



# Taking Great Pictures

One of the most attention-getting ways of publicizing your successful events and promoting your group is with pictures of your group in action. Here are suggestions to make your pictures even better.



## Before the Event

- **Have consent to take pictures of people.** Always get consent to take someone's picture and don't pressure people into being in photos. Photos where a person is not identifiable are better, but should still only be taken with permission. It's important to know in advance who doesn't want their picture taken at all and who is okay with group documentation but not public use of their image. A good trick for making sure that people who haven't given permission don't appear in photos is to give them a lanyard of a certain color so pictures with someone wearing those lanyards don't make it online.
- **Have a designated photographer.** Event organizers are pretty busy, so assign a volunteer to be in charge of pictures. A member who's a professional photographer is great, or anyone who's passionate about photography.
- **The quality of your camera matters.** Many phones can take decent quality pictures, so you likely already have the equipment you need. DSLR cameras are higher quality so if you or a volunteer have a good camera and it's safe to bring to the event, go for it.
- **Don't use the selfie camera.** If you're using your phone, use the front-facing camera and check your settings. Sometimes selfie cameras produce a lower resolution image that is difficult to use, and sometimes settings on your phone might automatically compress photos and create unexpected effects.
- **Verify that the location allows pictures.** Some organizations are leery of letting donors take photographs because they might not want their members outed or don't want their location shared. It's best to confirm instead of assuming.

## Tips for Taking Great Pictures

- **Pay attention to light.** Taking pictures in front of windows or into the sun generally shadows faces, even if you can see them clearly through the viewfinder. Keep the brightest light source behind you (or use the flash if your subject is close enough). Make sure that your shadow or the shadow from a tree or building doesn't fall over your subject or part of your subject. Use a flash in low light, but watch out for reflective surfaces that can produce glares (e.g., windows, glass over picture frames, etc.).
- **Have a simple focal point.** It's hard to show an entire scene, so focus instead on one or two people doing one activity. Keep an eye on what's in the background. You don't want the background to distract from the focal point. Get close to your subject.

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- **Rule of thirds.**

- Imagine that there's a tic-tac-toe grid in your viewfinder so that you have three rows and three columns.
- The horizon should fall along either the top or bottom row (not the middle row).
- If your subject fits in the middle column, turn your camera to the side or move your camera so that the subject is placed at the intersection of two lines.
- For a more thorough explanation and examples you can go [here](#).

- **Action shots.** Tell the story of your event and its success! Show your volunteers making food, hammering a nail into the ramp, giving blood, gathering supplies etc.

- Set your shutter speed high (fast) so that your image doesn't blur.
- Consider using a tripod.
- Try the action setting on your camera.
- Leave negative space in front of the movement.
- Take a short video and select individual frames from the video.

- **Portrait or group shots.**

- Get down so the camera is at eye level with the people you're photographing.
- Eyes of the person should be at the intersection of a row and column.
- For group shots, get close but make sure you include people's whole bodies.

## After the Event

- **Share pictures in the SWoA Event Report and with the SWoA Facebook page.** Please send high resolution pictures—at least 1920x1080 if possible. Try to make sure to send the originals in .png format whenever you can to make it easier to share.

- **Use best pictures in the group's newsletter, website, email, and social media.**