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So You Want to Volunteer?

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This article uses data from several studies conducted over a multi-year period to explore the impact of volunteerism both on those who volunteer, and on those who are impacted by the services provide by volunteers.

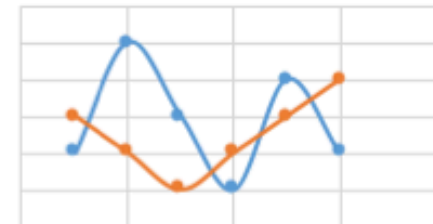


Figure 1. The volunteerism cycle

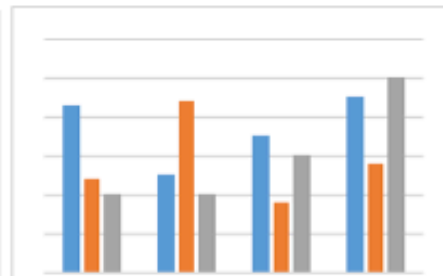


Figure 2. Ages and stages of volunteering

We have all heard general statements about the benefits of volunteering. You meet new people, gain confidence in yourself, develop new skills, are a part of a community, have fun, and gain the satisfaction of "making a difference." All of these describe benefits to the volunteer, but what is the real impact of volunteering? Who does it affect and how? When does