

Synthesis essay:
mandatory
community service
essay sample



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Defining community service is a simple task. It is voluntary work intended to help people in a particular area. Community service provides help to those in need, and will foster a sense of charity to participants. Everyone will agree that community service is an admirable doing, but should it be required to graduate from high school? Many schools are beginning to require a certain amount of hours of volunteering to graduate from high school, and I strongly believe they should reconsider. Community service should be an act based upon good will and kindness, rather than force. Community service should not be mandatory for graduation because it would ruin the spirit of volunteering by making it an obligation and because it is self-contradicting.

The spirit of volunteering would be diminished if community service was mandated by schools. "To be praiseworthy, an act must be voluntary." (Source B) Aristotle's quote is projecting that only voluntary acts will be merited. If schools force kids to do community service, kids will lose the self-satisfaction of volunteering because they will only be doing it based on obligations rather than personal grace. The Peace Corps defines community service by saying, "Service... is about accomplishment for ourselves, about reaching out, one person to another, about all our choices gathered together as a country to reach across all our divides." (Source G) One of the main components of community service is about accomplishment for ourselves.

When schools mandate community service for graduation, all of the self-accomplishment acquired from volunteering is lost. Even the people you help will not praise you, because they will know you only volunteered because it was an obligation. On the flip-side, if you volunteer out of sheer will and

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kindness, you will be recognized and glorified. President William Clinton states that volunteers “ won the American Revolution” and that volunteers “ helped get women the right to vote” and volunteers “ helped to effect the civil rights revolution.” (Source A) These volunteers helped our country in numerous aspects. Plus, these volunteers were doing their service from the goodness of their hearts, rather than forced by their superiors. One of the main factors of community service is the feeling of self-accomplishment. If schools mandate community service for graduation, the entire essence of self-accomplishment is casted away.

Mandatory community service simply contradicts itself. Volunteering should never be mandated because it ruins its entire moralistic value. Only 15% of upperclassmen disagree that required volunteer work is a self-contradiction and student should only volunteer if they truly want to do so. (Source E) This means that a vast 85% of young adults rightfully feel that community service should not be mandatory. Community service is an act of voluntary kindness, if it is mandated it would defeat the purpose.

Also, 83% of the same group of students admit that they have engaged in voluntary service out of school. (Source E) If almost all students already engage in volunteering outside of school, why should schools mandate it? “ Is it truly ‘ service’ if a child is forced to put hours of his or her free time into...?” (Source F) The answer is no. Individuals that are truly dedicated to giving back to their community will give do so. If an individual does not want to spend their free time doing community service then they shouldn’t have to. The board of education should not mandate student and their hours of

community service because mandatory community service is a complete contradiction.

Giving back to the community is something that all students should do.

When asked if students gained from their voluntary experience, 72% said yes. (Source E) It is without doubt true that community service only brings good to our society, but the feeling of self-accomplishment from volunteering would be drastically lessened if it was mandated by schools.