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Volunteering: Feeling Good When Doing Good

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Volunteering: an individual or group provides services for no financial gain "to benefit another person, group or organization". Volunteering is often intended to promote goodness or to improve the quality of life (Wikipedia). Volunteering offers vital help to people in need, the community, and organizations.

An older adult volunteer can offer time, expertise, and talent in many areas. The key is to match one's strengths and talents to the right volunteer opportunity. Once this is done, volunteering can offer many

benefits to one's mental and physical health. It starts with the "Helper's High", also known as the "Happiness Effect", it's the "feel-good sense" one gets for helping out. Volunteering may help increase happiness and provide a sense of purpose. It may offer the opportunity to learn new skills and build self-confidence.

Volunteering may help people to stay physically and mentally active. "Older volunteers experience greater increases in life satisfaction and greater positive changes in their perceived health as a result of volunteering" (Mayo Clinic Health System). Volunteering may help to increase physical activity like walking and help ease one to complete everyday tasks. Many resources show that being a volunteer may help to lessen depression, stress, and anxiety by enhancing and improving a person's mood. Volunteering can keep one physically active and mentally engaged.

Volunteering is a wonderful way to get involved in the local community. Many older individuals with developmental disabilities have not been engaged within their community. Volunteering can allow the person to connect to their community and make new friends and build relationships.

Volunteering can be a fun way to explore and pursue one's interests. It can help to renew creativity and motivation and make a person's life richer. If one is interested in volunteering, look at one's interests, likes, and dislikes as guides to the best volunteer opportunity. For example,

do you prefer to work alone or with others? Do you want to help with people or animals. How much time do you have to commit to the position? Possible locations can be area hospitals, senior centers, Community Theater, museums and places of worship, to name a few. Remember to volunteer the amount of time and the type of work that feels comfortable. Volunteering should be an enjoyable experience.

"As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands - one for helping yourself, the other for helping others." - Audrey Hepburn

ORGANIZATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

RSVP Program (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program)

The RSVP program is part of the Corporation for National and Community Service and is sponsored by the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc. If you are 55 years or older and want to volunteer, this program may be of interest. The RSVP program provides pre-service orientation, plus training and education for the organization served.

Some possible volunteer opportunities include Delivering Meals, the Caregiver Volunteer Respite Program and the SAFE program (Senior Advocates for Fire Education). The respite program allows a weekly visit from the volunteering to give the caregiver a break from taking care of an aging family member. Volunteers with the SAFE program

conduct fire education to older adults in the community after being trained by the local fire department.

To learn more about this program call the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio, Inc.

Resources

www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-living/volunteering-and-its-surprising-benefits

<http://createthegood.org/articles/volunteeringhealth>

<https://mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health>

www.areaofficeonaging.com/programs

www.areaofficeonaging.com/volunteer

<http://toledopolice.com/24-tpd/135resp>

R.S.V.P. Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol Program

The Toledo Police Department and the Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio formed a partnership to develop the Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol Program (R.S.V.P.) in September of 2000.

The mission of this program is to:

- Regularly check in on the safety and well-being of clients.
- Determine if there is a need to make a follow-up referral to appropriate agency to improve the client's quality of life.
- Assist in providing any immediate help needed, within program guidelines, during actual visitation.
- Provide companionship and some conversation, which may include a trip down memory lane.

Volunteers and clients develop a friendship by getting to know each other during visits.

The requirements to become a Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol Program volunteer are:

- Must be age 55 or older
- Possess a valid driver's / vehicle operator's license
- Possess a high school diploma or GED
- Successfully complete a background investigation
- Be physically able to perform the duties
- Volunteer a minimum of 12 hours a month
- Successfully complete R.S.V.P. training program
- Be familiar with the City of Toledo, and be able to read a map.

If interested in becoming a Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol Program

volunteer, contact the Toledo Police Department R.S.V.P. Office at 419-936-3720.



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