

Contribute to Your Community

BOTH YOU AND OTHERS BENEFIT.

Gallup surveys in 130 countries show people with higher personal well-being are more likely to say they give time, money, or help to others in their communities. A community can be:

- Your neighborhood, city, county, state, or country
- Your place of worship
- Societies or groups you belong to

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

In general, volunteers reported higher levels of happiness, life-satisfaction, self-esteem, and a sense of control over life. Studies have shown a strong link between volunteering and health benefits. Two hours a week, about 100 hours a year, is the number that is linked to the following benefits:

- Less chronic pain
- Lower rates of heart disease
- Lower rates of depression, especially for volunteers age 60 and older
- Lower death rates

One study of alcoholics going through the Alcoholics Anonymous program found that those who helped others were nearly twice as likely to stay dry a year later. Their levels of depression were lower, too.

Besides health benefits, volunteering can help you learn job and social skills. You can also take part in activities that you enjoy and find rewarding.

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GIVE TO YOUR COMMUNITY.

Choose activities that you enjoy, that you are able to do, and that fit with the organization's needs.

Things to consider:

- Donate household goods and clothing.
- Volunteer at church and community functions.
- Deliver meals to people at home. Work in a soup kitchen or food bank.
- Start a community garden or help plant or harvest one.
- Help in building a house for a family in need through Habitat for Humanity.
- Be a support person for people with the same health problem you have.
- Mentor a child.
- Coach a children's team.
- Become a Big Brother or Big Sister.
- Volunteer for disaster relief services through local groups or the Red Cross.
- Donate your frequent flier miles to Make a Wish Foundation.
- Give money to a needy cause.



Action Step

Find out a variety of ways to help others in your community from Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America at www.nationalservice.gov.