

Five Good Reasons to Volunteer

1. Gaining New Skills

With each new volunteer activity comes training. These skills may seem basic or trivial at the time of training, but may also provide building blocks for future success. For example, by managing the receipt, sorting and distribution of donations from community sponsored school supply drives, teens might learn how to use spreadsheets to keep track of inventory. These skills are a great foundation for a job in management, accounting, or running a small business.

2. Adding to the Resume

If a teen's pre-college resume is limited to summer employment at the local pizza place and basic computer skills, it might be time to add a few lines. Commitment to community volunteer work over time shows that a teen is willing to work for something without monetary compensation--much like a college internship, apprenticeship or job shadow experience--which may be a requirement of college programs.

3. Giving Time

One of the most selfless acts anyone can do is donate their time and talents. Teens who are busy with after-school sports or work to help support their families and still make time to volunteer on evenings or weekends show outstanding character and resolve to make a difference. High school students are particularly well-suited to find time to mentor younger youth, connect with residents at a senior center or assist with one-time special events held on weekends.

4. Showing Responsibility

Just like going to a job, committing to a volunteer position shows responsibility. Teens working on becoming more reliable should get involved in volunteer programs relating to their hobbies to naturally build responsibility. For example, teens who love to read can find volunteer opportunities with a local library and teens who enjoy sports can coach athletics at an after-school program for children.

5. Earning Credits

Some high schools mandate a specific number of community volunteer work hours before a student is eligible for graduation. Many volunteer opportunities can translate to high school or college credits. It is important to discuss these opportunities with guidance counselors and administrators before beginning volunteer work.