

## Team 6 Service Project Essay

Our team service project was done at the Houston Food Bank, where we assisted in assorting canned goods and other products to make them ready for distribution. Through this project, Team 6 gained a great amount of knowledge about the non-profit business industry, as well as the types of leadership qualities essential to large-scale organizational activities.

During our first session volunteering, we were introduced to many of the inner complexities of the Houston Food Bank's operations. While organizing boxes and food by their respective categories seems fairly simple, we discovered that there was much more to this organization than we initially thought. In addition to organizing the foods, we had to verify that each food product was not expired and that each box had the correct label. Each box made had to be meticulously recorded on paper so that the food bank had accurate records of how many boxes would be shipped out that day. This experience helped us connect to the lessons Mr. Green taught us when we visited the Food Bank as one of our monthly meetings. Specifically, he talked about the importance of coordination and cooperation with the various organizations receiving the food donations. Mr. Greene mentioned that each step of the process, from coordinating truck drivers and warehouses to getting food to people in need, took a tremendous amount of effort from both the volunteers and employees. Volunteering helped us clearly see the importance of completing each task efficiently and correctly, which ultimately aids the overall process of getting food to people's homes.

With this, there were many leadership skills we saw being utilized, as well as some skills that we put into use during these volunteering sessions. Prior to the volunteering, there were multiple employees explaining each job was performed. They efficiently divided everyone into groups and began to explain, which made it a lot easier for information to be conveyed to the volunteers. Through this initial experience, we recognized a few main leadership skills: effectively delegating tasks and encouraging people throughout the volunteering session to keep them engaged. After seeing these helpful leadership skills, we put them into use while carrying out our own tasks. For example, our group had about ten people, and we were assigned to put boxes on a cart according to their labels. One of the first actions we took was delegating tasks amongst our members. We had a few people carrying boxes while others wrapped each cart after

they were full with boxes. This way, the job was done effectively and quickly, which proved very important to the food bank. We had some people double-checking the boxes and number of carts that were filled to make sure all the information was recorded correctly to avoid issues later on for the employees. Additionally, our team was able to keep everyone else and each other engaged throughout the volunteering simply by talking about our common interests. Because we were all around the same age, it was easy to keep everyone encouraged during the tasks since we all had something in common such as school and even menial topics like favorite foods. This brings me to the HBR chapter about “What Leaders Really Do.” As I mentioned previously, Mr. Greene taught us many important lessons about the types of leaders who are likely to succeed. Among these, the ones that caught our attention, especially during this service project were aligning people instead of organizing and staffing and motivating people versus controlling them. By strategically putting us with fellow students, the volunteer organizers were able to promote a more inclusive environment; therefore, we were able to be aligned due to our common beliefs and motivated because of our social interactions.

Participating in this service project helped us grow as leaders because we saw how various leadership skills were being used first-hand, and we were able to apply them in real life situations. This project served as a vital part to each of our paths to becoming better and more effective leaders, and the lessons that Mr. Greene instilled in us have helped tremendously in regards to how we perceive different situations and how they should be dealt with.