

Volunteering for the Soul

Our communities are better places thanks to the efforts of volunteers. It's often because of volunteers that homebound seniors receive hot meals; children have after-school care; adults learn to read; and abandoned animals find shelter. And, volunteering also provides many benefits to the volunteer – in improved health and well-being as well as quality of life.

NEW LEASE ON LIFE

From a broad perspective, volunteering is about giving back to the community and making a difference. Helping others can help put things in perspective, and provides the opportunity to tap into something larger than ourselves. Many experts maintain that this aspect of volunteering can be a critical antidote to depression as it helps promote a positive outlook on life.

NEW SKILLS

Many volunteers report being motivated in new ways, as well as experiencing a deep sense of accomplishment. Additionally, volunteers indicate they develop new skills -- skills which, in many cases, they never knew they had! Planning and implementing a fundraiser can develop goal setting and project management skills. Coordinating a team of volunteers can lay the foundation for management and training skills. Creating posters to promote an event may alert you to art or graphic design talents that have just been waiting to be tapped. The possibilities are truly endless.

NEW HORIZONS

Volunteering can also be a means to bring about greater life balance, providing new outlets and different experiences to an established routine. Finding new interests can be fun, relaxing and energizing – and that energy can carry over into old situations - expanding perspectives and creating options never envisioned before.



Meeting new and diverse groups of people is another great aspect to volunteering. Both the recipients of your efforts and your team members can be a source of inspiration. Interpersonal skills can be honed, and one's network can be significantly expanded. Opportunities to learn about people from other walks of life, different environments, and new services and industries can all be significantly rewarding.

NEW CAREERS

Many over the years have transformed skills developed through volunteerism into new jobs, increases in salary, or promotions. And in today's job market, new skills and networking opportunities can be invaluable.

GETTING HELP

For help with personal or workplace issues, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). These confidential services are available to employees and their eligible household members 24/7.