



Getting Involved In Doing Community Service

There are a lot of ways to get involved in your community. Volunteering your time in the community, also called community service, can be a great way to get involved in something you care about and learn new skills. A lot of places and groups are looking for new volunteers. Below are some tips, stories and resources about how you too can volunteer in your community. Joining youth volunteer organizations is a great way to make new friends!

Here is some advice and tips to help you get involved in community service:

- You can make community service accessible to you! Your disability is not a barrier!
- Be Proactive! Go out there and talk to local community centers, churches temples, synagogues, mosques, schools or other places you think might need help.
- Try to choose things that you are capable of doing and enjoy doing!
- Don't be afraid of letting anyone down because of your disability, just do whatever you can.
- Try to look for adaptive materials/technology, so you can help in new ways!
- Don't give up! If you can't help with something because you aren't capable of doing so, try to find new ways to help.
- If it turns out that you can't help because of your disability (and can't come up with adaptive ways to do something), don't be hurt, just try to find something else to do, or another place to volunteer.
- Don't be intimidated, you can volunteer however you want to. Volunteering doesn't always mean helping out physically. If you can't do physical labor, like lifting, try to see if you can tutor, help organize or do paperwork.
- Try volunteering with other youth, during youth night at your recreation center or events at your school.
- Be Confident!
- Most importantly, work hard and smart, and always remember you are helping others.



Hamza's story about volunteering: I always wanted to get involved in community service, but was afraid that there wasn't much I could do because of my disability, and I was afraid that I would mess up the things that I could do. However, a few years ago, I got involved with Adaptive Community Approach Program (ACAP), a community service organization in Waukesha County Wisconsin, which helps disabled people find ways to get active in their community. I learned that I was able to do much more than I thought and have been serving my community ever since. I've also been inducted into the National Honors Society, which focuses on youth volunteer work, and have been able to assist in volunteering. I hope to pass on the things I learned to all disabled youth who want to make their communities better. Good luck! I hope your volunteering brings joy to yourself and others.

Resources

To look for organizations to volunteer at in your area check with your local United Way at: www.unitedway.org.

Look at the Youth Volunteer Corps of America, for volunteer opportunities http://www.yvca.org/?page=get_involved_volunteer or www.yvca.org.

Check with your local YMCA, church, community center or school for other ideas.