

Where to Look for Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteering has so many benefits, including:

- staying connected with your children through their schools
- making a contribution to your community
- using your professional skills, and developing new ones
- expressing your creativity
- working for a mission that you believe in
- making new friends and fighting isolation
- avoiding that gap in your resume
- turning volunteer work into a paying job

Helpful books on this topic include:

- *The Busy Family's Guide to Volunteering* by Jenny Friedman. (Robins Lane Press, 2003) It offers numerous examples of volunteer projects that families of any size can accomplish together.

- * *The Kids' Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference* by Barbara Lewis (Free Spirit Publishing, 1995)

Volunteer resources:

- * **Greater Philadelphia Cares (www.philacares.com)**

You want to make a difference. You want to feel connected and give back. You want a way to volunteer that works. With Greater Philadelphia Cares, you make a real difference, one project at a time.

- **VolunteerMatch (www.volunteermatch.org)**

A nonprofit organization whose mission is to help everyone find a great place to volunteer. Lists U.S. volunteer opportunities.

- **Volunteer Solutions (www.volunteersolutions.org)**

Affiliated with United Way of America, Volunteer Solutions helps individuals find volunteer opportunities in their community.

- **Youth Service America (www.servenet.org)**

SERVEnet has over 6,000 registered non-profit organizations, 35,000+ service projects and over 52,000,000 volunteer opportunities available in the U.S.

Online volunteering — the next big thing

What if your local match-ups don't provide what you're interested in, or your out-of-house time is limited due to younger children in the home? Then consider virtual volunteering.

As VolunteerMatch explains, "Virtual Volunteer opportunities let you volunteer from 'virtually' anywhere—so you can contribute your time and expertise without ever leaving your office or home. You can critique a press release, design a web site, become a helpline telephone volunteer, or tutor a child—all as a volunteer for an organization that could be halfway around the world. It's a creative, new way to get involved."

It's surprisingly easy to get involved globally. Just visit the following websites and see which volunteer opportunities catch your eye.

- **OnlineVolunteer (www.onlinevolunteer.org)**

Volunteers from all over the world are helping organizations that serve communities in developing countries.

- **Action Without Borders (www.idealists.org)**

Connects people, organizations and resources to help build a world where all people can live free and dignified lives. Lists volunteer projects in 165 countries.