

## **Ideas for Online Direct Client Service**

Virtual volunteering projects are discovering ways to offer direct services to a client/recipient of service. Some contacts may be entirely online, with no face-to-face meetings. In other cases, virtual contact is in addition to more traditional services. For example, a volunteer, via e-mail or a chat room, could:

- Electronically "visit" with someone who is homebound, in a hospital or a rest home.
- Provide online mentoring and instruction via email or private electronic bulletin board (helping students with homework questions, helping an adult learn a skill or find a job, or help prison inmates with studies or programs).
- Help with foreign language practice (for instance, "chat" with people learning English).
- Run an e-mail or chat room answer/support line, like a phone answer/support line, where people write in questions and trained volunteers answer them.
- Offer advance "welcoming" and answer questions of people about to enter the hospital, go to summer camp, enroll in a college--and then, via e-mail or a special Web page or Intranet, offer post-service follow-up to the same group.
- Work together online on a project, such as writing about the news of their neighborhood, school, or special interest group, or gathering historical information relating to a particular time or region, to post on a public Web site or to produce a printed pamphlet.
- Train volunteers in a subject via the Internet (distance learning).
- Supervise any of the above activities via the Internet and provide guidance to other online volunteers.

For more detailed current information, visit these Web sites:

[www.serviceleader.org/vv](http://www.serviceleader.org/vv)  
[www.netaid.org/ov/](http://www.netaid.org/ov/)  
[www.energizeinc.com/art/subj/inter.html](http://www.energizeinc.com/art/subj/inter.html)

Also, download the FREE book: *The Virtual Volunteering Guidebook: How to Apply the Principles of Real-World Volunteer Management to Cyberspace* by Susan J. Ellis and Jayne Cravens at [www.energizeinc.com/art/electbooks.html](http://www.energizeinc.com/art/electbooks.html).