

Volunteers of America: A 122-Year History



This year marks the 122nd anniversary of the founding of Volunteers of America. On March 8, 1896, Maud and Ballington Booth stood before a crowd of hundreds in the Great Hall of Cooper Union in New York City and declared:

"We will go wherever we are needed and do whatever work comes to hand."

In its early days, Volunteers of America cared for the city's poor, founded homes for unwed mothers, and served as early crusaders in the prison reform movement. For more than 40 years, Maud and Ballington traveled the country, truly going wherever they were needed, enlisting "officers" (as their people were called then) from all walks of life, who volunteered to make service their life work.

Today, Volunteers of America affiliates can be found nationwide, serving 1.4 million people in over 400 communities in 46 states as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Volunteers of America-Greater New York (VOA-GNY) is the largest affiliate, with more than 90 programs providing life-changing, often life-saving, services to tens of thousands of the most vulnerable men, women, and children in need every year.

Learn more about the founders and their legacy [in this video](#).

WATCH VIDEO

Dates Confirmed for Operation Backpack® 2018!



Operation Backpack® (OBP) is our signature back-to-school campaign - and the largest one in New York City - that benefits children living in the city's homeless and domestic violence shelters.

The success of OBP relies entirely on the generosity of those who live, work or simply care about New York City. There is no public funding for this campaign and so we must fundraise and secure sponsors and major in-kind donors if we want to ensure that every child who calls a NYC shelter "home" receives a new backpack full of grade-specific school supplies in time for the first day of school.

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Our public drive will take place **July 9-August 3**. During that period, look for our ads (all donated by incredibly generous out-of-home media partners) promoting the campaign. The culmination of the drive is Sort Week, taking place **August 6-24**, when we receive and quality control all donations, fill backpacks, and distribute the backpacks to the children.

Mark your calendars now! Consider speaking with your building management about promoting an OBP drive throughout the entire building, engaging all tenants in this great citywide event. Help us provide every child who needs one - last year this number was 18,000 - a new, full backpack.

You can start now by **confirming your company's participation**, or forming a fundraising team or donating [here](#).

[DONATE HERE](#)



March Volunteer Opportunities

In honor of *Women's History Month*, we pay tribute to our remarkable, truly progressive co-founder Maud Booth.

We also acknowledge all the women for whom we provide a safe haven while they recover from domestic violence, temporary shelter as they seek permanent housing for their families, and dignified housing after serving in the military.

Celebrate these women by hosting an "*Empowerment Day*" for the women in one of our shelters. This can be anything from a spa day, resume-writing session, or any number of empowering activities.

[Get Involved](#)



Volunteers of America-Greater New York Has Moved Its Administrative Offices

On February 12, Volunteers of America-Greater New York relocated from its longtime Upper West Side address to midtown Manhattan on West 50th Street.

Approximately 120 employees from the former Executive Office and senior leadership overseeing the organization's programs are housed in this newly renovated office space. This move will centralize key VOA-GNY functions into one Administrative Office with an open floor plan, providing opportunities for enhanced collaboration and efficiencies while addressing our need for more space.

[Learn More](#)

Partner Spotlight: Rutgers Presbyterian Church

The creativity, commitment and range of services provided by Rutgers Presbyterian Church (RPC) makes them one of our most valuable community partners. Mobilizing the support of their congregation and local community, RPC has organized food drives for our family shelters, book and DVD drives for our veterans, and holiday gift drives for our older adults. The church has also donated funds to VOA-GNY and serves as an official Drop Location for Operation Backpack[®], making it possible for the public to participate in that campaign by donating new backpacks.



RPC offers community programs, including art classes and creative storytelling, to families in the neighborhood, and has graciously extended these services free-of-charge to children attending our Bronx Early Learning Center. During these activity sessions, the children can

play, create, and express themselves freely. In addition, children in daycare and recreation at VOA's family shelter on the Upper West Side visit biweekly to flex their creative muscles by participating in art projects and playtime in a calming environment, abundant with activities.

Over the past year, RPC has "adopted" this family shelter, collecting donations to enhance their recreation and childcare departments. The **wish lists for these "dream spaces"** (curated by our staff) include art supplies, toys, furniture and more.

Thank you, Rutgers Presbyterian Church, for your tremendous support!

Learn More About Our Work: The Picture of Homelessness is a Family Portrait

For many Americans, the word "homeless" evokes a snapshot of a transient individual. However, children and families make up the fastest growing segment of the homeless population in the United States. In New York City there are more than 60,000 people, including more than 15,000 families with more than 23,000 children sleeping each night in a shelter.



At VOA, we work with homeless children and their families and try to mitigate the impact of their circumstances. Each of our family shelters has an on-site Board of Education representative who makes sure the children are enrolled in school. Our childcare and recreation staff are available for tutoring, to supervise homework, and to offer any additional help the children need after school.

Thanks to our corporate and community volunteers, the children in our programs are given parties around the holidays and school supplies at the start of the school year. If a child needs special supplies - like poster boards for a class project - our staff finds a way to acquire them to help the child avoid feeling different than his or her peers in school. Sincere acts like these have a large impact on the health and education of a child and aid in the development of a healthier family portrait. **Read more.**

To learn more, contact:

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