

Serving each other in
today's society



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Community Service: Serving Each Other in Today's Society

There are many young adults out there who lack self-esteem, confidence, a sense of

accomplishment or purpose, or simply a reason to get away from TV, computers, and video

games. They often don't understand the value of community and the importance of team work.

Most teens also don't realize how much lending a helping hand to others can also benefit them.

What could be done to teach teens the importance of helping others and build a sense of self-

confidence and worth? Community service is quick to remind anyone the importance of offering

help, working as a team and simply getting outside and active. These teens shouldn't be assigned

to just anything. All of the participants in community service should have a voice in the activities

in which they are participating. Otherwise, it could make the whole experience a miserable one

and do just the opposite of what it is intended to do. There is a lot of stigma around mandatory

community service, but with flexible community service programs, positive promotion, and

choices, teens will be put on the right track.

A lot of stigma surrounds mandatory community service. Most people see it only as a

means of corrective punishment. There are many people who think community service should be

left to prisoners, and not to the youth of today. This poor attitude needs to be reversed by

education. Many teens believe what they hear from their parents, teachers, and mentors. With

this poor attitude on the matter, it's no wonder teens may despise the idea of serving in the

community. Proper education and promotion is the key to a successful program. For example,

teens should see the results of community service. They should be able to see workers having a

good time and enjoying what they do. Young adults should also see that they would benefit from

serving in the community. This could all be done by providing introductory programs, attractive

<https://assignbuster.com/serving-each-other-in-todays-society/>

pamphlets, peer communication, and so on. Once teens are educated about community services

and its benefits, the stigma will fade and they will be more willing to participate.

It's important to remember the power of choice. There are numerous activities the teens

could participate in. Blood drives, children activity clubs, clean-ups, and mentoring are just a few

of the many things to choose from in community service. One who has a choice in what he or she

does as an extra activity will be happier while participating. Delgado states, "[...] a summary of

the literature on youth activities, found that youth benefit the most when they have an

opportunity to actively plan community-service projects that contribute to the welfare of

others[...]".(127) When community service workers plan activities, a sense of ownership is built.

Since the ideas were their own, the activity belongs to the workers and they will likely work

much harder than they would if they were forced into the activity. Choosing an activity is just as

powerful as planning one. The ability to choose an activity will also encourage teens to

participate in multiple activities, which will broaden their horizons and abilities.

A lot of young people lack a good sense of self-esteem. It can be caused by criticism, the

media, the lack of activity, and so on. Many times all a teen needs to boost his or her self esteem

is a sense of purpose and direction. Studies have shown that productive individuals generally

have a higher self-esteem. (Joseph 1) Using community service as a way for teens to stay active

is a great way for them to see the fruits of their efforts. When young adults see how much the

work they are putting forth really matters, it will boost their confidence. For example, if a small

town had grass growing in the sidewalk, trash lying about, and dirt everywhere, a group of teens

could plan a cleaning project. Such a project would beautify the town and would likely give the

group a sense of pride. The town would benefit by the work and maybe even be educated by the

teens actions. If there were a huge turn-around in appearance, then perhaps the rest of the

townspeople would help maintain the new condition of the small town. This would boost morale

even higher for the group and make all the work seem very worthwhile.

Another good point to mention is the fact teens would be busy. A lot of teens spend a ton

of time in from of their computers, televisions, or video games systems. A study conducted in

2003 concluded that an alarming 34% of teens were clinically obese. (Nichols and Good 169)

The sedentary lifestyle most Americans have adopted is devastating to overall well-being. When

teens are over-weight, they suffer in numerous ways. They are persecuted by their peers, which

results in a low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety. They lack the energy or drive to pursue an

<https://assignbuster.com/serving-each-other-in-todays-society/>

activity because they lack physical fitness. Any kind of activity is good for someone's health. If

teens get actively involved in community service, they will be on the go. If teens get moving and

realize how out of shape they are, then it may motivate them to do something about it. This will

promote exercise and proper diet, thus resulting in a healthier lifestyle.

Schools have been trying to incorporate teamwork into the classrooms, but it often

doesn't work out as well as hoped. There have been numerous studies conducted on the matter

and only a small portion of teamwork exercises have worked in schools.

(Thomas 1) When a

teamwork activity is academically based, it is difficult to pursue and most times it is difficult to

see any results. Actual physical labor shows more of an effect of one's efforts. Therefore, some

type of community service where one is physically involved in an activity with a group of people

would teach teens how positive teamwork is. Then, they would later incorporate the idea into

<https://assignbuster.com/serving-each-other-in-todays-society/>

other activities, thus making them well rounded and willing to work with others.

There are many young adults who leave high school and have no idea what the real world

is all about. Most teenagers only know a life where everything is structured, and there is no

question about what step to take next. Teens receive a schedule with their classes, books, a time

for lunch period, and often their extra activities are planned for them.

Community service would

be a great place for teens to learn the importance of self-reliance. When a teen is provided a

choice in what he or she may do as an activity, this would be the first step in that lesson. The

second would be finding a way to transport themselves to the place of work.

Then, they would

have to make sure they are on time. Decision making, responsibility and initiative all fit into the

lesson of self-reliance and define some of the basic things they would go through in adulthood.

As it has already been said, with self-reliance comes a sense of responsibility. Anyone

participating in community service is still held to a standard. These standards typically aren't as

high standards in a paid environment; however, there is still something to be gained. The

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development states, "[...] by age 15, millions of young people

risk reaching adulthood unable to assume the responsibilities of informed, active citizenship in a

pluralistic society. (Radest 30) This same report also says, " Early adolescence offers a superb

opportunity to learn values, skills, and a sense of social responsibility". (30)

With teens being

held to a standard, they must assume responsibility for their successes and failures. This is

something everyone goes through as an adult. It is better to learn these lessons earlier in life so

teens can make their mistakes, learn from them, and grow from the entire experience.

Resilience is a lesson which shouldn't be taken lightly and should be learned early in life.

Adults often rush to the rescue when problems arise, not allowing young people to think it

through and find a solution on their own. A problem arises and some teens may panic, have no

idea what to do, or stand around waiting for someone else to take care of it.

While going through

community service, teens will likely meet with a few setbacks and will need to take action. Since

these setbacks would likely only be minor, it would be a great place to start learning resilience.

Resilient children are proactive rather than reactive and have a good sense of " coherence". That

is to say they understand things happen in life but we still have some control over it all. (Joseph

29) Adults have to practice resilience a lot through life, so learning this early will help teens

become well rounded adults.

Since community service is a team effort, teens will be able to build professional social

<https://assignbuster.com/serving-each-other-in-todays-society/>

skills. Social skills are built throughout childhood, but in a more professional setting where the

use of language is different, these skills will be refined. These teens would be working with

adults who know how to properly communicate in order to achieve a goal. If young adults

observe the behaviors of the adults around them, take note of what happened, and try their best to

act the same, they would begin building the stepping stones to success.

They would learn a range

of things from avoiding confrontation and generating solutions, to active and proper listening

skills. (Joseph 255) All of these are needed in a professional atmosphere and will help them

throughout college and the working environment.

The benefits teens would receive from community service experience have been

thoroughly discussed thus far, but not how the community would benefit. It all, of course,

depends on the activities the teens participate in. If there were a community clean-up, then a

<https://assignbuster.com/serving-each-other-in-todays-society/>

town would be beautified. If the teens helped deliver groceries to those who can't get around,

then people wouldn't have to go hungry or worry about how to get their food. When teens

mentor younger kids, the children would have the benefit of someone relatively close to their age

teaching them. The people living in these communities and seeing the difference teens are

making with all of their work may adopt a more volunteer attitude. The ways a community

benefits from those who serve are endless, and shouldn't be forgotten.

There are so many things a young adult can take from community service that will benefit

him or her immediately, as well as in the future. Teens can build a healthy self-esteem by gaining

a sense of purpose and seeing how much of a difference they can make in the world. They could

come to understand the importance of living a healthier life. Young adults would gain the ability

to think through problems, work with others as a team, and make important decisions.

<https://assignbuster.com/serving-each-other-in-todays-society/>

Professional conduct and language will be learned, which will help them in their work

endeavors. They will also learn resilience and self-reliance, which will help them bounce back

quickly from setbacks and take a more proactive approach to life. There is a quote from Andrew

Shue that says, " Community service has taught me all kinds of skills and increased my

confidence. You go out there and think on your feet, work with others and create something from

nothing. That's what life's all about." (Shue brainyquotes. com) This is a great way to sum up

what teens would gain and what community service is about. It's about helping others, but also

helping yourself in the process. Once teens get out there and start working in our communities,

they will see what a difference they can make. They would remember these lessons through their

lives and likely continue to act in a positive way because of what they learned. This entire

process could help change the way people behave now and in the future in a very positive way.

When everyone gives just a little, it can go a long way and there has to be a beginning

somewhere. Why not make that beginning start with today youth and expand into the generations

to come?

Works Cited

Melvin Delgado, *New Frontiers for Youth Development in the Twenty-First Century: Revitalizing & Broadening Youth Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002) 127

Joanne M. Joseph, *The Resilient Child: Preparing Today's Youth for Tomorrow's World* (New York: Insight Books, 1994) 1, 29, 255

Sharon L. Nichols, and Thomas L. Good, *America's Teenagers-Myths and Realities: Media Images, Schooling, and the Social Costs of Careless Indifference* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004) 169

Howard B. Radest, *Community Service: Encounter with Strangers* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1993) , 30

Andrew Shue, n. p., *Community Service*, brainyquotes. com, n. d., August 20, 2009, <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/andrewshue214132.html>

Gary Thomas, *Effective Classroom Teamwork: Support or Intrusion?* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 1