

The Importance of Volunteerism

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Some people see volunteering as a chore and not an act of good faith. Others volunteer in order to receive something in return. True volunteerism is the willingness of people to work on behalf of others without the motivation of personal gain. Unfortunately, many people don't realize how much satisfaction they can gain from the experience of volunteering. Many people will never realize how it feels to make a difference in someone's life. Volunteerism is something very important to me, not for the praise I get in return, but for the difference I get to make in someone's life and the many life lessons to be learned from others.

Many people volunteer not to benefit themselves but to benefit others. I consider myself a true volunteer. The past few years I have volunteered at the local food bank, food pantries, The Wardrobe, and the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Columbia, Missouri. My high school softball team goes to the VA hospital every year to help out and visit patients. The joy I get when I enter some patients' rooms doesn't compare to any other feeling. To think, just stopping by and saying hello to a patient can make his or her day, week, or even month.

The real reason to volunteer is to change someone else's life, not one's own. If I were a sick patient in a veterans' hospital, wouldn't I like to visit with people other than my nurses and doctors? Yes, I sure would. Whether the patient is there for a little while or an extended stay, it would be a great feeling for someone to come and show that he or she cares. The smile on faces that come from a gesture as small as a hello is rewarding; it's moments like this that remind me of why I volunteer.

When our softball team visits the hospital every year to pass out simple gifts like toiletries and socks, it makes me realize how lucky I am to be healthy. Many of the patients have been injured or ended up in this hospital because they bravely fought for our country. Being a veteran alone is a huge act of bravery, and those men and women deserve our care and love. Through volunteering, I have come to realize many important life lessons. Even though I am the one who volunteers my time, these veterans are the ones that teach me valuable lessons and how to make the most out of what you have.

More people should volunteer and make time for others less fortunate. Yes, it takes time; yes, it might not be the most enjoyable thing to do in one's spare time, but consider helping out others who are less fortunate. I believe that people need to think less about themselves and more about everyone around them. Volunteers have made a large impact on their communities and for people around the world. Making a difference in the world is very important to me, and I would hope it is to everyone else as well.

"You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give." –Winston Churchill. Unfortunately, some people do not see volunteering in the same way that Winston Churchill did. Sadly, sometimes people see volunteering as a chore or a waste of time. Many believe that it is impossible for one individual to make a difference, but not me. I know the patients at the veterans' hospital enjoy the volunteers who give their time and brighten their lives. I volunteer because I know I am making a difference. I see volunteering as a chance to change someone's life forever.