



Lessons Learned...

On being a student volunteer

Tips for Involved Parents and Students

Tips for student volunteers from members of the North Gwinnett High Student Leadership Team...

- **Find one service organization within your school and get involved!** Your school offers a number of volunteer opportunities. For instance, you might look into helping with Relay For Life (benefiting the American Cancer Society), recycling, or peer tutoring. There are tons of opportunities. Just look for one that fits your interests or skills (or interests and skills that you would like to develop). If your school does not have an avenue for you to serve that fits your interests or skills, talk to an adult in the school about how to create a club!
- **Look for a volunteer opportunity that really gets you excited.** What are you interested in? How do you want to make a difference at your school or in the wider community? Is there an issue that you're passionate about? If so, are there opportunities for you to connect your passion with your volunteer work?
- **Remember not to overdo it.** Joining too many organizations might hinder your ability to give your all to the organizations that matter most to you.
- **Serving others feels good!** Once you make the decision to serve, you will most likely find yourself wanting to volunteer more and more since service is fulfilling.
- **Service is an incredibly rewarding experience.** You are not only influencing and improving the lives of others, but you, yourself, personally grow, too. It is a great feeling to know that you have helped someone.



“Volunteering is an act of heroism on a grand scale. And it matters profoundly. It does more than help people beat the odds; it *changes* the odds.”

Former President Bill Clinton

- **Serving is even more fun when you are with friends;** it helps to build your relationships with them. Serving is also a way to make new friends who have similar interests in volunteering.
- **An active volunteer with a servant's heart is very appealing to colleges and employers.** By being involved and giving your time to serve others, you are gaining the servant leadership skills that you will need to be successful in life.

On the other side of this tipsheet, find seven reasons to volunteer and ideas for volunteering



Seven reasons to volunteer

Here are just a few reasons to consider getting involved in volunteer and service learning opportunities:

You can explore your interests.

- **Like animals?** Volunteer at an animal shelter, help out at the zoo, or offer to walk your elderly neighbor's dog.
- **Enjoy children?** Help younger kids with schoolwork, volunteer at a summer camp, or help out at a daycare.
- **Like sports?** Help coach a tiny tots soccer team or volunteer with a sport camps or rec center program.
- **The outdoors your thing?** Clean up a park or stream, clear trails, plant a community garden, or mow the yard for a shut-in neighbor.
- **How about cooking?** Work with friends to prepare dinner at a soup kitchen or help at a homeless shelter.
- **Or making things?** Sew curtains or bedspreads for a women's shelter, make pillows for a nursing home, or knit or crochet hats and scarves for people who are homeless.

You can learn about possible careers.

- If you're interested in science, volunteer at the Environmental and Heritage Center or at a greenhouse.
- If you're thinking about medicine as a career, volunteer at a hospital or nursing home or work with hospice.
- If you're hoping to be a teacher, offer to tutor or mentor younger students or work as a peer tutor.
- If you're thinking of office work, volunteer to help in the office at a nonprofit.

You can meet new people you might not ordinarily meet.

- If you volunteer with a group, you will meet people with similar interests.



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Gwinnett County Public Schools and YOU!

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- “Adopt” a nursing home resident if your grandparents live far away or have passed away.
- Volunteer with an agency that works with refugees to meet people from other countries. You can learn about their culture and help them learn about living in the United States.
- Work with people with disabilities through organizations like Special Olympics and local agencies.

You can add value to your college application or work resumé.

- Colleges are looking for well-rounded individuals. Your volunteer activities are one way to share more about yourself.
- Employers are looking for certain qualities in a worker—punctual, responsible, team player. A reference from your volunteer work can help show these traits.

You can enjoy the experience!

- You can build friendships with fellow volunteers.
- Helping others will help you feel good, too.
- You just might get more out of the experience than you give!

You can share what you know and can do.

- Everyone is different and we all have unique qualities to share. Volunteering gives you a chance to share your skills, knowledge, talents, experience, personality, and passion with your community.

You can make a difference.

- As a volunteer, you have a chance to “advance the common good,” helping to make your community a better place to live, work, and learn.

Ready to volunteer?

Look for opportunities through your school, faith group, or other community organization, or find ways to volunteer nearby when you enter your zip code at www.LiveUnited.org/Volunteer.

Tips adapted from United Way's "Youth and Volunteering" web page.