VOLUNTEERISM

RESOURCE TOOLKIT FOR AMERICAN SPACES

This Resource Toolkit is designed for programming at American Spaces to create a greater awareness of volunteerism and its benefits.

WHY VOLUNTEER?

Health and Happiness
- Volunteering is great for your physical and mental health. It makes people more socially connected and can give someone purpose.

Skill Development
- Gain many skills, including leadership and management, which can be useful in getting jobs and advancing your career.

Learn about new industries
- Volunteering is a great way to learn about different types of work environments.

WHAT IS VOLUNTEERISM?

Volunteerism is donating time and energy to benefit other people or a community. People volunteer out of a sense of social responsibility rather than financial reward.

VOLUNTEERISM IN THE U.S.

In the United States, children, teens, and adults volunteer in many different ways. They volunteer with their schools, places of worship, or participate in a variety of projects such as handing out water to racers at a community marathon, coaching or tutoring youth, serving meals to the homeless, walking dogs at a local animal shelter, or rebuilding homes after a natural disaster. Others volunteer to achieve political change. They may register citizens to vote or advocate for specific legislation on a special interest topic.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Which local projects or organizations would interest you as a volunteer? What are they? What would you be doing?Who would you be helping?

Some U.S. schools require students to engage in volunteer activities in order to graduate. Do you agree with this? Should institutions require people to volunteer? If it's a requirement, does it count as volunteer work?

How could volunteering benefit your life specifically?What types of volunteering would be best for you? What volunteer work would be best for your community?

What does volunteering look like in your community?Are there any barriers to volunteering?

VOLUNTEER SERVICE IDEAS

- Host a skills-building program at a library, community center, or an American Space.

- Launch a clean-up project in the community

- Start a mural painting project in a neighborhood

- Hold a **Human Library** event

- Tutor or read to children in schools, homeless shelters, or hospitals

- Teach seniors to use a computer

- Organize a concert in a new place

- Build a community garden