

12 Reasons Community Service Should Be Required in Schools



For most people, volunteering is an extra; something that's nice to do, but not absolutely necessary. Although plenty of students do community service, the number of students who volunteer is dropping at a rapid rate. Consider this: [college student volunteerism](#) peaked in 2004 at 31.2%, and in 2010, got down to 26.1%. Nearly three-fourths of students are missing out on an incredibly enriching experience that can benefit them not just personally, but professionally as well. Why is this such a big deal? Read on to understand 12 reasons why community service is so vital to student success, and why volunteering should be required in schools.

1. [SERVICE LEARNING HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH ACADEMIC GAIN:](#)

Students who participate in community service learning tend to do better in school. It's believed that community service is somewhat of a missing link for students, giving them the chance to apply what they've learned in the classroom to real human needs. Volunteering is a great way to follow up on and supplement subjects that have been covered in the classroom.

2. [STUDENTS OFTEN EXPERIENCE AN INCREASED SENSE OF SELF-EFFICACY:](#)

Students who do community service work learn that they can actually make a difference with what they do. This helps students better understand their own competence, leading to more self-confidence and a can-do attitude that can spread to their work and academic pursuits.

3. STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE ARE MORE LIKELY TO GROW UP TO BECOME VOTERS:

Youths who take part in volunteering activities become more involved in their communities, and as a result, tend to care more about what happens in those communities. Often, students who have participated in community service will grow up to become young voters and remain involved in their communities throughout their lives.

4. COMMUNITY SERVICE IS A GREAT PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILL BUILDER:

Students participating in community service are often faced with challenges and tough problems to tackle. By working through them as a volunteer, they learn how to better solve problems, and enjoy the satisfaction of overcoming a hurdle.

5. VOLUNTEERING HAS HEALTH BENEFITS:

Creating a lifelong habit of community service can help students become more healthy over the course of a lifetime. Research has shown that individuals who participate in volunteering have better physical and mental health than those who do not, especially among adults aged 65 or older.

6. VOLUNTEERING MAKES STUDENTS MORE ATTRACTIVE TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS:

Taking part in community service teaches students skills that are valuable to employers, like problem solving, teamwork, and the ability to follow instructions. Volunteering is especially valuable when it is related to a student's future career.

7. STUDENTS CAN ENJOY EXCELLENT NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES:

Community service opens students up to a wealth of networking opportunities, allowing them to build new relationships within their community as they contribute. Students can meet new people, work with new organizations, and strengthen their ties to the community.

8. STUDENTS FIND A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY AND PRIDE:

As students work within their community, they learn that they can be responsible for making great things happen. This helps to build a sense of responsibility in students, and a sense of pride when they see what they've done is actually helping others.

9. COMMUNITY SERVICE BRINGS LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM:

Volunteering allows students to take what they've learned and apply it beyond the classroom. This offers the opportunity for enrichment and a great way for them to see how concepts they've learned work in the real world.

10. VOLUNTEERING OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SKILL BUILDING:

Participating in community service allows students to build upon their existing skill sets. As students work in a real-life setting, they can use volunteering projects to explore and improve upon existing skills. Students can explore potential careers and find out what they need to develop in order to work in the field.

11. VOLUNTEERING MAY LEAD TO SCHOLARSHIPS:

Students who participate in volunteering opportunities may be able to find more scholarships than they would without such experience. As community service offers students a way to build their network, they'll be creating connections with more people who can write letters of recommendation, and often, certain community service organizations offer their own scholarship opportunities.

12. VOLUNTEERING IS ONE BIG TEAM BUILDING OPPORTUNITY:

As students work in community service programs, they'll learn how to better work in teams. Often, students will also learn to develop leadership skills as well. This is valuable not just for schoolwork, but for higher education, careers, and further community involvement.