

The Benefits of Volunteering to the Volunteer

Research on Health Benefits of Volunteering

A study of adults age 65 and older found that the positive effect of volunteering on physical and mental health is due to the personal sense of accomplishment that an individual gains from their volunteer activities. (Herzog et al., 1998)

The Benefits Associated With Volunteering Among Seniors Report shows improved psychosocial and physical health, fewer functional limitations, and higher levels of positive affect, happiness, and life satisfaction. Benefits are strongest for volunteers of lower socio-economic status.

According to The Assets and Health Dynamics Among the Oldest Old Study, adults over the age of 70 who volunteered at least 100 hours per year had less of a decline in self-reported health and functioning levels and lower levels of depression and mortality than those who did not volunteer.

Researchers at University of California and Stanford University found that those who volunteered with two or more organizations experienced 44 percent lower mortality rates over a five-year period than older persons who did not volunteer, even after adjusting for other factors such as age, health habits, and social support.

Johns Hopkins University and Washington University research on the impact that volunteering has on older adults that serve shows: Better overall health: physical activity, strength, and cognitive ability increased significantly; Increased strength; Higher activity levels; More calories burned; Less TV time; Larger social networks compared to control groups of adults of the same age and demographic composition.

The Journal of Happiness research- Compared to people who didn't volunteer, people who volunteered in the past year were more satisfied with their lives and rated their overall health as better. Additionally, the researchers found that people who volunteered at least once a month reported better mental health than participants who volunteered infrequently or not at all.

Research on benefits of volunteering for your career:

The "Volunteering as a Pathway to Employment" study showed: volunteerism can help identify a new career path, expands your network of contacts, lifts job seekers' spirits by making them feel needed and productive, shows increased skills & experience, and can serve as on the job training or a trial run for paid work at a nonprofit.

Research by the Corporation for National and Community Service indicates that job seekers who volunteer have a 27% increased chance of finding a job and 41% of employers hiring consider volunteer work as much as paid work when evaluating job candidates.