

> THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENTS LEARNING ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

Students say that the benefits they get from volunteering are:

- + enhanced feelings of personal worth and contribution
- + refinement of values
- + the acquisition of new skills and knowledge.

Research says that:

Youth from affluent families are more likely to participate in both school based service and service learning... However, youth from low income families who participate in school based service and service learning demonstrate many positive relationships to civic attitudes and behaviours, highlighting the importance of making (these) courses accessible to students of all backgrounds (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2006, Youth Helping America, Educating for Active Citizenship: Service-Learning, School-Based Service and Youth Civic Engagement, www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/06_0323_SL_briefing.pdf P3).

Here are some things students said to us in 2013 during our research project *Promoting Youth Engagement and Wellbeing through Student Volunteer Programs in ACT Schools*.

I like helping people in general. It gives me a feeling of pride, happiness, joy and I love to get positive feedback about what I have done.

I'm glad they made us do it – the majority would do it again because of the fun you have and the feeling you get afterwards. It's definitely worth it.

It brings everyone together and encourages us as teens to be more aware of what kind of a society we are growing up in. It lets us use our own skills and the combination of those in groups with teamwork, as well to help other people. It's a very great and inviting experience.

Volunteering makes you feel like you are a big part of the world, not small and insignificant.

Going out into the community helps you to get to know more people and you feel involved because you are helping the community out.

I think if we were able to volunteer through a school organised program more kids would be interested in volunteering. Most people would volunteer if given the opportunity but they don't because it means they have to find an organisation, contact them and then get a way there and home... if their school did all the preparation and all the kids had to do was get there, more people would volunteer. You could get so much more interest if it was during school hours too, because kids are busy outside of school.

Having the school organise it is the best thing about my volunteering experience. It's hard to initiate yourself.