

Volunteering

Musick and Wilson (2003) found that volunteering benefits psychological wellbeing in two ways: by improving psychological resources such as self esteem and self-efficacy and by improving social resources such as new social ties. Though this research mainly targeted the impact of volunteering on the wellbeing of the elderly, Kim and Morgul (2017) argue that volunteering will also benefit adolescents as they take on new social roles and combat emotional challenges and may also improve their civil engagement. In studying the long term effects of voluntary service among adolescents, they found that youth who participated in frequent voluntary service reported lower levels of depression and were more likely to volunteer as adults. Volunteer work also helped participants gain important social skills which allowed them to succeed in educational and occupational outcomes (Kim and Morgul, 2017).

Grade Level:	6th - 12th
Materials:	List of volunteer opportunities for students
Duration:	Varies
Implementation:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide students with a list of information regarding potential volunteer opportunities and organizations.2. Invite and encourage students to volunteer throughout the school year or term.3. Help students overcome barriers for volunteering, such as transportation, scheduling, contacting the organization, etc.4. Help students find an opportunity that fits their skills and interests.

Does it work?

A study involving one hundred 10th graders from an urban public high school in Canada analyzed the effects of volunteering on cardiovascular disease. All participants completed assessments about their cardiovascular health and psychosocial state prior to volunteering. These students then volunteered in an after school program at a nearby elementary school for at least one hour a week. Such programs included, "homework club, sports programs, science, cooking, cards and games, and arts and crafts" (Schreier, Schonert-Reichl & Chen, 2013, p.328). After 10 weeks, the intervention ended and students completed the same assessments 4 months post intervention. Results of this study indicate that, in addition to lowering negative affect, volunteering can, "change risk markers for cardiovascular disease, reducing systemic inflammation, total cholesterol level, and obesity" (Schreier, Schonert-Reichl & Chen, 2013, p.330). The greater a participant's reported increase in empathic concern, negative mood, and altruistic behavior, the greater reported cardiovascular benefits.

Hamilton and Fenzel (1988) studied 84 adolescents (age 11-17) who participated in different volunteer projects, either through community service organizations or in 4-H and afterschool programs. Following the completion of the program, participants expressed more positive attitudes regarding social responsibility and the desire to help those in need. Students also shared that the volunteer experiences allowed them to learn more about others in their communities. Nearly all participants reported that they enjoyed the activities and would volunteer again in the future (Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988).

References:

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ADDRESSING
WELLBEING
IN SCHOOLS

*An Educator's Practical Guide to Improving
Wellbeing*

SYDNI FAWSON, MEGAN BATES AND
DAVID BOREN



Fawson, S., Bates, M., & Boren, D. M. (n.d.). *Addressing Wellbeing In Schools*. EdTech Books. https://edtechbooks.org/addressing_wellbeing