C3: Innovating with technology
Innovating with technology at The Smith Family

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Volunteer Australia National Volunteering Conference – The future is now

February 2023
A centenary of support

Volunteering over the decades

In our centenary year, we celebrate and acknowledge our volunteers through the decades. Here’s a snapshot of just some of their support.

1920s and 1930s
Our family relief work is done by members and volunteers.

The Great Depression
Members and volunteers deliver donated food and clothing to families in need.
1929–1939

1939–1945
World War II
Our Ladies Auxiliary distributes money boxes to households to collect coins for a fundraiser.

1960s
Volunteer Visitors visit people who are lonely and isolated.

1970s
We develop Each One Teach One (later becoming the Home Tutor Scheme), an award-winning program to help immigrant and refugee women learn English by linking them with volunteer tutors.

1990s and 2000s
New volunteer opportunities emerge with our education-focused programs and in our Commercial Enterprise.

Today
Thousands of volunteers support our work with children and families, along with over 14,000 members of VIEW Clubs of Australia. Education-specific roles include mentoring and tutoring, project-based skilled volunteering and more recently, virtual volunteering opportunities. Many of these involve our corporate and philanthropic partners.

400
volunteer drivers help deliver gifts at Christmas.
The Smith Family’s virtual volunteer experiences

Engaged

Engaged in their role and the context their contribution makes in terms of the broad scope of The Smith Family activities.

Supported

Supported in the work they do with training, management, performance monitoring and skill development.

Valued

Valued by all team members and stakeholders with regular attention to recognition.

Connected

Connected to the outcomes of The Smith Family fellow volunteers and the broader community through their involvement in voluntary roles.
How we expanded virtual volunteering

Our key considerations for the development of online platforms and virtual teams centred on the investment in people, resources and systems

- People – needs and motivations of volunteers
- Resources – what we already could use (equipment)
- Systems – volunteer portal, power app and support centre
The unique needs of different cohorts

- Flexibility – place, hours, activity type
- All ages & abilities, safety, equity and diversity
- Options for both short term (who do not undergo our screening process) and long term volunteering (who undergo our screening process)
- We can now have 100’s of volunteers support our work

Together Penny, Pauline and Toni have 40 years volunteering experience
Increasing opportunities to future-proof volunteering

- A system that enables volunteers to easily register and share their skills to participate in volunteering
- Further development of volunteer portal and extranet to allow for more activities
- Increase our volunteer base regionally, corporate opportunities and short-term volunteering
- Multiple opportunities to connect to our organization and work – value aligned volunteering
Virtual volunteering is possible, all you need is the people and the systems to enable change.