Tips for Inviting People to Volunteer

Approaching a prospective volunteer:
Be excited and motivated yourself. Sincerity is more important than the right technique.

Generally, public invitations aren't very effective, though they are necessary so the project isn't seen as exclusive. Identifying individuals who would be good at the task and inviting them directly is much more effective.

Share *why* you are inviting this person to volunteer. Name the skills or personality traits that would make them a good candidate for this work. People usually see it as a compliment when you recognize their gifts and believe they can do a task.

Explain the significance of the work. People want to be part of something that will make a real difference for people and for the world.

Remember you are providing them with a marvelous opportunity to be part of something worthwhile. You don't want them to be left out!

Describing the opportunity to serve:
Be clear what you are asking people to do.
   - Have a written position description.
   - Give the task a *title* that expresses a *"function,"* e.g., _____ [The word "volunteer" is a pay category, not a function!!]
   - Be forthright about the amount of work involved. Don't make it sound easier than it really is.
   - If possible, identify different levels of volunteer service within the project.
   - How long a commitment is required? How much time per week/month? Make the timeframe clear up front.
   - Talk about the support and training (if applicable) the volunteer will get.

Additional considerations:
Ask how the prospective volunteer might hope to benefit from their service or how they might want to contribute to others' wellbeing.

Don't assume that people want to volunteer in a field that is familiar to them Often they want to do something new and different and develop another side of themselves.

Paint a positive picture of the volunteer work. Volunteering should be enjoyable.

Remember finding the right people for the job is more important than getting a fast start.