

# Volunteers Make a Difference

## Student Guide

*"Volunteerism is an act of heroism on a grand scale. And it matters profoundly. It does more than help people beat the odds; it changes the odds."*

-President Bill Clinton

In this module you will explore volunteerism, what President Bill Clinton declares as acts of heroism. Volunteerism is an altruistic endeavor, that is, an action taken for the benefit of others without regard for financial gain, compensation or reward. Volunteerism is selflessness.

You probably know people whose altruism is demonstrated through the volunteering they do. Some of them may be famous like Mother Teresa, who dedicated her life to helping impoverished people in India.

Perhaps you know of a professional athlete who visits hospitals to brighten the day of critically ill children. Or maybe a family member, friend, or neighbor who takes meals to senior citizens who are housebound. Volunteerism takes a wide variety of forms.

In this module, you will learn about everyday people from around the country who make significant contributions to their community. Though we may not be aware of their services, they are heroes nonetheless. As you complete the learning activities begin to think about what YOU can do to make a difference in your community.



## Volunteerism Makes a Difference for your Future



### Lesson 1: Introduction to volunteerism

#### Thinking Deeply

- Read the quotes below related to volunteerism. What concept or belief is expressed by the author?
- Put the author's message into your own words.
- Compare your answers with a partner.
- Now, together with your partner, read the quotes again and determine a meaning that all the quotes share. Write that meaning on the line below the chart.
- Take turns sharing your responses with other partner pairs sitting near you.

Quote	Author's Concept or Belief	In My Own Words
<i>"The ocean is made of drops"</i> -Mother Teresa		
<i>"Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself"</i> -Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy		
<i>"The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit."</i> -Nelson Henderson		
<i>"Think that day lost whose descending sun, views from thy hand no noble action done."</i> -Joseph Joubert		
<i>I wondered why somebody didn't do something. Then I realized, I am somebody.</i> -Author unknown		

The shared meaning of all of the quotes is:

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## Volunteerism Makes a Difference

### Lesson 1: Introduction to volunteerism

#### Activity One: Make a prediction

Take a look at the statements below.

Based on your personal experience and knowledge decide whether you think each statement is true or false.

Men volunteer more than women in the United States. ☐ True ☐ False

Volunteers are most likely to volunteer for educational or youth service organizations. ☐ True ☐ False

Collecting, preparing, distributing, or serving food are the activities volunteers perform most often. ☐ True ☐ False

More than 60 million people volunteered in the U.S. last year. ☐ True ☐ False

Teen volunteers contribute about \$35 million a year to the U.S. economy through their voluntary efforts. ☐ True ☐ False

Retired people are more likely to volunteer than younger adults. ☐ True ☐ False

Now, Check Your Prediction!

#### Volunteerism is alive and well in the United States!

Take a look at the statistics on volunteerism compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics for September 2011-2012.

The statistics for teens are from Find the Data (<http://volunteer-statistics.findthedata.org/>) and the University of Nebraska, Lincoln Extension, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

64.5 million	Number of people who volunteered
23.2 percent	Volunteer rate for men
29.5 percent	Volunteer rate for women
27.4 percent	Volunteer rate for teens (16-19 year olds)
50 hours	Median number of hours spent volunteering
42.1 percent	Began volunteering on their own initiative
41.6 percent	Began volunteering after being asked by someone
44.2 percent	Rate of volunteerism in Utah (state with highest rate)
Religious organizations	Organizations volunteers worked for the most
35-44 year olds	Age group most likely to volunteer
Food preparation/distribution	Most frequently performed volunteer activity
2.5 billion	Number of hours that teen volunteers contribute annually
\$35 billion	Amount teen volunteers contribute to US economy annually

NOTE: The Bureau of Labor and Statistics defines a volunteer as someone who does unpaid work through or for an organization.

**Think about what would happen to the numbers if individual volunteer efforts could be counted!**

1. Go to <http://volunteer-statistics.findthedata.org/> Record the volunteer rates in your state.

2. What other information did you learn from the site about volunteerism in your state?

3. Find at least three other websites with statistics on volunteerism. Do they report the same type of data? Do they have the same numbers as the Bureau of Labor and Statistics? What may account for the differences?

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## Volunteerism Makes a Difference for your Future

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### Lesson 1: Introduction to volunteerism

#### Activity Two: Kevin Capuno is making a difference

Using a dictionary (either online or in print) find and record the definitions of the words below. If a dictionary is not available, discuss the words as a class to come to agreement on a definition.

Altruism: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Responsibility: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteerism: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Volunteerism is one way to demonstrate social responsibility. View the YouTube video, *Kevin Capuno is Making a Difference*. As you do specific statements he makes that demonstrate his sense of social responsibility and altruism, in the space below.

2. In your group create a visual representation that links volunteerism, altruism, and social responsibility together. Each person in your group will have a different color marker. When your image is completed you should see equal amounts of each color showing that each individual person contributed equally.

3. Your teacher will call on someone in each group to share aloud. Be ready!

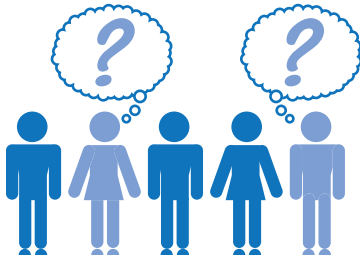
#### At Home

- As an ongoing homework assignment gather articles, flyers, Internet information or other print material concerning community needs and volunteer opportunities. Keep a running list of radio announcements, TV ads, and bumper stickers you hear and see about volunteering.
- You will need the material in Lesson 3.

## Volunteerism Makes a Difference

### Lesson 2: Me, a volunteer?

Opener:



**Hands4Hope**

View the YouTube Hands4Hope-Youth Making a Difference video and note the rewards and insights the students express.

Rewards	Insights

### Activity One: Benefits of volunteering

#### Benefits of Volunteering

Based on what you learned from the YouTube video, fill in the boxes below.

- The volunteers in the video expressed some benefits of volunteering. Name others you can think of.
- Share the ideas you brainstormed with a partner. Make one list. Eliminate duplicates and include all other items.
- Together, study the list of items. How can you categorize them? Decide on category headings and write each list item under one of your headings. Consider categories such as health benefits, personal benefits and financial benefits.

## Volunteerism Makes a Difference for your Future

### Lesson 2: Me, a volunteer?



**MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE DAY**  
NATIONAL DAY OF DOING GOOD




 **USA WEEKEND**

#### Activity Two: Meet our 2013 Make a Difference Day honorees

Make a Difference Day, the largest national day of helping others, is sponsored annually by the USA WEEKEND Magazine and its 800 carrier newspapers. It takes place on the fourth Saturday in October.

The article you will read from USA WEEKEND describes how individuals and organizations assumed social responsibility to make a difference by volunteering. As you read, pay particular attention to the specific skills the volunteers use and develop through volunteerism. Look back at the categories from the Benefits of Volunteering table to help you identify the specific skills. The first one is done for you as an example.

After you complete this activity add new categories and/or specific skills under the categories you already have on the Benefits of Volunteering table.

Make a Difference Honorees	Insights
 Opelika, Alabama	<b>Communication skills</b> – Volunteers spent the day chatting with and entertaining nursing home residents <b>Construction skills</b> – Volunteers repaired homes for individuals in need
 Sun City, Arizona	
 Geneva, Illinois	
 Thurmont, Maryland	
 Rochester, New York	
 Keene, New Hampshire	
 Cranston, Rhode Island	
 Cookeville, Tennessee	
 Ellensburg, Washington	

## Volunteerism Makes a Difference

### Lesson 2: Me, a volunteer?

#### Activity Two: Meet our 2013 Make a Difference Day honorees

Find a partner to discuss:

- What impressed you the most about the projects
- Which one(s) fits your existing skills?
- Which one would be a stretch for you?

Which town had a project that appeals to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Activity Three: Thinking ahead

To make a thoughtful decision about volunteering it is advisable to seriously consider your skills, talents and personal attributes. Fill in the chart below with your existing skills and attributes. Add skills you would like to develop. Think about what tasks would be meaningful and engaging for you.

Think about settings where you might contribute your talents. Add those to the chart. Examples are listed to help you get started.

It is also advisable to think seriously about your availability for volunteering.

Existing Talents and Skills	Personal Attributes	Talents and Skills Would Like to Develop
<i>Public Speaking Working with Children</i>	<i>Outgoing, Energetic</i>	<i>Organization skills, Working with Senior Adults</i>
Possible Volunteer Settings or Tasks	Possible Volunteer Settings or Tasks	Possible Volunteer Settings or Tasks

Taking the time to do so up front will ensure that a thoughtful decision will be made which will result in a positive and productive experience for all.

1. How much time do I have to volunteer? What other obligations do I have? Can I volunteer during the school year or just summers? Can I volunteer on a regular basis, for a particular time period, or one time?

2. Do I have the available transportation needed to commute to and from a volunteer site? Can I work at home?

3. What do I enjoy doing; what are my interests?

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## Volunteerism Makes a Difference for your Future

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### Lesson 2: Me, a volunteer?

#### Activity Three: Thinking ahead

4. What social issue do I feel passionate about?

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5. What kind of setting do I like to be in? Indoors, outdoors, quiet or busy?

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6. Do I prefer to work alone, with one or two people or in a larger group?

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7. Do I like interacting with the public or just people I know better?

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8. The World Volunteer Web (<http://www.worldvolunteerweb.org/>) recommends that you ask yourself if there is something specific you want to learn from a volunteering experience. Circle all that apply to you or add one on the 'other' line.

- › Make the community better where you live
- › Meet new people who are different from me
- › Try something new
- › See a different way of life
- › Apply my existing skills and talents
- › Learn something new
- › Build on my interests
- › Work with a particular age group of people
- › Other

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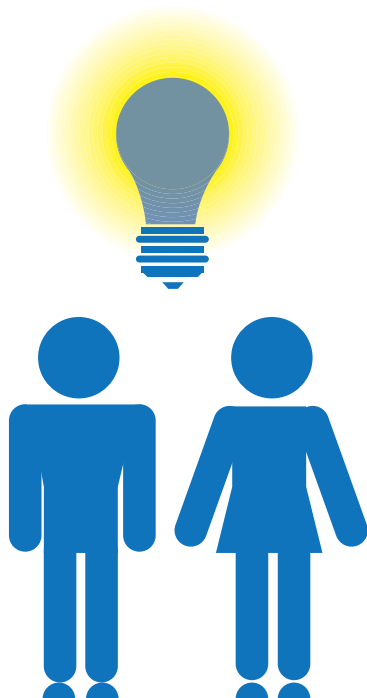
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## Volunteerism Makes a Difference

### Lesson 3: Selecting a volunteer opportunity

#### Activity One: Brainstorming volunteer opportunities



#### Community Projects

**1. Think about community projects that provide service and support to those in need.**

- School-sponsored or an undertaking of a school service club
- Organized by groups that your family, neighbors, and friends belong to
- Activities conducted by people at your place of worship
- Reported on the radio and TV
- Environmental organizations such as those working to prevent erosion
- Health organizations conducting blood drives
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Community Facilities

**2. Think about the facilities in your community that may need volunteers.**

- Daycare centers
- Nursing homes and senior centers
- Homeless shelters
- Hospitals and clinics
- Departments of Parks and Recreation
- Soup kitchens and food banks
- Animal shelters and veterinarian hospitals
- Local chapters of national organizations such as Habitat for Humanity
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Volunteerism Makes a Difference for your Future

### Lesson 3: Selecting a Volunteer Opportunity

#### Activity Two: Volunteer Opportunities

Review the new class charts to narrow your volunteer possibilities to three. Write each choice in a blank at the top of the chart. Answer the questions for each choice.

	Choice #1: _____	Choice #2: _____	Choice #3: _____
Why is this choice meaningful to you?			
What skills can you contribute?			
How might this choice fit your personality?			
What do you hope to learn?			
What skills might you develop?			

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## Volunteerism Makes a Difference

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### Lesson 3: Selecting a volunteer opportunity

#### Activity Three: Informational interview

Contact the volunteer coordinator at the one of the organizations that interests you. Introduce yourself and explain the reason for your interview request.

#### Before the interview:

**Arrange a convenient date, time and length for an informational interview by phone or in-person.**  
(If you visit in person for an interview be sure to bring an adult with you for proper supervision.) At the end of the interview be sure to thank the person for their time.

#### Generate a list of 8-12 questions you want to ask.

Refer to the Thinking Ahead chart and availability questions you answered in the last lesson to help you formulate meaningful questions. Questions should give you pertinent information about the organization as well as specific details about what volunteers do. The last question is done for you.

#### Interview questions

- #1 \_\_\_\_\_
- #2 \_\_\_\_\_
- #3 \_\_\_\_\_
- #4 \_\_\_\_\_
- #5 \_\_\_\_\_
- #6 \_\_\_\_\_
- #7 \_\_\_\_\_
- #8 \_\_\_\_\_
- #9 \_\_\_\_\_
- #10 \_\_\_\_\_
- #11 \_\_\_\_\_

#### #12 What should I know that I did not ask?

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After your questions are written share them with a partner.

Add or refine the questions based on your discussion. At the interview, record the responses you get.

## Volunteerism Makes a Difference for your Future

### Lesson 3: Selecting a volunteer opportunity

#### Activity Four: Action planning

Now it is time to reflect on everything you have learned and to create an action plan. Action plans commit to paper what you will do. Organizations and business routinely write action plans to help keep them focused on their goals and to help ensure everyone actually follows through to achieve the goals.

**Action plans come in many formats, but almost all include:**

- › Goal or mission – what you want to achieve
- › Action steps – What steps or actions you will take to accomplish the goal
- › Timeline – When each action will start and end
- › Evaluation measures – How to judge the accomplishment of each action

**Select one of your volunteer opportunities from Activity Two and use the questions below to help you write your action plan.**

**GOAL:** What is it you want to achieve as a person by volunteering? What skills do you want to use and develop? What experiences do you want to take with you when you go?

**ACTION STEPS:** What do you need to do to get started, stay engaged, and have a productive and positive experience with the organization you selected?

**TIMELINE:** When do you need to start and complete each action step?

**MEASURES:** How will you know that you have achieved your goals?

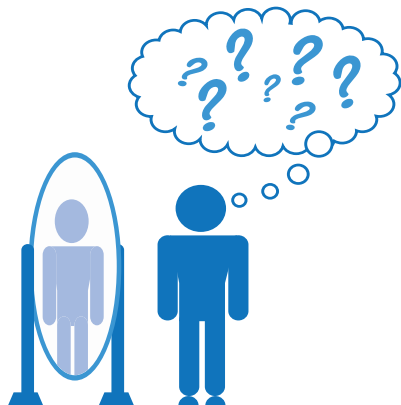
**Goal(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

Action Steps	Timelines	Evaluation Measures

**YOU are ready to volunteer! Contact the organization you selected and arrange a date to participate as a volunteer. You will report on your experience in the next lesson!**

## Volunteerism Makes a Difference

### Lesson 4: Reflect on your experience



#### Activity One: Share your volunteer experience with your peers!

In groups of two to three, discuss the following points about your experience. Listen closely as your peers share their experiences as well.

- › General information on the issue the organization you selected addresses

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- › Mission of the organization including the services provided, the clientele that is served and the scope of the need

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- › The type of work you completed during your volunteer experience

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- › The people that you met (both other volunteers and people you helped)

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- › Requirements and/or special training that were needed to complete your tasks

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#### Activity Two: Volunteer reflection

**Merely having an experience does not ensure that we have learned from it.**

Written reflection is a means of promoting learning from something you have done. It is an opportunity for you to react to and analyze what took place, your feelings concerning it and the insights you have gained.

On a piece of paper, write an essay that communicates your personal response to the volunteer experience.

**Include:**

- › Facts about your experience; what took place
- › What you learned about the community need your service addresses
- › Your feelings and how they may have changed during volunteering
- › A story that is particularly memorable to you
- › What you learned about yourself
- › What you might do differently

*“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.”*

-Sherry Anderson