**Compassion Exercise No. 1: Helping Those in Need**

**Introduction:** Practice compassion by taking time to help those in need. As a group, plan to spend about two hours at the volunteer location that has been chosen.

**To Begin:** Facilitators, you will need to make arrangements with a local food kitchen, animal shelter, hospital, community garden or other volunteer location of choice in advance. If you’re not sure where to begin, try visiting [VolunteerMatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org/) or [FeedAmerica.org](http://feedingamerica.org/). Some places will allow you to walk right in with as many volunteers as you have. Others will schedule a time for your group to offer assistance.

**Suggested Activities:**

* Help out at a food kitchen by packing food boxes or serving in a soup line.
* Volunteer at a local animal shelter by petting playful puppies and kittens to help socialize them for adoption.
* Visit a local children’s hospital and read to children who are sick or volunteer to read at a local library.
* Participate in a community garden project.
* Set up bins to collect canned food or clothing. Then, make a donation to a local homeless shelter, Salvation Army or Goodwill.

**Helping at a Distance:** If someone wishes to volunteer, but is unable to visit in person, they can practice “distance compassion.” For example, depending on where the group is volunteering, they might donate a can of food, a pet toy, a children’s book or a packet of seeds.