

HOW TO LAUNCH COMMUNITY CARE MINISTRIES

From Your First Conversation to Your First Ministry

Community Care Ministries doesn't begin with a program.

It begins with a conviction that your corps can become known for how it cares for people.

You don't need dozens of volunteers, a large budget or a detailed strategic plan before you begin. Most healthy CCM ministries start with a small team, a clear purpose and one simple act of care.

This guide will walk you through the first steps.

Step 1: Start with the "Why"

Before talking about volunteers or programs, spend time with your leadership asking one question:

What do we hope people experience because Community Care Ministries exists?

The answer shouldn't be about activities.

It should be about people.

Perhaps you hope no one in your congregation feels forgotten.

Perhaps you want your neighbourhood to know your corps as a place of compassion.

Perhaps you want every generation serving together.

A shared vision will guide every decision that follows.

Go deeper:

Read **Introduction to the Community Care Ministries Toolkit** and **Theological Foundations** to understand the vision behind CCM.

Step 2: Look at What You Already Have

Don't ask,

"What new program should we start?"

Ask,

"What is already happening that reflects the heart of CCM?"

You may already have:

- visitation
- music ministry
- community meals
- youth service projects
- prayer ministries
- family ministries
- seasonal outreach

Community Care Ministries often begins by connecting existing ministries rather than creating entirely new ones.

Step 3: Listen Before You Plan

Take time to understand your community.

Talk with:

- corps members
- community partners
- local Salvation Army social mission units
- neighbourhood organizations

Ask simple questions:

- Who is most isolated?
- Where are people struggling to belong?

- What is already being done well?
- Where could our corps make a meaningful difference?

The goal is not to solve every problem.

It is to discover where God may already be inviting your corps to serve.

Go deeper:

- **Understanding Diverse Communities**
- **Best Practices in Inclusivity and Cultural Appreciation**
- **Engaging Local Social Mission Units**

Step 4: Choose One Place to Begin

Resist the temptation to launch five ministries.

Choose one.

Healthy CCM grows through small, faithful steps.

Ask:

- What could we realistically sustain?
- Where do we already have volunteers?
- What need feels most urgent?

A ministry that is small and consistent will usually have greater impact than one that is ambitious but unsustainable.

Step 5: Build Your Team

Once you know where you're beginning, invite people into the journey.

Recruit through personal conversations rather than general announcements.

Start with a few people who share the vision.

Then onboard them well so they feel confident, supported and equipped.

Go deeper:

- **How to Find and Recruit Volunteers**
- **Onboarding Your First Volunteer**
- **Serving Together: A Guide to Roles in Community Care Ministries**

Step 6: Launch, Learn and Grow

Your first ministry doesn't have to be perfect.

Start.

Listen.

Reflect.

Celebrate what God is doing.

Then make small improvements before expanding.

Community Care Ministries grows through relationships, not rapid expansion.

Your First CCM Launch Checklist

- ☐ Shared the vision with corps leadership.
- ☐ Identified existing ministries that could become part of CCM.
- ☐ Listened to your congregation and community.
- ☐ Selected one ministry to begin.
- ☐ Recruited and onboarded your first volunteers.
- ☐ Planned your first act of care.
- ☐ Prayed together and launched.

Remember

The goal isn't to build the biggest Community Care Ministries program.

The goal is to build a corps where caring becomes part of its culture.



Programs may come and go.

When a congregation begins to notice the lonely, welcome the stranger and serve its community together, Community Care Ministries has truly begun.

Continue the Journey

This guide is your starting point. As your ministry develops, the CCM Toolkit provides practical guidance for every stage:

- **CCM Setup and Structure Guidelines Checklist** for detailed planning and governance.
- **Promoting Community Care Ministries** for building awareness and engagement.
- **Recognizing CCM Volunteers** for sustaining and celebrating your team.
- **Engaging Local Social Mission Units** for developing meaningful community partnerships.