

Screen it! Treat it! Beat it!

VOLUNTEERS: A GIFT TO VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WITH CCRAN OUR COMMUNITY



Health Benefits of Volunteering

Did you know that when you volunteer, you are improving your life and maybe even your health? The benefits of volunteering are countless. But there are social, emotional, and physical benefits association with volunteering.

1. Ends Loneliness



The [Campaign to End Loneliness](#) says that close to 45% of people in the US and the UK admit to feeling lonely. On top of that, one in ten adults reports that [they have no close friends](#). Loneliness and social isolation are two of the most severe epidemics in the world today. Volunteering can certainly help to reverse this trend.

2. [Increases Socializing](#)



Socially, the benefits of volunteering show up quickly and have long-term effects. Social interaction improves mental and physical health, according to [Psychology Today](#). The benefits of consistent socializing include better brain function and lower risk for depression and anxiety. You also improve your immune system.

3. [Builds Bonds, Creates Friends](#)



Volunteering creates stronger bonds between friends, family, and coworkers. People build closer relationships, better connections, and [more powerful attachments](#) to people when they work together. If you feel the need for deeper connections with other people, try volunteering. You might live longer and be happier.

4. Develops Emotional Stability



Depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, low self-esteem, and even Obsessive Compulsive Disorder have all been helped by volunteering. When people with [OCD, PTSD, or anger management](#) issues volunteer, they feel more connected to others. They have an increased sense of purpose. Connection and meaning translate to decreased symptoms and improved social function.

5. Improves Self-Esteem



When teens or young adults volunteer, they develop [self-esteem](#), confidence, and feelings of self-worth. Imagine the benefits to volunteering today, where [both girls and boys struggle with self-esteem issues](#). Consider the advantages of volunteering for teens and young adults with eating disorders, social anxiety, and depression. Volunteering could be life-changing (and lifesaving).

6. Promotes Longevity



While everyone benefits from a little boost in physical health, long-term volunteers have longer lives, less disease, and better overall health. One report says that [people who volunteer over 100 hours a year](#) are some of the healthiest people in the U.S.

7. [Reduces Risk of Alzheimer's](#)



Alzheimer's disease has become a frightening possibility for millions of individuals globally. However, some research has shown that [people who volunteer may be at lower risk of dementia](#).

Studies from the Journal of Gerontology indicate that [social service improves elasticity in the brain](#). As volunteers age, they may be able to maintain the connections in their brains that often break down in Alzheimer's patients. Any social interaction can help delay or prevent Alzheimer's, and volunteering can be a fantastic way to do that.

8. [Leads to Graceful Aging](#)



Older volunteers benefit the most from getting out of the house, engaging with others, and moving physically. Purpose and collaboration result in mental health improvements and a better outlook on life.

[Studies indicate that senior volunteers experience the most physical benefit](#) from their service, possibly because being active and engaged leads to more happiness.

Older people who volunteer often feel younger and chronically ill people may have fewer symptoms and pain. Some research has even found that [volunteers may have less heart disease](#).

9. [Burns That Stubborn Belly Fat](#)



With more people in traditional desk jobs, we live a more sedentary lifestyle than ever before. The [risks associated](#) with less daily movement include back pain, disease, obesity, and more stress and mental illness. When we volunteer, even if it is not a physically demanding project, we still get up and get moving.

Walking around a cancer centre handing out pamphlets, meeting with patients, or overseeing a table top display all require that you do more than sitting at a desk or on a couch. You could even become more physically involved such as participating in a walk/run, bowling event or golf tournament. Volunteers live longer and are [more likely to take care of themselves in general](#), including getting vaccinations and keeping their weight under control. Volunteering at something that requires physical energy may be more motivating than just walking around the block.

Dr. Allan Luk and Dr. Stephen Post have conducted extensive research on the health benefits of volunteering. Their findings are summarized below, endorsing the benefits of volunteering on a regular benefit:



Health Benefits of VOLUNTEERING



Volunteering reduces the body's stress and also releases endorphins (the brain's natural painkillers)*

95% of individuals feel good after volunteering*

Regular volunteers were 10 times more likely to be in good health than people who didn't volunteer*



said volunteering makes them feel happier**



said volunteering makes them feel healthier**



said volunteering makes them feel less stress**



said volunteering helps them sleep better**

*Based on Dr. Allan Luks' research

**Based on Dr. Stephen Post's research in a survey about helping (an average of 100 hours/year)

http://allanluks.com/helpers_high

Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.

Helen Keller

CCCRAN
Colorectal Cancer
Resource &
Action Network



You can find out about our volunteer opportunities by calling our toll-free information line at **1 833 79 CCRAN (22726)** or email us at info@ccran.org and let us know how you wish to help.

Together, Anything is Possible!