

LEADER READERS

Volunteerism

A volunteer is...

A person who freely gives of his or her time and talent to a worthwhile cause.

Someone who believes that people can make a difference and is willing to prove it.

Why do organizations need volunteers? For people power.

- **To enrich programs**- volunteers help organizations carry out their missions and help to expand the programming offered by the agency
- **To involve the community**- volunteers reach out and identify the needs of their communities
- **To aid staff members**- volunteers allow the agency staff members to best utilize their time and talents

How do volunteers help their communities? Volunteers serve a variety of needs.

- **Meeting human needs**- deliver services to people and helping citizens find services. Ex: SPAN (Services Program for Aging Needs)- delivering meals to homebound people
- **Promote awareness**- inform community members about a variety of services available to them. Ex: AIDS Services of North Texas
- **Solve problems**- create new programs, help meet the needs of community members. Ex: Friends of the Family- domestic violence shelter- create a brochure for their agency

How do volunteers help themselves?

- **Develop creativity**- special skills that you can use to benefit an organization
- **Meet new people**- extend network of acquaintances and friends
- **Explore new careers**- learn skills transferable to the job market
- **Make a difference**- contribute to society and better people's lives
- **Grow personally**- learn new skills and gain new insight

Leader Readers are a service of the Center for Student Development (CSD), created to support student organization success at Texas Woman's University. For more information, please contact the CSD at (940) 898-3626 or visit us on the first floor of the Student Center, 116.

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The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) conducts an annual survey of entering college freshmen with follow up questionnaires later in the academic year.

This survey found that community service involvement affects many areas of a student's development including:

- **Civic responsibility**- more of a commitment to serving their communities
- **Academic development**- service participants get higher grades and are more likely to have strong relationships with faculty members.
- **Life skills**- students who participate in service are more likely to understand community problems, to know about and accept people of other races and cultures, to have stronger interpersonal skills, to have a better understanding of social problems, to have the ability to work cooperatively, to have skills in conflict resolution, and to have strong critical thinking skills.
- **Real world opportunities**- leadership skills, relevance of the coursework to their everyday lives, and preparation for a future career.

Participation in service directly affects the long-term development of the student.

- **Lifelong commitment** to volunteerism and community activism
- Promotion of **racial understanding**
- Develop a **meaningful philosophy** on life
- Increase the likelihood of attending **graduate school** and obtaining a higher degree

Reflection

It is important to think and talk about what you've experienced through your community service experience. Consider the following model for independent or group reflection.

What? What did I do? What did I see? Who was at the site? What kind of work did I participate in?

So What? What does it mean to my career? How does the social issue affect me? How does it affect my community?

Now What? What am I going to do about the issue? What changes will I make in my daily life? What other projects or events will I participate in?

"It is amazing what we learn from those who apparently have nothing to teach."

Zig Ziegler

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