

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions From Parents About Youth Volunteerism

Q How can I support my child's volunteer efforts?

- A Reminders.** Write the date and time of your child's volunteer event(s) on the family calendar or put a reminder on the fridge. Remind your child a day or so ahead of the event.
- A Preparation.** Make sure your child is prepared with the proper clothing (think about the conditions he will be working in), equipment (if needed), snacks or a sack lunch (if requested), and permission forms.
- A Tracking Hours.** Help your child keep track of hours spent volunteering and provide this information to the program if requested. Programs use these records to apply for additional funds and track progress towards awards for your child.
- A Reflection.** Ask your child how the project went and what she liked about it, what she would do differently the next time, and how she might use what she learned in the future.
- A Volunteer Together.** Volunteer with your child.

Q How does volunteerism benefit my child?

- A** Provides a chance to make a difference and give back to the community
- A** Teaches responsibility and leadership
- A** Builds job and career skills
- A** Helps gain experience to list on college applications and resumes
- A** Completes required service hours for school
- A** Provides a chance to earn the Presidential Volunteer Service Award

Research also indicates strong connections between those who volunteer at a young age and those who continue to serve throughout their lives. Other research shows:

- A** Children who are taught the values of caring for others are less likely to be involved in negative behavior (Phalen, 2003)
- A** Childhood experiences have a valuable shaping force on a lifelong sense of purpose (Lewis, 2003)
- A** The growing trend of children serving as volunteers contributes to creating "volunteering as a norm" for both children and adults (Benson & Roehlkepartain, 1993)

Q How can I become more involved?**A** Volunteer as a family

- A group of people can get more done than just one person alone
- Helping out with a family member can ease the apprehension associated with starting a new and unfamiliar project
- Family volunteering is a concrete way to share ideas about compassion and giving with your family
- Young people who volunteer with their families become adults who volunteer with their families
- Volunteering with your family means quality time spent with each other as well as a service to others

(From idealist.org)

A **Make a donation** to support your child's volunteer project or the agency coordinating the project(s). Donations can take many forms besides cash, like your time, goods, or services

A **Recruit a friend**, family member, or co-worker to join your family at your next volunteer event
