

## *The importance of volunteering*

There are countless benefits students can reap from volunteering and giving back to their community. While it may not always be easy or glamorous, volunteering can be one of the most rewarding and uplifting experiences a student can have. It gives them the opportunity to try different kinds of work in various industries, helping them to decipher which careers they are interested in, all while helping those around them. Students can try out new skills and explore their abilities in a way that can be difficult in the traditional classroom. In addition, this extra-curricular experience gives students a competitive edge when entering the workforce.

Volunteering also has social benefits. Our society is becoming increasingly individualistic, but volunteering builds a sense of community and belonging. Students can meet individuals with similar interests and foster friendships that can last a lifetime. While volunteering provides an opportunity to make new friends, it can also be the first step in helping students expand their professional network. Students are exposed to a wide range of workers in a particular industry or sector that could be used as potential references in the future when job searching. Plus, studies have shown that the social interaction of volunteering can help combat mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

Of course, volunteer work should not be done solely to pad one's resume or meet new friends. The impact that students can make on their community and people in need is the greatest benefit. Volunteering makes a positive impact on the lives of the less fortunate, and can make us more accepting by exposing us to different environments and walks of life. Volunteers help to create healthier communities and brighten the lives of those around them while they develop their skills and build their confidence!

### **Want to learn more about how to volunteering using the Education Planner?**

1. From *Occupations*, select *Job Search* and filter to *Volunteer* opportunities in your community
2. Set a short-term goal with an action plan to get involved in the community under *Goals*
3. Add the goal to your *Who Am I? Portfolio* and reflect on the importance of volunteering (i.e., What are three benefits of volunteering?)
4. Go to *Resume* and document your experience with the dates that you volunteered, location, organization, and responsibilities
5. Take students to a local food bank, community centre, toy drive, hospital, etc. and have them reflect on their volunteer experiences by adding media (audio/video recordings) or journals to a *Volunteer Portfolio*

Looking for an easy way to prompt students to complete these activities? Read this [blog post](#) or watch [the video](#) for creating custom class activities.

Want to learn more? Email [support@myBlueprint.ca](mailto:support@myBlueprint.ca) or [sign up for a drop-in webinar](#).

