Volunteering is extremely valuable in itself to the specific causes, communities and individuals that utilize and rely on volunteers. Volunteering can also be an enjoyable and simple way for you to explore special interests you may have in your community and/or perhaps in the world.

And while the primary purpose of volunteering may be to help support specific causes, improve communities and provide hope and support to individuals, we also know through scientific research and surveys that there is also a tremendous payoff to those who volunteer.

Research shows volunteering lets you see your own life in new ways, helps you put your life in perspective and helps you recognize those things in your life, communities and the world that truly matter.

Furthermore, research has shown that volunteering increases a person's own personal self-worth and their overall sense of self as well as increasing their overall satisfaction of their life.

Beyond that, research has also shown that volunteering helps improve a person's psychological and emotional well-being as it decreases stress levels and helps reduce the severity of depression. As we know, volunteering generally makes those who volunteer feel great about themselves and what they are doing for others.

Volunteering is also a great way to help improve and expand your skills while helping others. Research has shown that volunteering and using skills you already possess will not only help you enhance and refine those skills but it often times will also help you learn and develop additional skills. This is a huge added benefit to you. Learning and developing your skills and talents could lead you to a career. Plus, it provides you with hands on experience that looks great on a resume and may give you a leg up when applying for a particular job or position, whether that be in high school, college or beyond.

Volunteering also often helps you by enhancing your personal knowledge, expands your experiences, and helps you develop better communication skills.

Moreover, volunteering has also shown to help improve a person's physical well-being. The Corporation for National & Community Service reported that volunteering has shown that those who volunteer have an increased living rate (live longer) and are more likely to continue and able to live independently on their own when they are older.

All in all, one of the greatest gains from volunteering is empathy. Empathy is the ability to relate to others, work together and form positive relationships. It involves seeing things and the world from another person's perspective and experiencing their feelings on a second-hand level.

Volunteer work does you, and all those you help, a world of good!

Here are a few general places and ways you can look to volunteer your time, skills and energy.

- Tutoring or Mentoring Programs
- Soup Kitchens or Homeless Shelters
- Animal Rescue Shelters
- Local & National Non-Profits

or

- Have a Bake Sale
- Hold a Car Wash
- Plan a Donation Drive (donations for places like food banks, homeless shelters or animal shelters)

For more information and ideas on how to volunteer, you can search online, ask your school administrator or school counselor.

https://www.volunteermatch.org/volunteers

https://www.whitbyschool.org/passionforlearning/why-is-community-service-important

https://www.rootsofaction.com/community-service-ideas-for-youth

https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/wellness/student-volunteering-could-have-health-benefits/

https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get.../volunteering-how-helping-others-helps-you