

How to Organise AWOL Actions



Where do I start?

Firstly, we are excited you are showing interest to make a difference through your local church into your community. If you do not have an idea where to start, we suggest you start by getting a few people from your church together for a brainstorm session as described below.

What is an AWOL Action?

AWOL Action is the name given to any project, outreach or ministry that is run during one or more sessions over the course of AWOL where teens are used to make a difference by sharing God's love in practical ways to the surrounding community. As an AWOL Action Leader, you will transport a number of teens to the place you have arranged and assist them to carry out the AWOL action that you have organised.

Brainstorming Projects, Outreaches or Ministries

Think beyond AWOL

Although there are some projects, outreaches or ministries that can be completed over the duration of AWOL, others can't. We encourage you to think long term when it comes to making a difference in your community. This means that you may begin making a difference before AWOL begins or alternatively, AWOL could be your launching pad for a long or medium term project, outreach or ministry through your church.

Gather information

Think about your community: what it is like at the moment, what they would like to see change and why.

Pick a street or area and ask those living there how your church can meet their needs.

Speak to the police, teachers, hospitals, shop owners, councillors, NGO's. (They have significant knowledge about the community.)

Look around you. Take a walk in your neighbourhood or in town. Take photos.

Brainstorm as a group at your church.

As a quick exercise, draw a rough map of an area of your community, and then mark the map where:

- you don't feel safe
- young people 'hang out'
- people spend their leisure time
- people work
- the best places are
- the worst places are
- you like to spend your time
- you would like to see change/improvement
- you can bring joy, care or love to people

Possible AWOL Actions

Here are some examples to get you thinking:

Different places to make a difference

- Hospitals
- Police station
- Schools
- Homes and Flats
- Municipal/Government Clinics
- Museum
- Parks
- Streets and Verges
- Vlei/Stormwater areas

Join in with existing projects

- NGO's
- Municipality
- Police
- Churches

Join with other organisations

- DICE
- CANSA
- SANCA Zululand
- Helping Hands
- iKhaya LikaBaba Children's Home
- Destiny House Children's Ministries
- Crossroads Teen Centre
- Wildlands Conservation Trust
- Thuthukani Special School
- Empangeni Child and Family Care
- Zululand Hospice
- Nicro Zululand
- SPICA
- Izulu Orphan Projects

Painting

- Old buildings
- Walls
- Bus shelters
- Murals

Upgrading

- Parks
- Wheel chair ramps
- Fix a fence
- Braai facilities

Gardening

- Planting trees
- Someone's yard
- Gardening for the aged
- Landscaping
- Parks

Cleaning

- Roadside
- Cars
- Graffiti off walls
- Illegal posters stuck on walls
- River or storm water banks
- Parks
- Someone's yard
- Set up recycling bins

Ministry

- Fun day
- Dramas
- Sports workshop/clinic
- Social games in the park
- Face painting at shopping centres
- Fun in the park (for Moms and their kids in the afternoon)
- Art lesson/class at an empty shop in a centre.
- Help out / provide a meal at home for the aged
- Puppet shows
- Free coffee shop

How do I put ideas into practice?

Here are some suggestions to help you get going.

- Use AWOL as a catalyst to involve as many people in your church as possible.
- Get approval from your church leaders as you will be representing your church through AWOL.
- Hold a workshop at your local church and invite the AWOL organisers to come and assist you in putting your ideas into action.
- Discuss the following practicalities amongst yourselves and come ready to workshop your ideas with the AWOL organisers.

AWOL Action practicalities

AWOL Actions

- Decide on the **duration** of the project, outreach or ministry. It can...
 - o Start before AWOL,
 - o Run only over the duration of AWOL or
 - o Continue even after AWOL.
 - o *Note that AWOL Action Leaders will only be able to take teens on AWOL Actions on certain days. The days for 2019 are Wed 26 and Friday 28 June.*
- Decide on the **nature** of each of your AWOL Actions. Are you going to...
 - o Join hands with another local church in a joint church project, outreach or ministry.
 - o Make a difference in another organisation (NGO, etc)
 - o Start your own project, outreach or ministry.
- Finalise the **location** of AWOL Actions
 - o In order to fit in with the mission of AWOL, all projects, outreaches and ministries must be carried out within Empangeni, Richards

Bay or its surrounding areas. Contact the AWOL team if you need clarity on this.

- Decide on the **number** of AWOL Actions
 - o You can plan and oversee as many as you like as a church – each having its own leaders.
 - o AWOL Actions can run on one or more of the AWOL Action days (Wed 26 and Friday 28 June).

AWOL Teens

- Decide on the **number** of teens you would like to take for the duration of AWOL.
 - o AWOL will allocate the requested number of teens to you. You will not receive the same teens each day.
 - o There is no connection between the number of teens from your church attending AWOL and the number of teens you are permitted to take on AWOL Actions.
 - o The number of teens in each AWOL Action you plan can vary if you wish.
 - o It is important that you prepare yourself to actively involve teenagers so that they participate and don't get bored. Your role is to facilitate the teens making an impact.

Resources

- Decide what is required in order for you to complete your AWOL Action.
 - o Equipment and material needed*
 - o Funding required*
 - o Expertise
 - o Permission

* All requests for municipal projects and funds/resources from the municipality need to be done through AWOL to streamline this process.

* Under certain circumstances, AWOL may be in a position to help finance some AWOL Actions.

* A default letter and guidelines are available to assist AWOL Action leaders with funding/resource requests.

Safety

- Ensure the safety of the teens in your care.
 - o We suggest one adult to supervise every five teens on an AWOL Action.
 - o Under no circumstances may a teen operate any electrical equipment, power tools, sharp utensils or operate any other equipment that require special skills beyond the average teenager.
 - o No teenager may climb scaffolding, buildings, trees and the like where a fall may result in injury.

Sharing your passion

- Before leaving with the teens you get to spend 20 minutes with them at 09h00 for a “Passion Talk”
 - This enables you to get to know them briefly.
 - Explain where you are going.
 - Tell them your passion for what you have planned and how it came about.
 - Remember, passion is caught not taught, so you would need to demonstrate it with the teens when you go out.

Transport

- Decide on how you are to transport your teens from the AWOL event site to your planned AWOL actions and back again.
 - You will leave with the teens around 09h30 daily and are to be back between 14h00 and 14h15. Plan your day around these times. If you finish earlier, have something planned to ensure teens are kept busy and engaged as they are not allowed to arrive back before this time.
 - You are responsible for the teens in your care. Please drive carefully and remain alert at all times.
 - Teens may not be transported by unlicensed or learner drivers; unroadworthy vehicles or on the back of vehicles without canopies.
 - The number people you transport may not exceed the amount specified on the vehicle licence disc.

Refreshments

- Lunch packs and refreshments will be given to each teen before departing. Decide how you intend providing toilet facilities while the teens are in your care.
 - Would you need to hire toilets?
 - Is there drinking water accessible? (AWOL can issue approx. 2 litres/teen if required)

AWOL Action Leaders

- Each AWOL Action must have a leader. This person will ensure the success of the AWOL Action as well as be responsible for the teens entrusted in their care.
 - All AWOL Action leaders taking teens from the AWOL event site are required to attend the briefing starting at 08h30 SHARP! (Allow enough time for you to find parking.)
 - If you are unable to make this meeting, you would need to inform the AWOL team and the person transporting your teens would be required to attend.

Finish Well

- Finish what you start
 - Remember, you are serving the community and need to show your commitment to the end!

If the teens do not manage to finish the AWOL Action, you will be responsible to ensure that your task is completed.

Filling in an AWOL Action Form

It is essential to fill in the “AWOL Action Registration Form” to consolidate all critical information about your AWOL Action.

Once your form has been received, the AWOL Actions Team will confirm all is in order.

Each AWOL Action receives a unique “AWOL Action number.” This number will be different if teens are going to the same place on different days or to the same place to do different AWOL Actions.

This assists us in our planning and ensures that every teen will receive a different kind of project, outreach or ministry each day.

The Next Step

Once your AWOL Action is registered, the document “Leading and AWOL Action” will be sent to you. This informs you what will be given to you on the day and what is expected of the leaders and the teens to ensure a successful AWOL Action.

More information

Log on to our website: www.aworkoflove.co.za

Or, contact our AWOL Actions Team Leader:

Lizl van Rooyen

082 302 2089

lizlvr@gmail.com