

# > WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO AND WHY THEY SHOULD BOTHER

Learning about volunteering – including what it is and what benefits it provides for the individual and society – does not have to be an add-on. If it is embedded in classroom activity all students are exposed to the concepts and practices, not just those who are lucky enough to have parents and carers who can model it to them already.

Volunteering can't start too early. Even children in the Foundation years can begin to learn what a volunteer is, recognise volunteers in the community and recognise that they themselves can be a volunteer.

Teachers can build a community of volunteering by:

- + modelling the importance of volunteering by being a volunteer themselves
- + explicitly teaching about volunteering and the characteristics, benefits and significant contribution of community service
- + facilitating opportunities for all students to volunteer and serve, as part of the curriculum and school life.

There are a number of things all teachers can do in the classroom to raise student knowledge and awareness about volunteering and service experiences and understandings. They include:

- + being explicit about what volunteering is and how it is represented across the community
- + using texts that relate to volunteering and service activity as part of the classroom repertoire (for example volunteering websites, brochures supplied by charities and service organisations, media articles and stories about volunteering, reports on humanitarian projects from across the world and research reports on volunteering and service activity available in the Volunteering ACT *Promoting Youth Engagement and Wellbeing through Student Volunteer Programs in ACT Schools* document)
- + using examples that include volunteering and service when setting assignments and classroom tasks (for example: *in your story one person must be a young volunteer, or include statistical data about an organisation's volunteering profile*)
- + explicitly teaching what volunteering and service activity is, and what benefits it derives for participants and the community
- + looking for authentic community opportunities for learning that expose students to volunteering and service organisations, communities, sites and experiences
- + inviting volunteers to bring their experiences into the classroom for students to hear and discuss
- + providing reflection sheets where students can think about, and then discuss, the experiences they had during practical volunteering activities.

At the senior secondary level students can be given opportunities to volunteer through:

- + structured units and work studies which allow voluntary activity to occur in a defined location over an extended period of time (for example volunteering in the local library on Thursday afternoons, coaching a sporting team, tutoring junior students at local schools, gardening at a not-for-profit venue, acting as a volunteer guide, planting trees or undertaking conservation/environmental projects with local groups, providing companionship at a local aged care facility or assisting at a local preschool or child care facility)
- + offering community service courses as part of the normal subject selection availability, such as Certificates I, II and III in Active Volunteering
- + facilitating extended, structured volunteering opportunities in non-assessable periods.