VOLUNTEERISM IN THE U.S.

In the U.S., children, teens and adults volunteer in many different ways. They volunteer with their school, church, or with family and friends doing a variety of projects ranging from giving water to racers at a community marathon, coaching or tutoring youth, feeding the homeless, walking dogs at a local animal shelter to building homes after a natural disaster.

Others volunteer to achieve political change. They sign people up to vote on a certain political campaign or advocate for specific legislation.

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.

BENEFITS TO VOLUNTEERING?

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.

Promote good governance
The United Nation believes that citizen volunteers make governments more accountable and can initiate needed policy changes in government.

Make Friends
Volunteering is a great way to meet new people and make friends who share your interests.

THINGS TO DISCUSS

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 volunteer to graduate. Do you agree with this?
- What do you think about requiring people to volunteer? 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?
INTRODUCTION: VOLUNTEERISM
(5-10 min)
1. Pass out information sheet.
2. Discuss

ADVANCED: VOLUNTEER SERVICE PLANNING
In this activity, participants will plan and do a service project.
1. Identify Local Needs
2. Build a Team
3. Set a Goal
4. Serve Your Community
5. Report and Celebrate!
Consider:
- Working alone or with another organization?
- How to get more people to join?
- Who/what will benefit from the project?

ACTIVITY LINK

VOLUNTEER SERVICE IDEAS
- Share your skills by hosting a program at a library, community center or an American Space.
- Clean-up project in the community
- Mural project in the community
- 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 for seniors
- Build a community garden

TOOLKITS and RESEARCH
Toolkits for Specific Projects
Learn how to do specific projects.
10 Tips to become a Volunteer
Make becoming a volunteer easier.
Health Benefits of Volunteering
Learn about how volunteering can improve your health.

AMERICAN SPACES RESOURCES
- eLibraryUSA
- Share America