

THE TEEN MAG.

7 Volunteer Opportunities Every Teen Should Try

ACTIVITIES

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Volunteering shouldn't be a chore, it should be a passion. Let your heart lead when it comes to giving back and helping to make a real difference in the world. A spirit of compassion and dedication could transform communities and change lives for the better.

What starts as individual acts of service grows into a collective force for good in the world. Helping others also helps yourself. Volunteering offers many benefits including: stress reduction, happiness, making new friends and being healthier. You can even learn job skills that can help with your future career.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

Volunteering is more of a gift to yourself than it is to others. So, what makes a great volunteer?

Are you...

- reliable?
- punctual?
- friendly?
- able to follow direction?
- trustworthy?

If you believe that you have all of the above traits, then you are ready to be an amazing volunteer!

Find something you are truly interested in and help it to the best of your ability. There are countless different ways to get involved, but if you are stuck on ideas, here's a list of the best ways to make a difference in your community.

Animals

Who doesn't love a furry friend? Animals are a cute companion by your side that can instantly brighten the mood. They become a part of our lives, our family.

However, not every animal is gifted with the opportunity to become a pet in a loving home. There are many vulnerable animals that need your help to get basic care.

Share this love by volunteering at local animal shelters, rescue centers, or wildlife sanctuaries to give the same care to all different animals. Not only will you be improving the lives of these animals, but you will have the opportunity to create a deep bonds with these important members of society.

Volunteering with animals is a fun, hands-on experience from providing them with food and water, bathing them, to even trimming their nails and playing with them. This is a perfect opportunity for someone looking to work in animal-related fields such as: veterinarian, animal care specialist, animal rescuer, wildlife biologist and so much more.

Children

Children are the future. Their cute smiles and curious eyes will grow to be the leaders of our world. So why not help them learn the lessons they will need to succeed in life.

Help them keep their curiosity alive. You can help children not only improve their grades, anxieties and creativity, but also build their confidence, social skills, self-esteem and resilience.

From volunteering at a day camp to a tutoring center to your local children's hospital, you can help spread joy and teach children what life has to offer. You can support these children not only by reading to them, but by the super power of playing. Your guidance and companionship can inspire and uplift children, helping them reach their full potential. This is a perfect opportunity for someone looking to work in fields such as: teacher, psychologist, child life specialist, pediatrician, social worker and so much more.

Libraries

If you love books then you know the power that words can have. From an inspiring and heartwarming tearjerker to a comedy that has you crying tears of laughter and joy, a book can truly transform lives. When you're having a bad day, curling up in the corner and reading a chapter or two of a book can make the whole situation better.

They can teach invaluable life lessons. And nothing beats those weekend trips to the libraries sitting in the back of your parents car and picking out your three favorite books.

Without the proper care though, these libraries will not be able to keep functioning and offer the gifts to the world they do now. You can check with your local library to get involved with keeping the libraries running, as well as helping with events that the libraries may host. You will learn and develop new skills in organization and technology, to event planning and customer care.

You will be engaged within your community, with social interactions and feel a sense of purpose. Your duties may vary from assisting at the circulation desk to shelving returned books and materials. You may also help in children's programs, inventory, and answering phones. This is a perfect opportunity for someone looking to work in field such as: librarian, historian, archivist, and so much more.

Museums

Close your eyes and picture stepping into a time-capsule of history. With artifacts from hundreds and thousands of years ago right there in front of you.

Hours of wandering around discovering new things with every step. From a dinosaur bone from hundreds of millions of years ago to a subway ticket from the 1800's, museums capture life from around the world at all different times in the world.

Without volunteers to help maintain the museums they cannot stay open and bring joy to all of the enthusiastic visitors. They need your help to preserve culture and continue to spark curiosity in those who come in. You will get to learn about the collections and the exhibitions, as well as meet people eager to learn about art, history and science.

From providing information and directions to greeting visitors and helping with various events, you can improve your social networking skills and knowledge. This is a perfect opportunity for someone looking to work in fields such as: curator, museum educator, conservator, and so much more.

Nature

Nature provides the basic necessities we need as human beings to survive, but more importantly it helps us psychologically. By reducing our stress and improving our mood, nature can be a serene place to everyone. So, we can't just let this important and calming environment fall into despair.

Join efforts to protect and preserve the environment by participating in conservation projects, community gardens, or beach clean-ups. Your efforts can help maintain the natural beauty and health of our world's ecosystems. This is a perfect opportunity for someone looking to go into fields such as: gardener, wildlife rehabilitator, environmentalist, conservationist and so much more.

Seniors

The seniors once were teens themselves. They once made impacts on the world that led it to the way it is right now. We can't let their stories go untold, their lives uncared for. They provided for all those around them so now it is our turn to provide for them.

Brighten the lives of older adults by volunteering at senior centers, retirement homes, or through home visit programs. Share your time and talents by assisting with activities or simply offering an ear and listening to their lifetimes worth of memories. You can help the seniors avoid social isolation and help them control their mental health by tactics as simple as being by their side.

Playing games, performing arts and crafts and making jokes are all great ways to help out. This is the perfect opportunity for someone looking to go into fields such as: social worker, occupation therapist, certified nurse assistant, senior center coordinator and so much more.

Health

Hospitals and clinics are vital to making sure everyone is healthy and safe in the world. From a simple check-up to a much needed surgery, everyone should be given the access to necessary care in order to thrive. Improve the lives of those in need by aiding in healthcare sectors around you.

Help by delivering meals, playing games and reading to the patients. Bring a smile to their faces and give joy and positivity in tough times.

Join nurses and doctors by volunteering and help give medical opportunities to those who need it. Skills such as attention to detail, resilience and strong communication are all improved by working in healthcare. These opportunities can help jumpstart a career in medicine such as: doctors, nurses, physicians, therapists, pharmacists are more.

In the end, no matter what you do to give back your time, it's crucial that you are passionate about it. You want your volunteering to be a powerful impact to the community so that the people(and animals) in need can get the full attention they deserve.

You will also gain important personal and professional experiences that will impact your future careers.

Even if you don't know how you want to help, try out a few different things till you find your place to change the world for the better. Volunteering teaches all the value of giving without expecting anything in return.