

14. You can improve career opportunities and employability

"Put volunteering on your resume and it makes you employable immediately." Emma Lancaster, senior auditor

"Volunteering helped me decide that teaching really is the career for me." Daisy Craig, psychology student

15. You can be part of a community

"One of the most special feelings is knowing I directly contribute towards the number of people smiling in my community and that makes me smile." Jessica Bavinton, physiotherapist

16. You can gain recognition as a specialist

"I think the skills you pick up for business are unmatched." Kate Rutherford, financial services partner

17. You bring value to struggling organizations

"Without volunteers Crime Concern would not be running the vast majority of our community projects." Adrian Smith, volunteer manager Crime Concern

18. You enhance social support networks

People with strong social support networks have lower premature death rates, less heart disease, and fewer health risk factors. *(Fact sheet: Volunteering as a Vehicle for Social Support and Life Satisfaction, Public Health Agency of Canada)*

19. You lower the risk of ill health

Volunteering lowers the risk of physical ill health because it boosts the social psychological factors that healthy people have. *(The Effects of Volunteering on the Volunteer, John Wilson and Marc Music, Autumn 1999)*

20. You increase your sense of identity

Volunteering puts people into highly social situations, increasing the opportunity for close interpersonal relationships and strengthening a sense of identity. *(Peer Counseling Perspectives, April 2003)*

21. You live longer

Studies report that engaging in regular volunteer work increases life expectancy because social interaction improves quality of life.

21

Reasons Why Volunteering is Good for Your Health!

Hands On Twin Cities

2021 East Hennepin Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55413
612-379-4900
www.handsontwincities.org

Be The Change. Volunteer.

Visit our website or call us for help in finding the right volunteer opportunity for you.



1. You feel good

According to Harvard cardiologist Herbert Benson, known for his work on the relaxation response, the health benefits of doing good things for others are similar to those experienced by anyone who practices yoga, spirituality and meditation. These include a slowed heart rate and a decrease in blood pressure. The key may lie in the sense of calmness that comes from helping others, also known as the "helper's high." These altruistic feelings reinforce the sense that one's life has a purpose. In turn, this enhances self-esteem, which then provides the motivation for a person to make better lifestyle choices.

2. You are healthier

Studies show that people who volunteer usually consider themselves healthier than people who don't. In one study, volunteers reported that helping others brought them relief from a range of problems, including headaches, backaches, overeating, insomnia, chronic pain, and some illnesses.

3. You reduce stress

Studies show that, like exercise or meditation, helping others on a regular basis creates a sense of calm and well-being and reduces stress. One expert explains: "When we focus on something outside ourselves, it interrupts our usual tension-producing thought patterns, breaking the chain reaction that causes stress."

4. Your immune system is strengthened

Studies show that while stress reduces our immunity to illness, the moods and emotions experienced by volunteers (optimism and joy) can strengthen immunity. For example, people who merely watched a movie about Mother Theresa helping the poor showed increased levels of immunoglobulin A, the body's first defense against infections.

5. You have hope

As a volunteer you experience what is working in the world, and the part volunteering plays in making a better life for all.

6. Your aging process is slowed

Older adults who volunteer in troubled schools not only improve the educational experience of children, but realize meaningful improvements in their own mental and physical health (Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions). "Giving back to your community may slow the aging process in ways that lead to a higher quality of life in older adults."

7. Your physical, cognitive and social activity is improved

Physical, cognitive and social activity increased in volunteers, suggesting potential for Experience Corps and similar programs to improve health for an aging population.

8. Your self esteem is improved

A study funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health in 1991 found that volunteering can improve self-esteem, reduce blood pressure, combat social isolation, reduce the impact of stress and augment the body's immune system.

9. You make a difference

"The parents of the children we looked after told us that we were making a big difference to their own lives." Liane Saunders, corporate trainer

10. You experience diversity

"Volunteering bridges a gap between people who wouldn't normally come across each other in their daily lives." Karen Arden, social worker

11. You make new friends

"Student community action was the only environment where I felt truly equal and that it was OK to be myself." Katie Marl, teacher

12. You find new opportunities and challenges

"Volunteering gave me first hand experience of what caring for patients actually involved and how challenging a job in medicine could be." Sophia Naz, doctor

13. You are inspired

"It's refreshing to be appreciated for doing something which is so motivating and inspiring." Matt Bush, property researcher