"You can use me as a last resort（选择）, and if nobody else volunteers, then I will do it." This was an actual reply from a parent after I put out a request for volunteers for my kids' lacrosse（长曲棍球）club.

I guess that there's probably some demanding work schedule, or social anxiety around stepping up to help for an unknown sport. She may just need a little persuading. So I try again and tug at the heartstrings. I mention the single parent with four kids running the show and I talk about the dad coaching a team that his kids aren’t even on… At this point the unwilling parent speaks up, "Alright. Yes, I’ll do it."

I’m secretly relieved because I know there’s real power in sharing volunteer responsibilities among many. The unwilling parent organizes the meal schedule, sends out emails, and collects money for end-of-season gifts. Somewhere along the way, the same parent ends up becoming an invaluable member of the team. The coach is able to focus on the kids while the other parents are relieved to be off the hook for another season. Handing out sliced oranges to bloodthirsty kids can be as exciting as watching your own kid score a goal.

Still, most of us volunteers breathe a sigh of relief when the season comes to a close. That relief is coupled with a deep understanding of why the same people keep coming back for more: Connecting to the community（社区）as you freely give your time, money, skills, or services provides a real joy. Volunteering just feels so good.

In that sense, I’m pretty sure volunteering is more of a selfish act than I’d freely like to admit. However, if others benefit in the process, and I get some reward too, does it really matter where my motivation lies?