

National Volunteer Month

In many parts of the country, volunteering is the cornerstone of summer vacation, college applications, and active parts of after school and sports programs. Most organizations in small towns, rural counties and the largest cities would not function without volunteers for things such as firefighters and community safety officers. Families have made volunteerism a tradition generation after generation. Even former President Carter and his wife dedicated years of their lives to volunteering for Habitat for Humanity.



The word "volunteering" may not make much sense to your young child as they do not get paid to do anything. Still, even children as young as three can learn the value of helping people and places in need. Now is the time to start a lifelong commitment to giving.

Learn From Others

Being a volunteer, you and your child can meet and work with people who hold similar values. This can provide you both a way to meet and learn about people from different cultures and backgrounds, and those with different skills and abilities.

What Do Children Learn?

According to Peter Levine, who directs the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning at Tufts University, children who volunteer are more successful in school and more likely to graduate from high school and college. Volunteering can teach a child the skills of long-range planning, working in groups, interacting with people who are different from themselves, time management and the sense of empowerment to define and solve complex problems.



MLC April Family Minutes

A resource from our family to yours

Be A Role Model

As a parent, you are your child's first teacher. Teach your child that giving your skills and time is more valued than purchasing items. This can be a life lesson learned at an early age. Children understand the importance of time spent with them and their loved ones. By showing your child how to help others through giving of your time as a family, and being a volunteer, is a great way to teach empathy and compassion.



Some Ideas To Get You Started

1. Volunteer at your child's school or for their little league or sports team
2. As a family, volunteer for a beach or park clean up day
3. Work a food bank or kitchen, even if it is not a holiday
4. Walk or run for a cause
5. Find a church or community event to support such as Vacation Bible School or a community garage sale
6. Give your time to Animal Shelters to clean, feed, walk, or even read to animals.

Fun Family Book

The Anonymous Hippopotamus
by Michelle Duffy

This is a delightful, whimsical book that teaches children the importance of being kind to one another through the eyes of two friends. It shows that anyone can be kind to anyone and how special and needed these gestures are. This book helps children learn that the act of giving and doing for others is the reward.

<https://www.amazon.com/Hippopotamus-Michelle-Duffy/dp/1664187553>

Resources

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/tips-for-volunteering-with-kids>

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/volunteer.html>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/global-awareness/how-and-why-your-child-should-start-volunteering.html>

<https://lifestyle.howstuffworks.com/family/activities/10-small-volunteer-acts-for-kids.htm>