10 Reasons You Should Volunteer

1. **Build your resume.** If you have never had a job, then volunteering is a must. It is the perfect way to add work-related experience to your resume. Even if you have had multiple jobs, volunteering can benefit you because it shows the employer you are serious about getting involved and improving your skills.

2. **Develop transferable skills.** Employers are looking for skills that are easily transferred to different areas. Some of these skills are: teamwork, interpersonal communication, public speaking, time management, leadership, organization, analysis, computer skills, problem solving and creative thinking. Plus, learning to be dependable and responsible will prepare you to be a good employee.

3. **Explore career opportunities.** It's hard to know what you want to do with your life by reading a job profile. There are many assessments and tools to help in this process but volunteering can be just as effective. You will see first-hand what professionals in various fields do. This can show you the pros and cons of certain jobs. You may have an eye-opening experience that gives your life different direction.

4. **Networking.** We have all heard the saying, "It's not what you know but who you know." While this statement isn't 100 percent accurate because what you learn in college is valuable, there is some truth to it. Having contacts in the business world may lead to jobs. Interacting with different people in a volunteer setting could really open doors for you as an applicant.

5. **Learn things you can't learn in the classroom.** Be exposed to different parts of the community, different cultures, beliefs and values. College is a time to figure out who you are and what you want to do the rest of your life. Learning about new things can shape that path. Plus, you will be able to see how things you are learning in the classroom apply to the real world.

6. **Get a reference.** Getting that first job out of college can be difficult, especially without work experience. Employers always check references and while having one or two college professors listed will be helpful, having someone else who can speak to your work ethic and abilities can be priceless. Make sure you treat any volunteer opportunity like a job by being on time, asking for time off, and providing two weeks' notice when you decide to leave.

7. **Make new friends.** Who wouldn't want another opportunity to make more friends? You may see the same people every day at school, in the residence halls, and in the dining halls, but volunteering will expose you to a different crowd, most likely with similar interests.

8. **Prepare for graduate school.** If you have thought about attending graduate school, volunteering may be just the thing to set you apart. Graduate admissions officers are looking for well-rounded students. They want to see that you did more in college than live in the library. Plus it shows that you care about contributing to society and being a responsible citizen.

9. **Do some good.** Volunteering will allow you to get involved with a worthy cause and potentially change lives and make a difference. You will learn to have empathy and to see the world from a different perspective.

10. **Volunteering isn't a full-time commitment.** Volunteer hours can be minimal. Three hours tutoring children on Saturday mornings or one night a week serving at the homeless shelter will still help you accomplish your volunteer goals. Most volunteer commitments allow you time to still be heavily involved on campus or work part-time while maintaining your grades.

BONUS: You will enjoy it! It feels good to help other people and know you are making a difference. Volunteering can be a fun way to get involved in great programs that help your fellow community members.