

# Why Volunteer?

“You must put in if you expect to take out.” Ken Ray

Community Service/Volunteering is HUGE for scholarships and many colleges like to see it! “Scholarship committees want to award a scholarship to dedicated students who give of themselves to serve others.” They are looking for **documented** volunteer hours &/or self-initiated projects where you are making a difference in the lives of others. You do this by investing your time and talents in the community.

**Have you ever thought about where the scholarship money comes from?** It comes from people who have raised or donated it to give to someone they don't even know.....they just want the person to be deserving of it. They are paying it forward and want to know that the person receiving it is serving his community.

Many students don't know what they want to study in college or what career to pursue. They wind up dropping out of college because they don't have a purpose....they don't know why they are there other than their parents/teachers told them they should go.

Benefits of community service:

- You gain **Life Purpose** by getting involved & investing in the real needs of the people around you and you may find your calling to pursue a certain career. This purpose can then become a great story for your essay.
- You gain awareness to **talents, strengths, abilities, and feelings** you never knew they had.
- You gain **real world experiences** and **exposure to various careers** you might not have ever heard of.
- You gain empathy, to see life from a **different perspective**.
- It can bring **meaning & satisfaction** to your life because you know you are making a difference.
- It **builds character**...integrity, responsibility, commitment, organization....
- And what about the **networking opportunities** for future paying jobs??? If you make a good impression, and they know how hard you work without being paid....they might consider a paid position or they might recommend you to someone else for a job.

Scholarship committees are not just looking for a long list of different community service activities. They want **quality** over quantity. Quality in this aspect is defined as dedication, commitment or devotion to one or more particular community services and how the activity changed or affected you, and the impact it made on others.

Self-initiated projects rank highest with scholarship committees because they require the student to identify, organize and solve real-life problems. Examples of self-initiated projects:

- **Mikeysrun.com** – You can check the story of a 13-year-old who lost his hands and legs to a bacterial infection & has not only overcome his disability with prosthesis, but he is also helping Boston Marathon victims who have lost limbs by raising \$1 million.
- **Michael Eckert** – He is an 11 year old from Temple who raised \$30,000 in nine months to build a school in Uganda.

Here are some websites where you can get more ideas on volunteering.

[www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)

[www.unitedway.org](http://www.unitedway.org)

[www.teenlife.com](http://www.teenlife.com)

[www.DoSomething.org](http://www.DoSomething.org)

[www.CreatetheGood.org](http://www.CreatetheGood.org)

[www.GenerationOn.org](http://www.GenerationOn.org)

[www.volunteer.gov](http://www.volunteer.gov)

Please don't think that community service ends after high school. Believe it or not, there are scholarships for college going students who also want to see community service. As I mentioned earlier, these experiences provide great networking opportunities for jobs.

You should concentrate on something that is related to your interests and the career you want. This way you can decide if it is something you really want to do the rest of your life or you might actually find something else in that field you want to do.

### Community Service Ideas

- Church
- Nursing home
- Day care center
- Recreational center
- Sports complex
- School
- Summer camp program
- Animal shelter
- Homeless shelter
- Local hospital/clinic
- Library
- Recycling
- Teen Court
- Mentoring
- Neighborhood cleanups
- Coaching youth teams
- Tutoring
- Reading to children
- United Way
- Salvation Army
- Red Cross
- Food Bank
- Habitat for Humanity
- Special Olympics
- Meals on Wheels
- Big Brother/Sister
- Adopt a Grandparent
- Girls & Boys Club
- Senior Citizen Center
- AmeriCorps
- Points of Light