

SPUR Good Deeds

- Becky Twaalfhoven

SPUR is a non-profit organization based in Marblehead that works to provide volunteer opportunities for members of the community, especially young people. Founded in 2014 by Jocelyn Cook, SPUR facilitates local events and services to engage volunteers and inspire good deeds. The organization's mission is "to SPUR youth and adults on toward good deeds that build stronger communities through hands-on community service and enrichment programs." This holiday season, SPUR took over the stocking drive from A Community of Friends and filled over 400 stockings. In addition to such seasonal events, SPUR organizes local volunteers every month to cook, deliver, and serve a meal at the Lifebridge homeless shelter in Salem, hosts enrichment workshops for children, and performs many different acts of kindness throughout the community every day. All of this is set in motion by charismatic founder Jocelyn Cook, who works tirelessly to expand her outreach and truly improve the lives of everyone around her. One key aspect of SPUR that makes it appealing and sustainable is that volunteers don't need to make a big commitment of time or energy; in fact, most of the volunteering is in 2-hour shifts at locations in and around Marblehead. Another special focus is on spreading kindness through simple acts of giving, especially amidst the craziness of everyday life. One of the projects SPUR created for individuals during the holiday season is the "Count Down with Kindness" calendar, a template for which can be found on the SPUR website. Here are the instructions and suggestions provided by SPUR:

Instructions:

Simply download one or all of the free SPUR kindness countdown templates and cut along the lines. Select the tags that work for your household and then fill your advent or countdown calendar with one tag in each spot. Every day select a new tag and reveal the day's suggestion to SPUR kindness and thankfulness this holiday season. No matter what your holiday or religion, we hope you join with us this holiday season to SPUR good deeds....and as you move through your countdown, feel free to share photos on our Facebook page to SPUR others into action.

Where to buy your own countdown calendar:

Michael's Crafts Store, Joann Fabrics, AC Moore, Marshalls, Christmas Tree Shops, Amazon, or make your own with clothespins and yarn!

Suggestions:

Make it a morning event - A lot of households enjoy reading their tag in the morning so that they have all day to find ways to complete it.

Don't have a countdown calendar? Don't worry! You can make an easy one simply and cheaply with yarn/ribbon and clothes pins and then hang your countdown as holiday decor.

Not interested in posting a countdown calendar but still want to fill your season with kindness? Draw your tag from a bowl or hat each morning.

Spontaneity can be fun! Some households like to leave a few blank tags in their countdown – then fill out together on the day of. It’s a great way to be creative and spontaneous and to look for a random way to spread some kindness throughout the day.

A project like this is the perfect example of what SPUR is all about: creating a positive community whose members are engaged and support each other in any way they can. As soon as I got involved with SPUR, I found myself quickly getting more involved in community projects and volunteering without having to sacrifice any time or commitments, and I encourage others to do the same.