



The Personal Benefits of Volunteering

Source: The Corporation for National and Community Service, "The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research."

Health Benefits of Volunteering:

- A heightened sense of well being, reduced insomnia, strengthened immune system, and hastened surgery recovery time.
- Volunteering can improve self-esteem, reduce heart rates and blood pressure, increase endorphin production, buffer the impact of stress, and combat social isolation.
- Improved self confidence and self-esteem, which helps to reduce blood pressure and improves immune function.
- Placement in highly social situations, which increase the opportunity for close interpersonal relationships and strengthen one's sense of identity
- Formation of interpersonal ties and social networks that can act as a buffer against stress and illness.
- A longer life expectancy than non-volunteers. Studies report that engaging in regular volunteer work increases life expectancy because social interaction improves quality of life.

Benefits to Youth Volunteers:

- Youth who volunteer are more likely to do well in school, graduate, vote, and be philanthropic. Youth who volunteer just one hour a week are 50% less likely to abuse drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, or engage in destructive behavior.
- Young people who volunteer are more likely to become active citizens, engaged in civic activity as youths and later as adults.
- Almost 78% of people who volunteer report that volunteering is important because it "allows me to gain a new perspective on things."
- Volunteering connects young people to their communities, fosters leadership and develops an interest in making a difference.

- Teens say the benefits received from volunteering are: Learning to respect others; learning to be helpful and kind; learning to understand people who are different from themselves; developing leadership skills; becoming more patient; and gaining a better understanding of good citizenship.

Professional Benefits of Volunteering:

- Practical work experience
- Learning new skills
- Increased social interactions
- A bank of professional contacts and potential references
- Higher visibility to employers and community as a whole