



Department of
Education

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New York City Mentoring Program Community Service Opportunities

Would you like to work with kids? Improve your neighborhood park? Paint a school? Feed the homeless? Explore a career, an interest, a different world? Then you should consider volunteering!

Community service is a great mentor-mentee activity as well as something either of you might like to get involved in for an extended period of time. Here are a few suggestions for organizations that you may consider researching or contacting to see if their volunteer opportunities fit your interests and needs.

I. Web sites with a range of volunteer opportunities and organizations that will help you find the right volunteer opportunity for you:

- The Mayor’s Volunteer Center of New York City, “NYC Service”: This site provides a list of volunteer opportunities at organizations in all five boroughs. You can search by borough and area of interest. Opportunities have included: Library Computer Coach, Tutor, Graffiti Clean Up, Assistant at Senior Center, and Office Child Care. www.nycservice.org/message.php
- Hearts and Minds: Check under “Volunteer with Us” for organizations responding to specific issues, such as homelessness and the environment. www.heartsandminds.org
- Idealist: This is a great site to find volunteer opportunities. The Volunteer section of www.idealists.org includes some opportunities that mentors and mentees can do together. For students, check out the Kids & Teens section at www.idealists.org/kt/index.html for a great database of volunteer opportunities with not-for-profit organizations. Just enter your zipcode to find opportunities. The database lists many opportunities in New York.
- New York Cares: For those aged 18 and up only. Attend a 1-hour orientation and then sign up for either ongoing or one-time projects. 212-228-5000. www.nycares.org

II. Organizations that offer volunteer opportunities for both high school students and adults:

- Coalition for the Homeless: Help distribute food, clothing, and blankets through the Grand Central Food Program. 212-776-2090 or 212-776-2000. www.coalitionforthehomeless.org
- New York City Coalition Against Hunger: High school students (and adults) can volunteer in this organization’s network of food pantries and soup kitchens. 212-825-0028 ext. 221 or ext. 207. www.nyccah.org
- Partnerships for Parks: Volunteer in parks and community gardens with local groups, care for street trees, celebrate “It’s My Park!” Day, or plan a meaningful project in a New York City park for your group. www.partnershipforparks.org/get_involved/volunteer/index.html

- Publicolor: An after-school program for youth who learn leadership and teamwork skills while transforming school environments by painting them new colors. Adult volunteers may join in on afternoons or weekends. 212-213-6121. www.publicolor.org

III. Individual opportunities for youth (but this is just the beginning—don't be afraid to research your interests on-line and contact organizations that interest you to inquire about volunteer opportunities!):

- American Red Cross: Youth aged 14-18 can volunteer with the American Red Cross of Greater New York by becoming a part of its Youth Services Program. Develop your leadership skills as a project leader, coordinator, or executive board member and plan and organize youth puppet shows, toy drives, etc. 212-875-2241. www.nyredcross.org/youthgroup
- The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals: Volunteers must be at least 16 years old and commit to eight hours per month for six months. Call 212-876-7700 to reserve your spot at an orientation. Look on web site under 'ASPCA NYC' and then 'About NYC' for volunteer information. www.aspca.org
- Citymeals-on-Wheels: Students can volunteer to respond to letters from seniors or create birthday and season's greetings cards. 212-687-1234. www.citymeals.org
- YMCA: Check out the volunteer page in the 'Support Your YMCA' section of www.ymcanyc.org. If you would like to volunteer, contact the YMCA Branch nearest you.
- The Children's Aid Society: For those aged 18 and up only. Every individual must attend a 60-minute information session. Check out www.childrensaidsociety.org/volunteer to see if anything interests you, then contact the Office of Volunteer Services at 212-901-1954 or 212-949-4800 for more information.
- Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY): Go to www.vnsny.org and check out the 'Volunteers' page in the 'Community' section. For one VNSNY volunteer project, Chinese-speaking high school students translate for elderly Chinese members during classes at the Chinatown Community Center. To find out more about how you can become a volunteer, please contact the VNSNY Office of Volunteer Services at 212-609-1572 or 212-609-1570.
- The 92nd Street Y: Check out the Teen Community Service and Leadership Program by searching in the Teens section of the 92nd Street Y's web site: www.92y.org. Volunteer opportunities exist at a variety of locations, including hospitals, soup kitchens, and after-school programs. You may participate during the week (multiple sessions per semester) or join other teens for One-shot Programs, community service projects that take place one weekend day per month. After identifying an opportunity that interests you, call 212-415-5624 to find out how to apply.