

PEAK READINESS ACTIVITY 7a: What is Service and Volunteering?

What is service and where do you want to help?

In previous Activities, you've looked at your role in the working world and how you'll support yourself. In this Activity, you'll explore what it means to volunteer and contribute your time for the benefit of others. Doing service for others builds a better community, provides needed assistance for those who need help, and it will help you expand your skills. Plus, you will grow your own value system and in the end, you'll feel good about yourself and the help you provided.

What is service learning?

A volunteer is someone who chooses to contribute time and effort to help others. "Service learning" connects your volunteer efforts with real community needs and opportunities for you to develop new knowledge and skills. A key part of service learning is the people you connect with - your fellow volunteers, community leaders, and the recipients or beneficiaries of your efforts.

In your classroom or with your youth group, you'll have the opportunity to find projects in your area. Your teacher and other adults will guide you to where you can help. Take this opportunity to expand beyond your own interests. Reach out and discover the joy and contribution of doing service.

There are many real challenges, issues, problems, and injustices out there in the real world. It's important to take time and consider what's needed, what you care about, and think how you can help solve those problems. Here are a few examples...

Homelessness	Recreation	Disabilities	Community service
Hunger	Environmental	Human rights	Criminal justice
Inter-faith	Animal rights	Civil rights	Children's rights
Equality	Social justice	Elders	Drug abuse and rehab
Conservation	Public health	Literacy	Parks and green space

Decide where you want to help

In the following Activity, you will consider a number of questions about your possible role as a volunteer. Think about what's important to you. Discuss this with your teachers, friends and family. Answer each of the follow questions to discover your focus. There are a few sample ideas above.

What social or community issues interest you? Be specific.

What do you believe should be done to help this issue?

What can you uniquely provide, create, contribute, or help with to address this issue?

What questions do you have about this issue? What else can you learn about it?

Who is most affected by this issue, and how are they affected?

What do you believe are the "root causes" that contribute to this issue? Who is responsible for these root causes?

Where might you go and who might you talk with to learn more?

Where would you go to volunteer to help?

Why this issue? What values or principles do you hold that causes you to feel strongly about this issue?

Using Internet, magazines, newspapers, and other sources, name five recent events in your community that relate to this issue:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

