

10 Practical Ways for Teens to Get Involved in Community Service

There are lots of [personal benefits of volunteering](#) and finding ways to contribute to your community. For teens, it's great for increasing self-esteem and confidence, making new friends and professional connections, discovering new interests, exploring social and political issues, building up college applications, and adding valuable items to a resume.

Fortunately, along with all the benefits, there are also plenty of simple ways for teens to get involved in community service. Opportunities can vary by location, of course (with more in urban and highly populated areas), but opportunities are always out there if you know where to look.

Community Service Opportunities for Teens

1. **Get your friends together for community beautification projects.** These can include picking up litter, weeding, painting over graffiti, and other simple improvements. Just make sure you plan it out with the local government if it's public property or the owner if it's private property.
2. **Donate clothing, shoes, jewelry, accessories, toys, games, video games, books, and other items** you don't want anymore. Churches, synagogues, fire departments, Goodwill, hospitals, shelters, foster parent organizations, public school drives, and libraries often accept some or all of these.
3. **Mentor or tutor younger children.** They are often much more receptive to this sort of help from "big kids" than they are from grown-ups. Many religious institutions, nonprofits, schools, and other groups offer these opportunities. It shouldn't take long to find something of interest.
4. **Pitch in as an assistant coach or referee for a local youth sports team.** Check with your local community center, recreation department, YMCA, churches, and Boys & Girls Club. It's a fun, healthy way to get

involved with kids, parents, and organizations in your community.

5. **Volunteer at a local soup kitchen, food pantry, or homeless shelter.** Also, ask what sort of food and supply donations they could use. Donate what you can and hit your friends and family up to contribute something, too.
6. **Talk to the staff at assisted living facilities in your area.** Find out how you can get involved with visits to elderly residents. Encourage your friends to participate. Giving just a small amount of your time has such a huge impact on residents.
7. **Ask elderly or disabled people in your neighborhood what you can do for them.** Performing tasks like picking up groceries or running other errands for them, mowing their lawn or weeding their garden, doing the dishes, or painting a room in their home can be enormously helpful.
8. **Inquire about volunteer opportunities with a local politician or political candidate** who's focused on issues you care about. Also, write letters to your local and state politicians to encourage support and initiatives for causes you believe in.
9. **Approach nonprofits in your area that work on issues that are important to you.** Ask about volunteer opportunities. See if they need you to set up and manage social media accounts for them, as this is an area nonprofits often can't devote enough attention to.
10. **Love animals? Volunteer at a local animal shelter or ASPCA chapter.** Donate pet food and supplies if you have them, and solicit them from your friends and family. Spread the word about pet adoption and help connect people and families to pets that need loving homes.