



MY VOLUNTEERING STORY

Do you ever read things and think “That’s too good to be true.” What if I told you how volunteering changed my life? True story. What if I told you it can change your life too? You’ll feel happier, grow as a person, and maybe even find a job! You don’t have to take my word for it. Read my volunteering story and decide for yourself.

But first, I have to tell you about a difficult time in my life. It might sound like I’m complaining, so don’t judge, okay?

BEFORE MY VOLUNTEERING STORY BEGAN

Four months before I started volunteering, my family moved. I was unemployed and quickly became discouraged. Job searching in a new area where you have no network is difficult. I struggled with the rejection, or often radio silence from job applications or after interviews. After a while, I started to wonder if I picked the wrong degree or was simply unskilled for the jobs I was applying to.

I began to ask myself whether or not I should apply for different listings. I tried to remind myself that job listings get lots of applications and competition is fierce. It felt like I was doing all this busy work with applications for nothing. I either wouldn’t receive an interview, or if I did get one, I wasn’t offered the job. If I didn’t apply, I wouldn’t get a job. But it felt like if I did apply, I received the same result. I started wondering if I should settle for something like an entry-level job at a fast food place. Wasting time on social media didn’t make me feel better, but I wasn’t sure what to do with my free time.

MY INTRODUCTION TO VOLUNTEERING

I needed a way to network in my community. Plus, I needed something to do with my free time that felt productive. My mom suggested I do some Christian volunteering in my free time. She had recently donated baby blankets to our local pregnancy resource center, and she urged me to volunteer there. I got the contact info from the website and soon attended a volunteer orientation night at the center. Meeting the women who work there and learning about their mission was inspiring.

I was thrilled to volunteer my time creating social media posts for the center. What comes naturally to me, others find time-consuming and challenging. By scheduling posts, I gave the staff time to attend to a million other things. I was able to work hybrid, sometimes from home and other times popping into the center. My confidence returned. It's a psychological hack that when you feel down, focusing on helping others makes you feel better. The "helpers high" improves both mental and physical health (1).

VOLUNTEERING TICKED ALL THE BOXES

- Let go of my self-pity
- Stopped wasting time
- Set my own schedule
- Felt happier because I had a purpose
- Gave back to my community
- Networked in my new community
- Built experience for my resume
- Eventually got a job

Yes! I got a job, not at the Pregnancy center, but through my new connections at the center. My volunteer coordinator knew about a pro-life marketing company that was hiring. She sent me the link to apply. I applied and name-dropped her in my email. The rest is history. Volunteering really changed my life because if I hadn't volunteered, I wouldn't be working at the job I have now.

WILL YOU GET A JOB FROM VOLUNTEERING?

Your volunteering story might look different than mine. Networking improves your job prospects and sharpens your skills (2). Can volunteering be work experience? Yes! Absolutely. It's best if your volunteering demonstrates transferable skills for the job you're hoping for. These skills might include communication, public speaking, teamwork, and more (2). You may even improve your problem-solving, project planning, task management, and organization skills (3).

Do you have more questions about volunteering?
Keep reading for more information about volunteering.

HOW DO I START VOLUNTEERING?

In my case, after I connected with my local pregnancy center, I filled out an interest form. The form collected formalities like my contact info. It surveyed me about my beliefs about unplanned pregnancy topics. Then it asked which area I wanted to volunteer in.

HAVE SKILLS TO OFFER ? WE CAN USE THEM!

CONTACT HEARTBEAT OF COLUMBIANA COUNTY

HOW MANY VOLUNTEER HOURS SHOULD I WORK? CAN VOLUNTEERING BE A HOBBY?

This is totally up to you. Since you're not a paid employee, you can usually set your own flexible schedule. Many centers will take as many hours as you can give. I volunteered part-time. I didn't have a client-facing role, so I could work off hours like evenings and weekends. Volunteering doesn't have to be a full-time occupation– it can be reserved for a part-time hobby.

IS VOLUNTEERING A JOB?

If you define a job as something you get paid to do, volunteering is not a job because it's unpaid. On the other hand, if you define a job as helping with work that needs to be done, then volunteering is a job because it takes effort.

VOLUNTEER VS INTERN

To me, an intern is more of a defined position than a volunteer. Interns are typically college students earning credits towards their program. Interns must be compensated either with course credit or with pay. Internships are typically for a defined time, like a semester or the summer. Volunteering is less structured. It doesn't matter how old you are or even your skill level. Also, volunteer positions are unpaid. Sometimes volunteer roles last for only a day; other times they last for a decade!

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF VOLUNTEERING?

At Heartbeat, we need volunteers in every aspect of our ministry. Work can be medical, or non-medical, with clients or behind the scenes. Roles range from giving pregnancy tests and ultrasounds to leading after-abortion care. We need prayer warriors, donation sorters and boutique assistants. A pregnancy center requires many different positions, from front desk workers and teachers of classes, to one-on-one mentors. Not to mention, food preppers, lawn care volunteers, and more.

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." Colossians 3:17 ESV

WHY VOLUNTEERING IS SO IMPORTANT

Volunteering benefits both the community and you, the volunteer. You'll feel happier, grow as a person, and maybe even find a job!

We support men and women facing unplanned pregnancy in the East Liverpool, OH area. All our services are free. By partnering with volunteers, Heartbeat is able to keep costs low. Low operating costs mean more money for vital supplies.

How often can you say you helped with an organization that saves actual lives?

READY TO BEGIN YOUR VOLUNTEERING STORY ?

Sources

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<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/raising-happiness/201002/what-we-get-when-we-give>
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