

# Spread the Love by Volunteering



Author – Zuri Garcia, Extension Assistant Professor

Whether it's a soup kitchen, a classroom, a youth camp, or the street, people can be found volunteering. Just in Utah, millions of volunteers are found spreading the love. Utah is ranked number one for adult volunteering in the United States with \$3 billion in services contributed in 2012. Volunteering benefits both the community being served and the individual volunteer.

Many people are motivated to volunteer because of the benefit to the community. When money is put aside and free time is donated, more work can get done. Organizations that are created to improve community and family life have a larger reach when volunteers are involved. Community needs addressed through volunteering include: disaster services, economic opportunities, education, the environment, health and families.

Volunteers benefit from the work they do in their communities. There are social benefits to getting out and building relationships with fellow volunteers and individuals being served. Volunteers become less isolated and feel a sense of purpose. Physical and mental-health benefits also exist for volunteers. Volunteering at an earlier stage in life may decrease the likeliness of suffering ill health later in life. The more committed volunteers are, the more significant the benefits are that they receive from volunteering. An average of one to two hours a week has been found to be significantly beneficial.

Volunteering is a way to spread love throughout the community. So how can you get started? There are

countless opportunities to volunteer. Your local Utah State University Extension office is a great place to start. By looking at your personal interests and hobbies, you can decide what area of Extension would be the best fit. If you like gardening, you might consider becoming a Master Gardener. Are you an experienced food preserver? Would starting a youth 4-H club be for you? Do you have ranching experience? Family finance is an important area of Extension, do you have a financial background? The best part of volunteering is that it can be a lot of fun. Go to <http://extension.usu.edu/> to learn about USU Extension and start volunteering today.

Sources:

Charts and Utah ranking stats retrieved from: [www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/UT](http://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/UT)

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