

ROLE OF VOLUNTEERING IN JOB SEARCH.

Volunteering is about giving your time to a good cause. You don't get paid, but you do get the chance to use your talents, develop new skills, and experience the pleasure that comes from making a real difference to other people's lives, as well as your own.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT.

1. Gaining New Experiences and Insights;

Volunteering allows students to get involved with new things and develop technical, social, and academic skills that couldn't be learned in a classroom environment. Whether you're helping out at your local library or tutoring underprivileged kids, volunteering allows you to experience different environments and situations.

I know that a lot of us, as competitive, college-obsessed, sleep-deprived students, get lost in the quantity of volunteer work, but it's crucial to take a step back from the number games. Instead of boasting about how many hours you've piled up, why not talk about the things you've done? Volunteering brings out new interests, hobbies, and opinions; moreover, volunteering expands students' horizons.

2. Giving back to society and Helping Others;

Admit it: you're pretty lucky. You're working your way through your college education with intentions to move on to post-college education. You assumedly have a roof over your head, food to eat, and clothes to wear. Even if you don't have the "best" of those, you've got them. Volunteers create better environments for others; they create healthier communities, and they brighten lives. Jill, another rising senior, has been playing the piano for more than a decade and the flute for seven. She volunteers by performing in concerts for senior citizens. "We always talk with them after our concerts, and their stories are very humbling. They make me realize that I'm actually very lucky to know how to read and play music."

They always tell us how great we sound and how they wish that they spent the time in their youth to learn an instrument.” As a volunteer, she’s been able to give back to the community that fostered her musical talents.

3. Creating Connections and expanding your personal and professional networks;

No matter the age, building relationships with people is crucial. Not only does the volunteer work you do as a student show who you are as a person, but it reflects many positive character traits that potential employers and admissions officers want to see. Volunteering allows you to meet a wide variety of people from all sorts of walks of life.

Networking is an amazing benefit of volunteering, and students learn professional skills and have access to a breadth of knowledge from their co-volunteers. Jasmine, a fellow rising senior, volunteers at her local free clinic, where she’s the assistant administrative coordinator. “Some of the doctors and volunteers there have become my mentors, letting me shadow them or giving me general life advice about interacting with people and education. Interacting with new types of people, though extremely difficult, has developed my people skills.” Through her volunteer work, she’s not only become an integral part of the clinic itself, but she’s gained a lot of valuable insights, skills, and experiences.

People already working in your target field are great sources of information about job openings, affinity organizations, and people you should meet. And if you have a good experience volunteering, your supervisor might serve as a reference when you’re applying to jobs.

4. A Sense of Accomplishment;

Volunteering isn’t one of the most plush, easy, or glamorous of jobs, but it is one of the most beneficial and uplifting. While no monetary compensation is received, many will

tell you that their work and experiences gained as a volunteer were worth way more than any money they could have gotten from another line of work.

Think of it like this: volunteering is done on a person's own accord. It's taking some time out of your day and helping others. Volunteer work makes us feel good. It builds self-confidence and lifts up the spirits, "Students these days are getting caught up in the number of hours they store up doing something that they don't care about, and not only is the meaning behind the actions lost, but the charity becomes a chore. So yes, do it, but do what you want to do and because you want to do it." That couldn't be truer. It's crucial to have a strong connection to your volunteer work. Basically, you get out of it what you put into it.

5. Building Career Options;

Charity work gives students opportunities to test out a desired career path. Concurrently, it gives them an edge on their CV. Getting involved with an organization that shares similar ideals and interests is an important step for students. At a young and pretty inexperienced age, volunteering is an excellent gateway to the workforce.

By gaining new experiences and creating new connections, volunteers are able to better visualize themselves in that field and explore the daunting question: can I see myself doing this for life? And, even if the organization you do get involved with has nothing to do with your intended career path, it might end up surprising you. While I wasn't such a fan of my early high school summers of volunteering, I was still able to make the most out of my situation by learning how to solve problems, work more efficiently, and deal with unwanted environments. Even though I know that I don't want to follow a similar career path, I strengthened a lot of skills necessary for my own future career. So, take a chance by getting outside of the beloved comfort zone through volunteer work.

6. You learn new and transferable skills;

Volunteering will help you develop new job skills as well as apply current skills in new ways. For example, a mid-career professional who has worked in concert promotions could use her marketing skills to help an organization with their fundraising or other mission-based events. A college student accustomed to doing research for school assignments could volunteer to research an issue or demographic for a nonprofit.

7. It's an opportunity for career exploration;

Volunteering allows you to try on different organizations, roles, issues, etc., without job-hopping. Of course, volunteering isn't the same as being on staff, but it can expose you to the work of an organization in a deeper way than becoming a member, following it on Twitter, or even conducting an informational interview with an employee.

8. You build a track record of work for a specific cause;

Nonprofits value dedication to their issue area. By turning your values into action, you will demonstrate to your potential employer that you are committed to—and educated about—their issue of concern.

9. Hiring managers value volunteerism;

Having volunteer work on your CV can help you stand out. In our 2012 “Voices From the Sector” surveys of organizations and job seekers, almost 65 percent of nonprofit hiring managers said they consider volunteer experience to be at least “somewhat important” when selecting candidates. In our 2013 survey, 76% of respondents said nonprofit experience (working, volunteering, or interning) is important.

MORE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING.

Self-worth, great fun, friendships and job opportunities can all be part of getting involved with your community. Volunteering may be an outlet for your natural talents, a road-test for your new career, or simply a handy way to meet new friends. Your strong beliefs and values may also inspire you to volunteer.

Here are just a few of the goals that volunteering can help you achieve:

- ✓ A means of building self-esteem or confidence.
- ✓ A great way to learn or develop skills.
- ✓ A pathway to enhance work experience.
- ✓ Gain improved health and be active.
- ✓ A way to meet new people or broaden your social set.
- ✓ Make a difference in someone's life.
- ✓ A way of expressing gratitude for help you may have received in the past or 'giving back'.
- ✓ An opportunity to support a cause you feel strongly about.
- ✓ Feeling needed and valued is satisfying in itself.
- ✓ Make a difference within one's own community.