

# Youth & Voluntarism

(1 of 2)

If you are a young person, there are many good reasons to get involved in volunteer and service learning opportunities. Here are a few for you to consider:

## 1. Volunteering can help you to explore your interests.

- If you like animals, you can help out at an animal shelter or at your nearest zoo.
- If you like working with kids, get involved at a summer camp or at a preschool program, or help younger students with their schoolwork.
- If you enjoy playing sports, play games with the kids at a Boys & Girls Club.
- If you like to cook, get together with friends and make dinner for the families at a soup kitchen or help out at a homeless shelter.
- If you enjoy sewing, you can make curtains or bedspreads for the families at a women's shelter or make lap robes & pillows for nursing home residents. If you know how to knit or crochet, you may enjoy making scarves and hats for people who are homeless.
- If you enjoy being outdoors, help your park district clean up a park or volunteer to help a neighbor plant flowers or mow the grass for your elderly neighbors.
- If you enjoy the performing arts, explore volunteer opportunities with a community theatre group.

## 2. Volunteering can help you learn about possible careers.

- If you think you'd like to work in the medical field, volunteer at a retirement or nursing home or with Hospice.
- If you're interested in teaching, spend time with younger children, helping them with their homework.
- If you're interested in science, consider volunteering at your local science museum or greenhouse.
- If you'd like a job in an office someday, offer to help with filing and data entry at a nonprofit organization.

## 3. You can meet people you might not ordinarily meet.

- By volunteering in a group, you'll meet other people with the same interests you have.
- If your grandparents have passed away or live far away and you don't get to see them often, you can become friends with a senior adult and adopt them as your "grandma" or "grandpa."
- By volunteering with an agency that helps refugees, you can meet people who have come here from other countries. You'll learn about their culture and help them adapt to life here.
- By volunteering with an agency that works with people with physical or mental challenges, you'll find out that they're not so different from you after all.

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(2 of 2)

## 4. Volunteer activities look good on college applications and work resumes.

- College admission staffs want to know who you are as a person. They want to know more about you than you high school grades and SAT score.
- Potential employers want to know if you show up on time, can take direction, are responsible, and work well with others. A good reference from an agency you've volunteered with can help them decide that you'd be a good employee.

## 5. It's fun.

- People who volunteer often say that they get more out of the experience than they give.
- Giving of your time and energy makes you feel good about yourself and raises your self-esteem.
- Working with other volunteers builds friendships.

## 6. You're sharing your talents and knowledge with others.

- You have skills, talents, knowledge, experience, personality and passion. Each of us is unique and has something to share with others.

## 7. By volunteering, you help to form a stronger community.

- Sometimes we look at the way the world is and think, "This isn't the way things are supposed to be." By volunteering, you can help make a positive change in the world.
- Each of us wants to live in a community where families are healthy and strong, where children are given the help they need to succeed in school, where people with disabilities and the elderly are able to live as independently as possible, and where people live in safe, supportive neighborhoods.
- By volunteering, you help to make those connections and help to make our community a better place to live, and you become part of the solution.