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Community Service Ideas for Teen Volunteers



TeenLife[®]

Giving back is a great way to fulfill your community service requirement for school or a club, build your resume, and make a difference in your community. But sometimes it's difficult to find an exciting volunteer opportunity. Try some of these community service ideas for teens and get inspired to volunteer.

Don't have any time?

Here are a few quick community service ideas for high schoolers:

1. Donate old clothes or household goods. Take a look through your closet or storage space to find those dusty items that you've outgrown or just don't use anymore. If it's in good condition, give it to your local Goodwill, or women's shelter.
2. The next time you go grocery shopping, pick up some non-perishables to donate to your local food bank.
3. Bring new or lightly used toys and stuffed animals to a children's hospital.
4. During the holiday season, answer a letter to Santa from a needy child. Visit your local participating post office to get a letter from an underprivileged kid, buy a gift, and mail your package.
5. For your next birthday, ask that people give donations to a charity of your choice instead of gifts.
6. Send a care package to deployed troops, veterans, or wounded soldiers. Write a thank-you letter and include some food (no homemade or canned food allowed). If you're under 18, make sure to sign your letter with your first name only. Take a look at Operation Gratitude or Give2TheTroops to learn what to donate and who to send it to.
7. Donate blood. You have to be 17 or above, or 16 with parental/guardian consent. You can make an appointment with the Red Cross, or look for a community blood drive near you. If you're under 17, you can still donate your time.
8. Donate children's books, novels, and other reading materials to shelters, libraries, and schools.
9. Write a letter to your Congressman about an issue that you care about.
10. Offer to rake leaves, shovel the walk, or do housework for an elderly neighbor.



Volunteer based on your skills.

Believe it or not, the knowledge that teens sometimes take for granted can really make a difference in someone's life.

1. Teach computer skills to the elderly.
2. Become a volunteer tutor. If you excel in a particular subject, share that knowledge with other teens who are struggling. Volunteer your services online non-profit or let your teacher know that you're available to other students.
3. Become a tour guide for a local historical organization.
4. Volunteer to teach English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).
5. Coach a sport you love to a youth team.
6. Good at sewing or knitting? Donate homemade blankets to people in need. Take a look at knit-a-square.com or Project Linus.
7. Got a big vocabulary and a little time to kill? Test your skill on freerice.com. They'll donate 10 grains of rice through the World Food Programme for every answer you get right.
8. Use social media. Spread the word about a worthy-cause through posts on your own account, or volunteer to set-up a social media account for a local non-profit.
9. Do you love to cook and bake? Invite your friends to participate, and hold a bake sale for your favorite charity.
10. Volunteer to give music lessons to people in your community.

Consider volunteering for a one-day event.

Volunteer organizations are generally small-staffed, so they need to recruit lots of volunteers for a huge event. This short-term community service idea is ideal for teens who can't make a weekly commitment, but still want to help out.

1. Volunteer to run/walk for an event, like Race for the Cure or Relay for Life.
2. Offer your help taking registrations, handing out water bottles, cleaning up after, or other administrative tasks for an event. It might not feel as glamorous, but this volunteer work is actually really helpful to non-profits!
3. Participate in a clean up of a beach, riverbed or local park.
4. Trick-or-treat for UNICEF. Think you're too old to collect candy, but still want to dress up? Collect money for a charitable organization like UNICEF, and no one will judge you.
5. Join the day of service: Martin Luther King Jr. day. There are tons of volunteer opportunities on the National Day of Service that don't occur any other time of the year.
6. Plant trees for Arbor Day.
7. Dance at a dance marathon. If you're up for a 24-hour dance party, it's a great way to raise funds.
8. Organize or participate in a sleep out. Experience the difficulties that homeless people face every day while raising money and awareness for homeless or at-risk youth. Covenant House Sleep Out provides online tools to help you plan.
9. Volunteer on Thanksgiving Day with your whole family. Serve a meal, in your home or in a local shelter, to someone who needs it.
10. Host a food packaging event at your school to help hungry children with nationwide organizations like Outreach.



Volunteer organizations love consistent, weekly teen volunteers.

When you make a commitment to being a volunteer on a recurring basis, you'll fulfill your community service requirement in no time. These types of posts often require training before you start. And, in addition to giving back, a long-term volunteer commitment is a great thing to put on a high school resume.

1. Volunteer with animals. Check out your local rescue league, ASPCA chapter, or animal shelter to learn how. Make sure to check out the volunteer requirements--some places require 18+ volunteers to actually work with the animals.
2. Become a mentor to a younger kid.
3. Volunteer at your local library.
4. Help special needs kids or adults through an organization like Best Buddies or The Friendship Circle.
5. Deliver food to those who are unable to leave their home. Contact your school or church to see if they have programs in place, like Meals on Wheels, or start one of your own.
6. Volunteer at a crisis line. Many organizations have specific programs for teens and their peers, where you'll be trained to listen actively as a teen crisis counselor.
7. Visit a retirement home and spend time doing fun activities with the elderly who lack immediate family.
8. Volunteer at a homeless shelter. There are multiple different volunteer options, such as preparing and serving food to people in need.
9. Offer to nanny or baby-sit for free to a family in need. You can contact a local women's shelter, department of social services, or church to volunteer your services.
10. Help an adult learn how to read.

Have a unique idea for giving back to the community?

Start your own non-profit! Here are our favorite ideas from teens who have created their own volunteer opportunity:

1. Jonathan Woods established the Under the Tree foundation at 12, when he realized that teens are often overlooked during toy drives.
2. Neha Gupta began her non-profit at the age of 9! Her organization, Empower Orphans, has helped more than 25,000 children globally.
3. Jordyn Schara founded WI P2D2 (Wisconsin Prescription Pill and Drug Disposal) when she turned 14, which works to dispose of drugs in an environmentally friendly and safe way.
4. A 10-year-old Zach Certner started his organization, SNAP, as an athletic program for children with special needs.
5. Shannon McNamara started SHARE, a non-profit that provides thousands of girls in Africa with books and school supplies, when she was 15.
6. Kalin Konrad started her annual backyard carnival for Alzheimer's when she was in 5th grade. Kalin originally began the event when her grandmother was diagnosed with the disease.
7. 13-year-old Claire Fraise wanted to give dogs who would be euthanized a second chance with her organization, Lucky Tails Animal Rescue.
8. Former anorexic teens Liana Rosenman and Kristina Saffran decided to start Project HEAL to raise money for teens who needed treatment for eating disorders.
9. LuLu Cerone founded LemonAID warriors at 10 years old to help other kids make social activism part of their social lives.
10. Wanting to end hunger, Katie Stagliano, now 14, started planting fruits and vegetables in her garden to help the hungry. Her organization, Katie's Krops, has helped feed thousands of people so far.