Teen Volunteering
Sharing Our Gifts and Talents

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WHAT is Volunteering?

Volunteering:

- Is about someone who is willing to commit and devote time and energy for the benefit of the community without expecting or receiving financial compensation.

- Is a way to become motivated and to work towards a project or cause that has personal interest.

- Gives an individual the opportunity to change lives, promote good, and improve the overall quality of human life, including ones own.

A Gift to the World, Community, and Yourself
WHO Can Volunteer?

EVERYONE

Volunteering is about everyone becoming involved. So the answer to who can volunteer includes:

- You
- Your mother, father, and siblings
- Your friends
- Your teachers and classmates
- Your neighbors
- The people you see walking down the street every day
- Individuals of all ethnicities, genders, professions, ages, social classes, and backgrounds.

Literally everyone has the chance to volunteer.
WHY Volunteer?

Reasons to Start Volunteering:

- To achieve personal growth
- To achieve a new perspective on life
- To make a difference
- To feel involved and to connect with your community
- To contribute to a cause that you feel strongly about
- To develop new skills
- To help others, meet people, and make new friends
- To feel good about yourself
- To learn about a new activity or group
- To keep active

Your reasons for volunteering are your own individual choices and preferences. No matter what your reasons, you will gain a lot of benefits.

Helping others and engaging in different activities will help you learn about yourself and others.

You will meet an array of interesting people.
Reasons Why Youth Volunteer – Teen Perspectives:

“It makes you feel compassionate for those in need.”

“You are able to do something for a cause in which you believe.”

“When you help others then others will help you.”

“Teens rank volunteering as one of the top activities that they consider “cool.””

“Volunteering helps you gain important job skills and experience, while exploring future career options.”

“Young volunteers are able to expand their social circle and enhance their societal awareness.”

“Volunteering lets you feel the impact you create on the world.”

“It helps you develop time-management skills and your work ethic.”

“It helps you achieve better grades and overall satisfaction with yourself.”
# HOW Would Volunteering Help Me?

## Youth Volunteering Statistics:

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<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<td>Youth volunteering has increased steadily over the past 10 years, with 30% of youth participating in volunteer activities.</td>
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<td>Out of 18.8 million youth, about 73% volunteer an average of 3.5 hours per week.</td>
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<td>Teens who volunteer experience growth in areas of personal and cultural competence and social responsibility.</td>
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<td>Students who volunteer are more likely to graduate from college than those who do not.</td>
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<td>Teens who volunteer with the elderly help bridge the generation gap and minimize the youth stereotype of being apathetic and self-centered.</td>
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<td>Studies show that teens who volunteer have higher self-esteem and more resiliency.</td>
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<td>Students who volunteer are more likely to have a higher GPA than those who do not.</td>
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<td>Youth who have volunteered are more motivated, have better time-management, and are better able to handle difficult situations.</td>
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How Do I Get Involved?

How-To Steps:

1.) **Consider why you want to volunteer.** Do you want to help the community or make a difference in the world? Do you want to develop new skills, make friends, and learn? Do you want to give something back by volunteering? Examining these types of questions can help you choose the right volunteering opportunity.

2.) **Choose an organization that is significant to you.** There are many organizations doing all sorts of work, and it is important to find an opportunity that is of value to you. Find something that is relevant to your life. The more passionate you are about the volunteer experience, the more enthusiasm you will share.

3.) **Look for an organization or activity in your area or community.** Talk to others who have volunteered with your intended organization or activity, and ask them to share their experiences.

4.) **After finding an organization of interest, look at the tasks within it that suit your interests and skills.** Volunteer work should be compatible with your personality and overall interests, which will help develop new skills.

5.) **Start small.** Volunteer your time for one to two hours per week or one day a month. Decide whether you enjoy the work, and if your schedule allows for more hours, from there you can decide how much time to commit.

6.) **Get to know others within the organization and how volunteers are supported within the group.** Attend orientation or training workshops, if available. Talk with other group members about the volunteer work and what is expected of you.

7.) **Explain your background and areas of interest to those in leadership roles.** Individuals in charge can help match you with meaningful and suitable tasks, but only if they get to know who you are.

8.) **Get started.** When starting, ask plenty of questions and research the organization. Remember, until you start working you won’t know if this organization is right for you. If it does not, don’t get discouraged. Find a new opportunity that will be a better fit.

9.) **Get training.** If your organization provides a formal orientation or training sessions, attend them. If not, ask other volunteers about their experiences and how you can become better acquainted with the agency.

10.) **Don’t give up.** Some volunteer tasks may not be exciting, but they are crucial for the organization to operate. However, if you find the work unpleasant ask for another task.

11.) **Have fun!** Enjoy your volunteer experience and your newly developed techniques and skills.
WHERE Should I Volunteer

Volunteering Ideas:

1) Homeless Shelters
2) Food Banks
3) Habitat for Humanity
4) Red Cross
5) State Parks
6) City Programs
7) Literacy Programs
8) Hospitals
9) Libraries
10) International Opportunities, such as the Peace Corps
11.)Senior Citizen Centers
12.)United Way
13)Salvation Army
14)Environmental Organizations
15)Disaster Response and Relief
16)Animal Shelters
17)Nonprofit Organizations
18)Create Your Own Ideas:
   - Design a Mural
   - Set Up and Art Exhibit
   - Tutor Younger Students

One of the hardest parts of volunteering is taking the first step. JUST BE CREATIVE AND HAVE FUN!
Youth Volunteering Story

Wing-Shan, a recent high school graduate, decided upon entering college that she would like to devote a few hours a week towards helping those within her new community. Her story is one that generates an eye-opening experience and allows her to see how she can impact the world...

“I volunteered at The Door in New York City as an SAT and GED tutor when I first entered college. The Door supported underprivileged kids from all over the five boroughs. Sometimes, I worked with kids, newly immigrated, who could barely speak or read English. Sometimes, I worked with 21-year olds who had too many responsibilities to succeed in high school, and were studying for their GED. And on busy days, I was shifted upstairs to the Broome Street Academy to help math students with homework. I couldn't really tell, but a lot of these kids came from housing projects, were homeless or runaways, part of the foster system and most didn't have any health insurance. It was eye-opening to work there.”

“This volunteering experience allowed me to apply my innate duty to make the world a better place. It also helped me to teach and learn from the people I came across. That is why I enjoy volunteering, it helps me put my life in perspective and I feel like I'm doing something for someone or something greater than myself. There's this feeling of mutual gratitude between me and whomever I impact. I was lucky to have grown up in the suburbs, surrounded by supportive family members and good friends .They worked really hard to make my life better, so it feels good when I do the same thing for others.”

- Wing-Shan, Volunteer at The Door in New York City

“Help a young person discover his or her potential!”

- The Door, NYC
Ami, a volunteer for Little Dresses for Africa, decided to partake in making little dresses out of pillowcases for girls in Africa. However, Ami not only made dresses for those involved with her volunteer organization, but also expanded this concept and made dresses for girls in Haiti. Her story is one that demonstrates how creative one can be in helping the community, the state, and even globally...

“The reason I make these dresses is because I want to help and it allows me to turn one of my hobbies into something good. It makes sense to volunteer some of my time doing something I enjoy and sharing the result with someone less fortunate. The gift of a new dress could make the world of difference to a little girl who has no clothing or is in dire need of a new outfit. The condition that many of these children thrive in is something that many of us in the United States could never imagine.”

“It is not only rewarding to make these dresses, but also teaching children how to sew. Teaching someone, especially a child, a new skill is such a gift. Some of the girls at the gathering I host, learned how to sew on flower appliqués by hand, operate a sewing machine, attach iron-on rhinestone accents to fabric, thread a sewing machine, and follow pattern directions – all in just a few hours. Watching children learn and giving to others is an overall fulfilling experience.”

- Ami, Volunteer for Little Dresses for Africa

“We’re not just sending dresses, we’re sending HOPE!”

- Little Dresses for Africa
Resources


Teen Volunteering

Sharing Our Gifts and Talents

Huamin Philanthropy Brochure Series - 1

Huamin Research Center, School of Social Work, Rutgers University
390 George Street, Room 503, New Brunswick, NJ, 08901, USA

China Philanthropy Research Institute, Beijing Normal University
19 Xin Jie Kou Wai Street, Room 1003A., Haidian District, Beijing, 100875, China