



Bridging the Bayous Timebank consists of an online community that has the capability of drawing people together for the common good. On one hand, individuals will be able to ask and receive help for various tasks they need to have done or would like to learn how to do, while on the other hand, the program provides individuals a simple way to find meaningful volunteer opportunities that match their interests, talents, and skills.

Here is a simple explanation of how the program works: For every hour of volunteer work, a Timebank Hour is earned. Timebank Hours can then be used for someone to assist you with small tasks or can be saved up to use for larger tasks that require more than just one hour of time. Services provided through Bridging the Bayous Timebank are as varied as the members that make it up and can include such assistance as: simple house/car repairs, hair stylists, grass cutters, cooking lessons, etc. When ready to volunteer or need the assistance of someone else, all that is needed is to log in to Bridging the Bayous Timebank's website to see who needs your help or to request assistance. Matches are then made and assistance provided. The hours you have volunteered as well as used, are then recorded by the software for future exchanging.

Bridging the Bayous Timebank is centered around 5 core values:

- ✓ **Assets:** We are all assets. Every human being has something of value to contribute. Many people have talents they do not realize or skills they may take for granted that others would like to utilize. Bridging the Bayous Timebank empowers people to grow their abilities & learn new skills.
- ✓ **Redefining Work:** We realize some work is beyond price. We are committed to redefining the concept of community, where ordinary people can work together to meet one another's needs and to value whatever it takes to raise healthy children and build strong families.
- ✓ **Reciprocity:** Helping works better as a two-way street. The question, "How can I help you?" needs to change. We like to ask, "How can we help each other build the world we both will live in?" It is a gift to have the ability to help someone. There is no shame in asking for help & allowing someone else to help you; for when we work alongside each other, we become a stronger community.

- ✓ **Social Networks:** We need each other. Networks are stronger than individuals. People helping each other allow communities to feel the support, strength, & trust of its members. Special relationships grow from this commitment to community. By both giving **AND** receiving, we learn to appreciate the value of every member's talents & abilities, as well as challenge ourselves to accept each other's differences. As our community grows, Bridging the Bayous Timebank will help create an environment that encourages collaboration not just between members, but also with our neighbors, churches, service agencies, & community institutions.
  
- ✓ **Respect:** Every human being matters. We must respect where people are in the moment, not where we hope they will be at some future point. Through reciprocity, we respect ourselves & each other. No one is above another & no one is a burden - -- we are all givers & receivers, teachers & students.

Bridging the Bayous Timebank *cannot* work like a two way street, where one side of the street is doing all of the giving while the other side doing all of the receiving. It must operate on a continuous flow, where everyone is open to receiving help from someone else, while also giving of themselves to help another person in need. The beauty of this hourly exchange is that an equal value is placed on each exchange so that no assistance provided is considered more valuable than another. In other words, one hour of time equals one hour of time, no matter what services are being provided!

By joining Bridging the Bayous Timebank, you can feel the excitement as you share your talents and skills with others in a meaningful way, while also looking to see what others may have to offer you in return. Bridging the Bayous Timebanking is community involvement at its best!