Volunteer Opportunities for Stay-at-Home Students

Many students are looking for ways to meaningfully use their stay-at-home time right now. If you're wondering how you can help your community during the COVID-19 crisis, think about your genuine interests. Whether it's art, working with children or healthcare, sharing your skills and talents can make an impact.

Local organizations such as Hands on Twin Cities matches volunteers with opportunities. Staying in touch with neighborhood organizations, places of worship, and service organizations such as The Lions Club, Interact Clubs and your high school Honor Society is also a great way to learn about community needs. You can also find opportunities through social media groups and Nextdoor (a neighborhood networking service), and in this article published earlier this month.

Here are some ways you can volunteer while at home:

Assist the elderly
In many cases, our elderly community members don't just need assistance with necessities like groceries, but they need social connection as well. Deliver groceries, do yard work or interact with them through phone calls or by sending handmade cards or artwork.

Do online tutoring or virtual babysitting
Again, use Nextdoor, social media, or even your own teachers to find elementary school colleagues who might spread the word about your availability. Or visit Quarantutors, a San Francisco Bay Area organization that is matching students with tutors all over the country. You can also provide babysitting time remotely by reading to younger kids or guiding them through activities.

Be a political volunteer
Pandemic or not, our 2020 Election political process continues. Volunteer to increase voter turnout through organizations such as Rock the Vote, which offers opportunities that can be done remotely, and Postcards to Voters, which can be written from home.

Code for nonprofits
If you have programming skills, do home-based coding for nonprofits that need help through organizations such as Code for Social Good, Benetech, or DonateCode. Or develop apps or websites for fundraising and volunteer efforts in your community.

Organize virtual performances
Organize a virtual concert, performance, poetry slam or other event for fun, or turn it into a fundraiser and donate proceeds to a local nonprofit. Or offer to teach an online class, such as ballet, painting, or karate -- either as a service or to benefit an organization providing much-needed community resources.

Collect donations
Find out what a local shelter or food bank's needs are, and send emails to families, friends and neighbors asking for collections. Have them leave the items outside for you to pick up and deliver.

During this time, it's important to keep in mind the importance of remaining connected. Reaching out through volunteerism is a great way to remind ourselves that while we are keeping our distance, we are all in this together right now