try out other roles and develop new skills.