

POSITION: Giving back to our communities is vital, therefore, all high school students should be required to complete a minimum number of community service hours before completing their academic lives.

Community service is **work done by a person or group of people that benefits others**. It is often done near the area where you live, so your own community reaps the benefits of your work. You do not get paid to perform community service, but volunteer your time. Community service can help many different groups of people: children, senior citizens, people with disabilities, even animals and the environment. **Community service is often organized through a local group**, such as a place of worship, school, or non-profit organization, or you can start your own community service projects. Community service can even involve raising funds by donating used goods or selling used good like clothing.

Many people participate in community service because **they enjoy helping others and improving their community**. However, some students are required to do community service in order to graduate high school or to receive certain honors. Some countries require students to perform community service hours to graduate from high school. In some high schools, for example, students must finish 200 hours of community service to get a diploma.

What is the benefit of this? First of all, many students learn about their **personal strengths and weaknesses**. When you're working on campaigns and projects and getting to see real-life results, you'll get to know how your personal attributes and actions can make a difference. Many of these qualities are things that students can't get good feedback on in the classroom. For example, students may learn that they have excellent skills in coping with a crisis or other stressful situations, or may learn that they find taking charge of a team to be a struggle. This kind of exposure to different situations can then teach students how to further develop skills that they have, and how to work on areas they struggle in.

In particular, students find that they are able to develop skills in **leadership, communication, working well with a team, and finding solutions for problems**.

Many students also find that community service makes them more aware of and interested in issues of **social justice**. For example, if you spend your days going to school, playing sports, and doing homework, you will likely not spend a lot of time thinking about the problems that homeless people encounter.

On the other hand, if you're working every weekend at a homeless shelter, you'll have a chance to dispel stereotypes about why people become homeless while also learning about the unique challenges that homeless people face in getting off the streets. Many homeless people face prejudice that makes returning to work and earning a self-supporting living more difficult than it is for non-homeless people.