

Why Community Service Work is Beneficial for Teenagers

July 8, 2014— Camille Heidebrecht

When I was a teenager, I remember helping the neighbor with her groceries or babysitting for the kids down the street a couple hours for free, but when I was growing up, I don't really remember an emphasis on high school community service. The buzz was largely about getting a job or multiple jobs to pay for the extras that I wanted, and my parents would not buy. I worked at Macy's, bussed tables at a local restaurant, and scooped ice cream in the summer. Plus, did a lot of babysitting. Of course, I believe most teens still look



for—and appreciate—the benefits of working in a part-time job but also truly understand the personal benefits of worthwhile community service work. It may be somewhat obvious, but worth noting to remind us all that teens *should* volunteer as much as they can throughout their teen years. ***Teenagers who volunteer gain benefits ranging from increased self-esteem to acquiring valuable job skills, and community service is also a critical component of a successful college application.***

The Personal Benefits of Teen Volunteering:

- Develops an increased sense of social responsibility—a global view of society and a heart for giving back and helping others.
- Exposes teens to diversity and multiculturalism. And, improves communication and critical thinking skills.
- Provides an opportunity to apply academic learning to real human needs by building relationships and social connectedness with peers, adults, and activists sharing a cause.

The College Admissions Benefits of Teen Volunteering:

- Helps students stand out among other applicants; admissions officers want well rounded co-eds who volunteer; service work is a leading decision-making factor after a student's GPA and SAT scores.
- Provides a topic of interest for college essays; emphasis on “why” and “how” a student has tackled an issue.

The Career Benefits of Teen Volunteering:

- Helps students find their passions and interests that may lead to a career choice they may have not considered.
- Helps develop lifelong interpersonal and communication skills.

By engaging in volunteer work, teens have an opportunity to learn experientially. They discover where their passions lie while undertaking feel good projects that truly make a difference. These experiences allow them to make more informed choices about college and career options as well as instilling a lifelong interest in giving back.

WATCH: “How to Change the World” | Kid President – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4z7gDsSKUmU>