

The Chicktime Experience

It is with great excitement that we invite you to join us today and experience Chicktime first hand. This video was produced with the local chapter leader in mind, but we believe all volunteers will enjoy the video and find value in watching it.

Through this video, our hope is to give you an idea of what a Chicktime event feels like, and to provide a step by step guide to making sure your volunteers feel welcome, comfortable, and valued. In addition, we have included a special interview from two monthly workshop/activity leaders to give a bit of insight from their perspective, as well as an interview from a volunteer who just showed up to play!

For a successful event, plan to start one hour before the children/women you serve arrive. This is VALUABLE time for your volunteers as it will be the only time you will be able to communicate expectations and procedures. Once the children arrive and the event is underway it can get quite chaotic. This time will allow you to make sure everyone is on the same page.

- 1st 15 minutes- During this time, as everyone is arriving, make sure your volunteers are signing in, getting a name tag, getting a shirt if they need/want one, visiting with the volunteer coordinator about any outstanding paperwork needs, and just greeting each other and getting settled in.
- 2nd 15 minutes: Once everyone has arrived ask them to gather in a circle so that you can share some very important information.
 - Thank everyone for coming
 - update everyone on any news such as need for monthly workshop leaders, additional volunteer opportunities at the charity that your chapter is promoting, upcoming event news for next month, and any other business news. This works VERY well in lieu of regular chapter meetings!! Use this time wisely to communicate news and needs.
 - introduce monthly workshop leader and ask her to introduce the helpers she brought with her. This is also a good time to ask the general volunteers for any additional help still needed (in case one of her helpers didn't show up)
 - ask the volunteers who don't have a specific job (with the workshop leader) to raise their hand. Spend the next couple of minutes training them on what they are to do during the event. Explain that their job is to assimilate into the group and just play along with those we are serving. Tell them that the absolute worst thing they can do is break off into little groups with another volunteer or two and just chat... explain how this makes the clients we are serving feel insignificant. Tell them that it will be uncomfortable to reach out, or to sit in

between them, etc... but to do it anyway!

- ask the volunteer coordinator to share any rules, regulations or any information at this time. This is also a great time for her to share other volunteer needs or donation needs the charity has.
 - explain how the shirts work- \$20 donation per shirt and that we need at least 50% of the volunteers wearing the shirt so it communicates to those we serve that we are a group and we come back each month as promised... how every volunteer won't be able to return and that is okay because our identity is our group... and as long as the group returns... we have kept our promise to return, even if an individual volunteer is unable to
 - pray together in a circle if you wish.
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- final 30 minutes: set up the event!

Now lets cover how Chicktime volunteer opportunities are organized. This all depends on how many clients your chapter serves and whether you are serving women and children or just children. These are general guidelines that work very well for existing chapters.

- If you are serving 25 or less children, one workshop works great. Plan for the activity to last about 1.5 hours and include a snack if possible. If there are a broad range of ages in the group, don't worry. Just plan ahead and bring something engaging for the little ones during the activity. For example, if you are doing an art class and teaching painting techniques, bring along a volunteer to lead the young kids in finger-painting while the workshop leaders teaches the art class. If your group serves boys and girls, and your group is doing manicures that day, bring along a volunteer to toss a football or lead a sports clinic with the boys.
- If you are serving more than 25 children, break them into groups of 15-20 and have different workshops happening simultaneously so that the groups can rotate through the stations. Each station should last about 45 minutes to an hour. The video you are watching was filmed at New Life Children's Center. The Chicktime Canyon Lake chapter partners with New Life serving 80 children. Each month they have 4 stations going at one time so it is quite a production! It can get crazy but it is always fun and always worth it! Later, you will get to hear from Paula and Haylee Oliver, the monthly workshop leaders who organized the event you are watching. The Canyon Lake chapter calls their monthly workshop leaders "Chick Leaders".
- If you are serving women and children, it is a good idea to have two activities going in separate rooms. One for the moms and one for their children. The moms typically appreciate the time to engage as adults while their children are having fun with the activity that was prepared for them.
- We cannot reiterate the importance of snacks. Food is a connector. It doesn't have to be expensive or fancy. Cold lemonade and cookies on a hot day, or even chilled bottled water and individual bags of fun crackers or pretzels work

great. As a special treat, incorporate the snack into the workshop by decorating cookies or cupcakes from time to time.

- The goal is to have fun and BE PRESENT. Allow yourselves to leave your world outside when you enter the shelter and become absorbed in theirs for just a few hours. It might possibly just change your life, we hope it does! 😊

The final section of this video shares the perspective of the volunteer.