

A Special Report

ENGAGING *youth* IN LIFELONG SERVICE

Findings and Recommendations for
Encouraging a Tradition of Voluntary
Action Among America's Youth

giving & VOLUNTEERING
IN THE UNITED STATES



INDEPENDENT
SECTOR

About INDEPENDENT SECTOR

INDEPENDENT SECTOR is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of more than 700 national organizations, foundations, and corporate philanthropy programs, collectively representing tens of thousands of charitable groups in every state across the nation. Its mission is to promote, strengthen, and advance the nonprofit and philanthropic community to foster private initiative for the public good.

About Youth Service America

Youth Service America (YSA) is a resource center and premier alliance of 300+ organizations committed to increasing the quantity and quality of opportunities for young Americans to serve locally, nationally, or globally.

Founded in 1986, YSA's mission is to strengthen the Effectiveness, Sustainability, and Scale of the youth service and service-learning fields. YSA envisions a powerful network of organizations committed to making service the common expectation and common experience of all young Americans. A strong youth service network will create healthy communities, and foster citizenship, knowledge, and the personal development of young people. YSA's programs include National Youth Service Day and Global Youth Service Day, the largest service events in the world. They take place concurrently each April, focusing national and international attention on the year-round service contributions of young people, while recruiting the next generation of volunteers, and promoting the benefits of youth service to the public.

YSA also hosts SERVENet (www.SERVENet.org), an award-winning one-stop portal for information and resources on service and volunteering.

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INDEPENDENT SECTOR is pleased to collaborate
with Youth Service America on the development
and distribution of this report.

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Methodology

Engaging Youth in Lifelong Service is based on analysis from INDEPENDENT SECTOR's *Giving and Volunteering in the United States* 2001 national survey. The survey was a telephone survey of 4,216 adult Americans 21 years of age or older conducted in the months of May through July of 2001 by Westat, Inc., for INDEPENDENT SECTOR. The interviews asked about individual volunteering habits in the 12 months prior to the survey and about household giving during the year 2000. For the purposes of this report, volunteering is dated 2000.

Research Program

INDEPENDENT SECTOR's Research Program works to build the research necessary to accurately define, chart, and understand the nonprofit sector and ways it can be of greatest service to society. Signature projects include the *Nonprofit Almanac*, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, and the Measures Project.

The *Giving and Volunteering in the United States* 2001 Series

An executive summary, comprehensive report, and series of smaller reports exploring special topics from the *Giving and Volunteering in the United States* national survey will be available throughout 2002 and 2003. Subscriptions to the entire series or orders for individual titles may be placed by calling the INDEPENDENT SECTOR Publications Center at 888-860-8118 or by visiting the INDEPENDENT SECTOR website at www.IndependentSector.org.

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Engaging Youth in Lifelong Service

The United States was built on an ethic of service—service to our fellow citizens and service to our country. From the birth of American democracy, volunteers established a revolutionary form of governance, and volunteers have been at the heart of every social movement since. While the United States is certainly not the only country that values volunteering and philanthropy, social scientists and historians have often observed that its voluntary spirit is particularly vibrant.

This tradition of service begins early in life. Parents, educators, and policymakers increasingly recognize the importance of involving youth in community service through the charitable

sector. Whether it's called civic engagement, social capital, service learning, or simply giving and volunteering, there are many programs geared toward increasing the involvement of youth in community service, thus planting the seeds of service in people when they are young.

How does this ethic of service pass from generation to generation? Are all Americans naturally generous with their time and money, or do certain life experiences help one acquire this value? What are the lifelong charitable patterns of adults who began their service at a young age? Does youth involvement make a difference?

The answer is clear. Americans who began giving and volunteering as youth are more giving of their time and money as adults. This pattern holds regardless of income or age group. Youth involvement does make a difference—a measurable difference—that persists throughout a lifetime.

Youth Volunteering Leads to Adult Service

INDEPENDENT SECTOR's *Giving and Volunteering in the United States* biennial survey series asks adults not only about their current behavior but also about the charitable experiences they had when they were younger. Forty-four percent of adults said they volunteered in the past year, and two-thirds of these volunteers began contributing their time when they were young. Adults who began volunteering as youth are twice as likely to volunteer as

adults as those who did not volunteer when they were younger (Figure 1).

High School Volunteering on the Rise

Within every age group, people who started volunteering as youth are more likely to volunteer as adults. The difference is especially significant for young adults, where the rate of volunteering for those who first participated as youth is almost double that of those who did not (Figure 2). The experience of youth volunteering forms a lifelong involvement in volunteering.

By estimating when respondents were in high school, when they would have been most likely to experience programs encouraging youth to volunteer, the possible impact of these programs can be seen. Figure 3 shows an increasing trend of youth participation in volunteer activities over the past 50 years. The first major jump in participation rates occurs in the early 1960s during the Great Society programs of President Lyndon Johnson's administration.

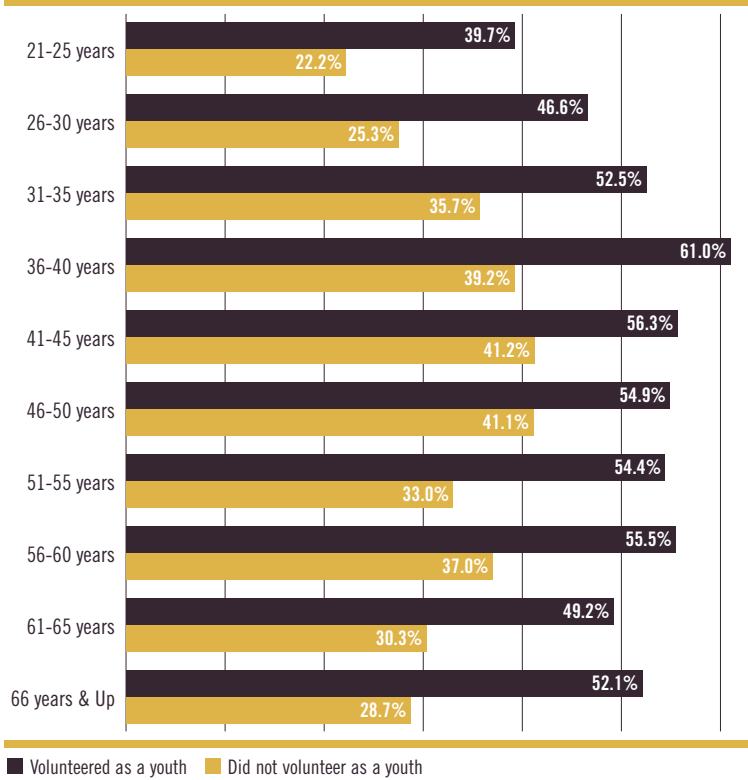
While there was a significant jump in the early 1960s, rates of youth volunteering dropped off during the Vietnam War and the late 1970s. Even with this decline, the propensity of youth to volunteer stayed at a higher level than prior to the Great Society era.

During the past two decades, there has again been a significant jump in the participation of youth in volunteer activities. In fact, the 1990s show the highest volunteering rates among American high

Figure 1 Percentage of Adult Volunteers by Youth Involvement



Figure 2 Adult Volunteering by Youth Involvement and Age



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school students in the five decades examined. INDEPENDENT SECTOR attributes this increase to the growing emphasis on service in school, including volunteer activities of honor societies, service-learning courses, and community service requirements for high school graduation. These rates of youth involvement as reported by adults are very similar to teen volunteer rates documented by INDEPENDENT SECTOR in its survey of teenagers in 1992 and 1996.

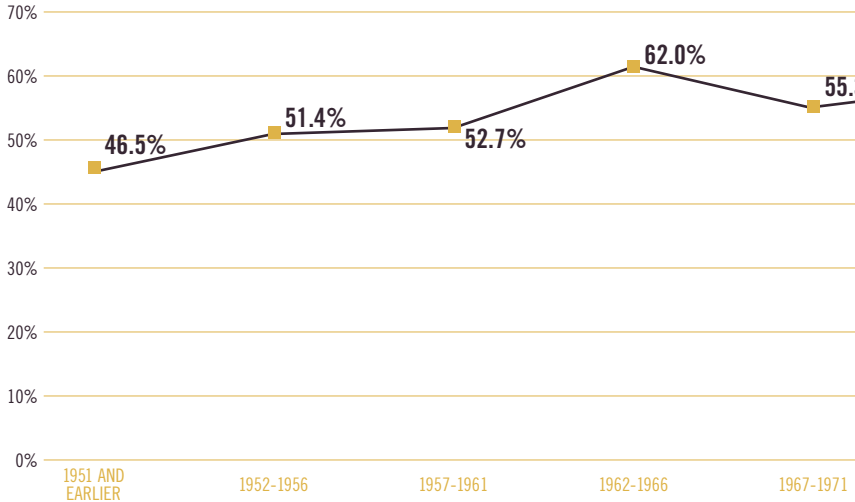
Youth Volunteers Make Generous Donors

But volunteering isn't the only way that adults who started serving early in life continue to give. Youth service also influences both the propensity to contribute and the amount given annually. In Figure 4, a clear pattern is evident—youth volunteers are slightly, but consistently, more likely to be contributors than others in the same income level.

The impact of youth volunteering that leads to the slight increase in giving rates is much more dramatic when examined in terms of how much adults give (Figure 5). In every income category, those who volunteered as youth give more than those who did not, and this impact increases with income. As the financial resources of a household increase, those involved in youth volunteering give considerably more.

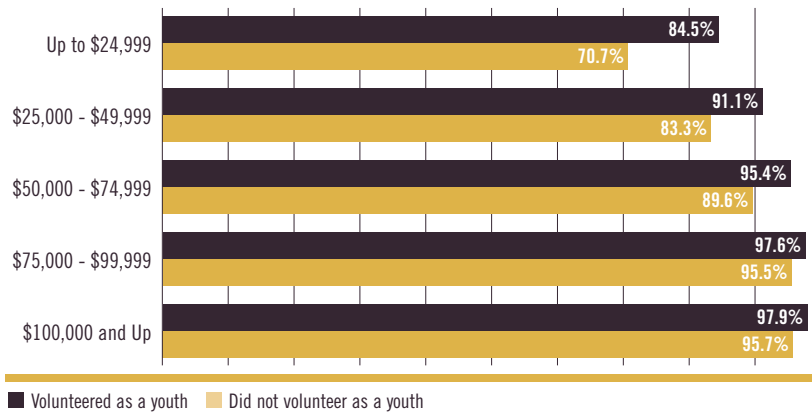
The lifelong impact of youth volunteering is seen in both adult volunteering and adult giving. The impact crosses age and income, forming a lifelong pattern of involvement. The pattern is clear and compelling: Youth service leads to greater involvement as an adult. The work of volunteer coordinators, teachers, and other youth leaders has an impact on the behaviors of teenagers far beyond their teenage years. It develops in them a pattern of civic engagement and involvement that persists.

Figure 3 Youth Volunteering by High School Year*



* Year Respondent Was 16 Years Old

Figure 4 Percentage of Households Contributing by Youth Volunteer Status and Income



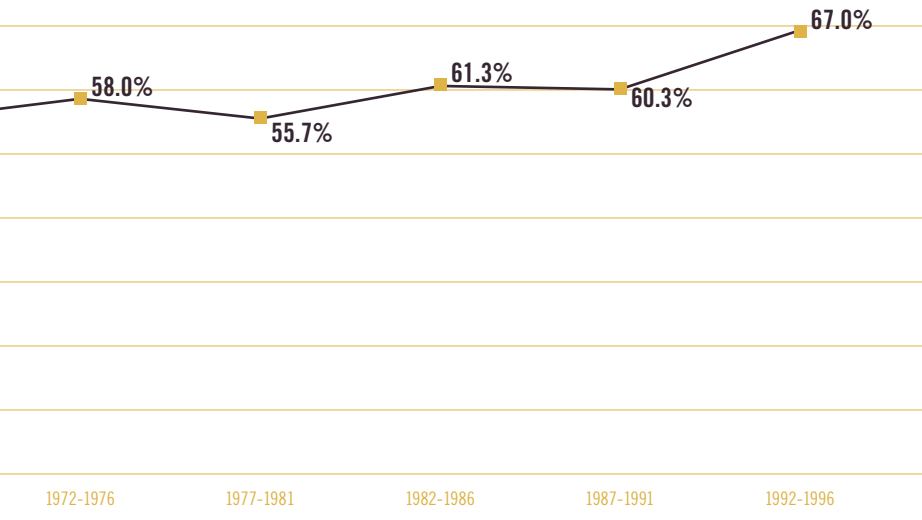
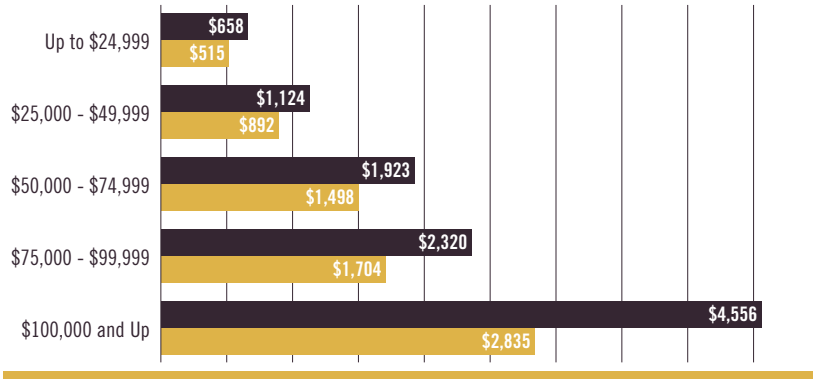


Figure 5 Household Contribution* by Youth Involvement and Income Categories



* Contributing Households Only

THE LEVEL OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IS A POWERFUL PREDICTOR OF SEVERAL ADULT BEHAVIORS: THE PROPENSITY TO VOLUNTEER, THE PROPENSITY TO GIVE, AND THE AMOUNT ONE GIVES.

Other Forms of Youth Participation Predict Charitable Habits of Adults

If volunteering when one is younger affects levels of giving and volunteering as an adult, do other forms of youth engagement—such as raising money, participating in student government, belonging to a youth group, or being active in a religious organization—affect charitable behavior? The answer is yes. Being involved in any one of these five activities, including volunteering, relates to higher levels of giving and volunteering as an adult. In fact, the more ways people are involved in their communities when they are younger, the more involved they are as adults.

This pattern is clearly demonstrated in Figures 6 and 7. Those with high levels of participation volunteer at more than twice the rate of those who were not involved

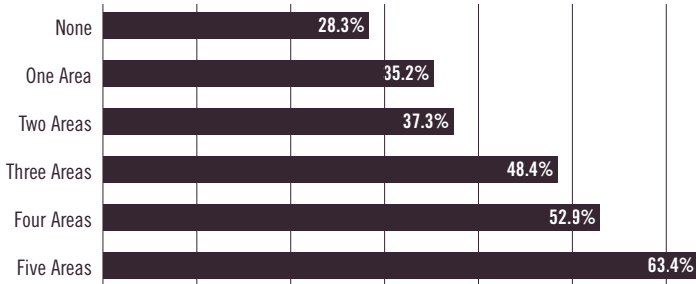
when they were younger. This difference is even more pronounced for levels of giving. A person who was engaged in all five activities as a young person contributes almost three times as much annually to charitable causes as an individual who was not engaged.

The level of youth engagement is a powerful predictor of several adult behaviors: the propensity to volunteer, the propensity to give, and the amount one gives.

Engagement Across Generations

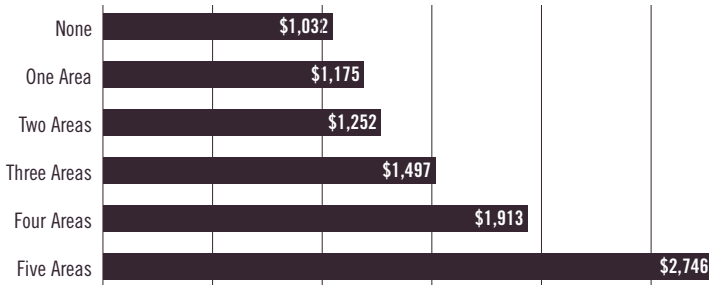
Young people generally do not volunteer without some form of adult involvement and supervision. Whether parents, teachers, religious leaders, or mentors, these adults can be seen as role models, providing support, encouragement, and enthusiasm in addition to supervision.

Figure 6 Percentage of Adults Who Volunteer by Degree of Youth Involvement



Note The five areas of youth involvement tracked by the survey were: volunteering, raising money, participating in student government, belonging to a youth group, or being active in a religious organization.

Figure 7 Average Household Contribution by Degree of Youth Involvement



Note The five areas of youth involvement tracked by the survey were: volunteering, raising money, participating in student government, belonging to a youth group, or being active in a religious organization.

Can the lifelong impact of these role models be measured?

The survey results demonstrate that those who did not volunteer when they were young and did not have a parent who volunteered were less likely to volunteer as an adult than those who had either of these experiences (Figure 8). Those who volunteered as youth and whose

parents volunteered became the most generous adults in terms of giving time—nearly 60 percent of them volunteered in the past year. This pattern suggests that role models, whether a parent or someone else who engages youth in volunteering, significantly increase the future participation rates of these youth when they become adults.

People involved with their parents as youth are more likely to become engaged as adults, but what happens when they, in turn, become parents? Does this pattern repeat across generations? Are those who saw their parents volunteering more likely to be engaged as adults with their own families? The answer, again, is yes—almost 70 percent of adults who now volunteer with their families started volunteering themselves as youth with their parents (Figure 9). Those who volunteered as youth, who had parents who volunteered, and who are now part of a couple with children, also give more than other families who did not share these experiences (Figure 10). As these traditions are handed from parent to child, a multi-generational circle is being created. Youth volunteers grow up to become the parents of a family that volunteers, becoming the role models for today's young volunteers and the sustainers of tomorrow's adult volunteering. In this way, the spirit of engagement passes from generation to generation.

This phenomenon of cross-generational engagement extends into the area of household giving. Those who volunteered as youth, who had parents who volunteered

as youth, and who now are part of a couple with children in the household, give more than other couples with children. Their annual household contribution is far greater than those in the other groups—nearly two times as much as those who did not have parent volunteers as role models.

Conclusion

These results show the very important role that youth and family service programs play in sustaining America's voluntary spirit. The relationship between youth participation and adult involvement is plain to see.

The research presented in this report can arm youth leaders, religious leaders, educators, and policymakers with the data they need to shape programs that enable and inspire young Americans to accept the call to service. Fundraisers, volunteer coordinators, and other nonprofit executives will recognize the importance of developing programs that engage youth and families today to lay the groundwork for future generations of adult philanthropists and volunteers. Seeds of helping planted in youth today will grow into a lifelong journey of involvement and engagement.

Figure 8 Adult Volunteering Rate by Parental and Youth Volunteering Experiences*



* Couples with Children Only

Figure 9 Percentage of Adults Who Volunteer With Family*



* Couples with Children Only

Figure 10 Giving Across Generations*



* Couples with Children Only; Contributing Households Only

Building Programs to Nurture Lifelong Service

Practical Implications for Nonprofit Organizations

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The clear message of INDEPENDENT SECTOR's research is that the future of individual nonprofit organizations, the volunteer sector, and society as a whole depends on young people finding meaningful opportunities to serve. If adults who volunteered as children contribute more of their time and money to charitable organizations than those who did not have service experience in childhood, then plainly an investment in today's youth volunteers is an investment in the future.

The research findings trigger a number of practical questions for nonprofit organizations, not only for those devoted to youth issues but also for those serving other causes.

What are appropriate volunteer assignments for youth? Which programs successfully engage kids, and how? What are the barriers to youth involvement, and how can we overcome them? What are the safety and liability concerns, and how should we handle them?

This research celebrates the benefits of involving young people in service to the community, but it also addresses the accompanying challenges and concerns for nonprofit organizations. In addition to practical tips and strategies on how to develop a youth volunteer program, we have included examples of programs and initiatives that are already successfully incorporating young people as regular volunteers. The resources section at the end of this publication includes organizations that offer additional advice on youth volunteering and related issues.

The Benefits of Involving Youth

Young volunteers bring with them a new perspective and a high level of energy, often a view or approach that adults have not considered or have forgotten. Young people are quick learners, less hesitant about trying something new, and willing to take risks. Nonprofit organizations benefit immediately from incorporating young people's energy and enthusiasm into their programs; they also ensure a strong future by training their next generation of leaders and staff.

Local communities and society as a whole benefit by involving youth in service. When young people learn about the root causes of hunger, homelessness, and other social problems, they are motivated to go beyond alleviating present suffering to become engaged in finding and contributing to future solutions. By becoming involved in service, young people gain the sense that they are not powerless and that their contributions can make a real difference. Young people learn that they can improve individual lives, including their own; shape organizational programs; and change policies at the local, state, and national levels.

Thinking Differently About Youth Roles

What tasks can young people be responsible for, and what is an appropriate age to begin volunteering? One way to address these issues is for an organization's staff to ask two questions before starting any project:

- What skills are needed to do this particular task or service?
- Could this task be accomplished, or this service be delivered by a young person?

Focusing on the skills needed rather than the age of the potential volunteer is a critical first step toward changing an organization's mindset about who can get a job done. When a project manager asks

these questions at the beginning of the decision-making process, countless opportunities for youth involvement typically appear.

The survey findings are very compelling in terms of the investment young volunteers represent for nonprofit organizations. With that in mind, it is critical for agencies to think outside conventional boundaries and open up multiple opportunities and roles for young people. If students participate in fundraisers in their own schools, organizations can use their help and skills for their own fundraising efforts. Young people are very effective in recruiting their peers for events and can work on outreach activities for nonprofits. They are photographers, reporters, project planners, peer advisors, and decision-makers. Organizations willing to include young volunteers in substantive ways can identify and match their own staffing needs with the skills and interests that young people already display on a daily basis at home, at school, and in their own groups.

When is a volunteer too young? Can a middle or elementary school-age student volunteer? If the skills required for a volunteer assignment include professional training, it is clear that an adult with that capacity should be responsible. But with a shift in attitudes for staff and a willingness to “let go” of the idea of traditional adult responsibilities, it can be seen that children are capable of a wide variety of tasks.

For example, a library story hour is usually conducted by adult librarians or volunteers. However, a 10-year-old with appropriate reading skills and a good voice is very capable of reading stories to preschoolers, who will relate to and see a role model in an older child. Even younger children—five- and six-year-olds—are quite ready to entertain seniors in a retirement community through singing, creating artwork, and playing together. If the volunteer assignments require greeting people, answering a telephone, reading and filling out forms, filing documents alphabetically, or adding numbers with a calculator, there is no reason why such projects could not be completed by a student who already knows how to speak clearly, read, write, copy, alphabetize, and add.

In other words, it is not the volunteer involvement itself that needs to be questioned, but that the tasks assigned to young volunteers be age- and skill-appropriate. Young volunteers need specific instructions and guidance, an example of how to fulfill the task, and periodic checking; that is, similar guidance and monitoring as required of adult volunteers. The two programs highlighted here offer examples of activities where youth do not traditionally find a role. The skills youth learn in these programs train them to become critical community resources and can also open doors for jobs in the future.

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross offers age-appropriate trainings and resources to teach young people how to prevent and respond to emergencies. The organization also offers volunteer opportunities for different age groups through its local chapters. Young children are involved in any number of projects: assembling boxes of school supplies for children affected by disaster, helping home-bound elderly neighbors prevent and prepare for emergencies, creating greeting cards and art projects for patients in veterans hospitals, and greeting donors and offering refreshments during blood drives. Teens are offered more advanced Red Cross training that allows them to educate others: teaching younger children to swim, educating the public about HIV/AIDS prevention, and conducting first aid and CPR classes. Through the Red Cross, teens can also be trained as disaster response volunteers.

www.redcross.org

www.redcross.org/services/youth

The Food Project

The Food Project's summer program in Lincoln, Massachusetts, brings together 60 14- to 16-year-olds from diverse economic and ethnic backgrounds to work on urban and rural sustainable agriculture projects. In crews of 10 youth and 2 older teens, advised by adult staff, participants grow produce during the summer that they donate to shelters and soup kitchens or sell at very low prices at farmers markets. Framed within a service-learning approach, the program combines work with training sessions and activities that link each week's project with a specific theme such as community or responsibility. Every Wednesday, youth meet at various shelters and soup kitchens in the Boston area to prepare and serve lunch, which often includes the vegetables they grew themselves.

Once a week, youth and adults evaluate each other's attitudes and performance, pointing out achievements and areas for change. At the organizational level, teens serve on the Food Project's board of directors and participate in program discussions and decisions along with adult staff. As a full-time summer internship, teens receive a modest weekly stipend and transportation vouchers.

www.thefoodproject.org

Fresh Youth Initiatives

The Fresh Youth Initiatives in New York provides opportunities for youth in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan to engage in community service projects and develop leadership skills. The central program, Community Youth in Action, has the long-term goal of developing a generation of committed community leaders who will continue to contribute to the neighborhood's improvement. In the short term, Washington Heights and other neighborhoods in New York City reap direct benefits from young people volunteering. Projects include planting fruits and vegetables at a local garden and donating the produce to a food pantry, eliminating graffiti and painting mailboxes in the neighborhood in collaboration with the U.S. Postal Service, park clean-ups, and food preparation for the homeless around the city. Youth are involved at every level of the organization: as project designers and service providers their engagement gives them ownership of the community improvement project; as youth council members, they help adult board members know what works and what does not at the program level.

www.freshyouth.org

Youth/Teen Courts

Youth or Teen Courts involve volunteers between the ages of 8 and 18 in judging and sentencing peers for first-time crimes, traffic infractions, or school rule violations. They are not formal courts, but local community programs where young people—depending on each program's structure—serve as judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, juror, and other established court roles. A 2002 Urban Institute study of teen courts, "The Impact of Teen Courts on Young Offenders," indicates that peer pressure is a positive strategy to help young offenders understand that their behavior has harmed others. The study also points to somewhat lower rates of recidivism in the youth courts—a strong argument for encouraging youth to help other youth. The American Bar Association is a strong supporter of youth volunteers in teen courts. In the introduction to its how-to publication, "Youth Courts: Young People Delivering Justice," the ABA states: "The ideal of justice can only be achieved when people both understand and trust our justice system. Through youth court, the nation's young people have a chance to contribute directly to the workings of that justice system, and at the same time develop a foundation for their trust in that system."

Youth Supporting Youth

For youth-serving programs, incorporating youth as volunteers benefits the entire organization. Young people know the population served better than anyone else—their experiences, their needs, their pressures—and youth volunteers can help shape the organization's messages and services more appropriately. Having young people advise on how to approach their peers, for example, may prevent paternalistic models and attitudes that limit the program's impact. Youth receiving services from their peers or older youth may see them as role models, or find their arguments more persuasive than if delivered by adults. For the young volunteers, active participation in the organization's operations enables them to learn valuable job skills. Volunteers and staff who have experience and appropriate skills are the lifeline of every organization's survival; the involvement of these volunteers at a younger age increases the probability that they will continue to support such organizations in the future.

The two cases highlighted in this section are among the many that incorporate youth in delivering services and making institutional and programmatic decisions that will affect other young people. Their involvement increases the likelihood that programs will be effective, because they have input from young people themselves or because they use peer pressure as a positive program tool. Another consideration is to recruit young people

who are seldom asked to volunteer, such as youth with disabilities or young people from disadvantaged communities. They may benefit the most from a service experience but also have the least access to such opportunities. These youth are more frequently associated with the role of service recipients rather than givers of care. However, they know their communities' and peers' needs and how best to relate to them—a critical asset for any organization.

The Youth-Adult Relationship

Youth volunteer programs all require some type of adult supervision—in some programs adults play the role of champion, mentor, and supporter; in others youth work alongside adults as peers. In the teen court example above, the ABA notes that “adults and youth work as colleagues to achieve the goals of restoring justice to the victims, the respondents, and the community.” Youth as Resources, with its strong youth-adult partnership component, is an example of a program in which youth receive the guidance, supervision, and encouragement of adults, along with the opportunity to participate and contribute to the community. In developing strong relationships with their youth partners, adults learn to leave behind traditional attitudes and perceptions of youth as needing to be cared for, in exchange for a vision of young people as able and willing agents of community change.

Encouraging Family Volunteering

Of special note is the report's finding regarding the "cycle of service" resulting from both youth and parents volunteering. Opening up opportunities for families to volunteer together will have a positive impact on the intergenerational spirit of community engagement. If parents can avoid the temptation to impose their own ideas of service on their children, and accept that their children may have different ways of doing things, then volunteering can be an effective strategy for them to transmit specific behaviors and values to their children through hands-on experience. In family volunteering, parents and children are faced with the need (and the opportunity) to re-learn their roles and operate as a team. Volunteering together offers ways for family members to see each other in a new light, all making a contribution for the well-being of others. Although job and school responsibilities can make it difficult for parents and children to get together when nonprofits need their services, the scheduling challenges for family volunteering are by no means insurmountable. The two examples cited below demonstrate that corporations are recognizing the importance of encouraging their employees to volunteer with their families, and that nonprofits are finding new and sometimes innovative ways for them to do so. (See also the case of KaBOOM!

on page 31 where playground sponsors bring their own children to participate in playground construction projects).

Building a Service Ethic

Families, religious institutions, and schools are the primary agents of socialization—they transmit a society's core values and norms to the young. In the United States, these institutions teach the young about striving for individual achievement, learning to work with others as a team, showing respect for national symbols, and the importance of caring, compassion, fairness, and doing good for others.

These values are taught through classroom lessons, family discussions, religious observance, and also through practical experiences. With reading, math, languages, sports, and other skills, there is a direct relationship between practice and improvement. Surely the same holds true with children practicing service to others and becoming civically engaged—they are learning how to become active and responsible citizens. Evidence shows that experiential learning—learning by doing—is conducive to better retention of skills. This makes the service-learning approach particularly promising since it integrates service into the educational curriculum in a seamless relationship between acquired competencies and their application for the public good.

Youth as Resources

Youth as Resources, a program created by the National Crime Prevention Council in 1987, recognizes youth as valuable community resources and engages them as partners with adults in bringing about positive community change. Young people between the ages of 5 and 21, in partnership with adult volunteers in schools, youth organizations, and community foundations where a YAR program has been established, address community needs such as health, housing, education, environment, crime, and any other issue identified by the youth themselves. Funds for the projects are provided through grants awarded by a board of youth and adults. Through involvement in YAR, young people gain confidence, leadership skills, and new insights about themselves, others, and the value of contributing to their communities. Adults—both those working with young people and those touched by their volunteer service—understand that youth are capable and caring citizens with important contributions to make. And communities benefit from new services and improvements delivered by people of all ages.

www.yar.org

State Farm's Employee Volunteer Program

State Farm's Employee Volunteer Program strongly encourages employees to volunteer with their families. The Bowl for Kids' Sake fundraiser for Big Brothers Big Sisters encourages families to participate as a team, collecting pledges and participating in a bowling competition to benefit social programs. Other company-wide projects such as National Youth Service Day, Make a Difference Day, the Christmas Giving Tree, and the Bear Necessities school supply drive, are initiatives where parents and children volunteer together. Children participate in a Sort-A-Rama where they organize donated school supplies according to age and fill backpacks to give to other children, and they particularly enjoy helping their parents buy Christmas gifts for children in need.

Greater DC Cares

Greater DC Cares' Family Cares program is designed to provide flexible opportunities for all families to spend quality time together while helping to meet critical community needs. Projects include a wide range of activities, from spending time with elderly residents to watering crops at a farm for the Capital Area Food Bank program and planting trees in neighborhood parks. The Family Cares experience offers an opportunity for parents to teach their children the value of community service. According to DC Cares, benefits to family volunteering include:

- Adults and children share the same goal and a common purpose.
- Children have opportunities to share their time and talents with the community.
- Children learn self-confidence and acquire new skills.
- Family members encounter people from different cultural and economic backgrounds.
- Family members see each other in a new light and with a fresh perspective.
- Family members become better at communicating and more supportive of one another.
- Volunteer experiences carry over into other parts of their lives, such as dinner table discussions, and strengthen the family as a unit.
- Adults and children learn to put their own problems in perspective.

www.dc-cares.org

Cheltenham Elementary School

Led by their teacher, Lalaena Gonzalez, the entire second-grade class (85 students) of Cheltenham Elementary School in Denver, Colorado, created a weeklong community clean-up project in April 2002. Ms. Gonzalez developed a thematic unit based on required state educational standards. Seeking to meet the second grade standard of "neighborhood," she aimed to help her students gain pride and ownership of their community on every level—from family, to class, to neighborhood, to the world. She sees that aim as particularly challenging and important since the school is the second poorest in Colorado. Students cleaned the inside and outside of the school, learned about recycling (another second grade standard), and posted charts and graphs on the amount and variety of garbage they collected. They started with their classrooms, and projected the amount of garbage that would be collected in the whole school using mathematical models. Students studied environmental advertisements and then created their own campaign to help keep neighborhoods clean. During the week of the clean-up, students charted the number of bags collected, discussed how the discarded items affect the environment, and kept a community journal in which they reflected on their experience. Ms. Gonzalez plans to establish this as an annual school-wide project.

Amateur Radio Club of William Blount High School

In the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001, a group of William Blount High School students in Maryville, Tennessee, asked what they could do locally should disaster strike their own community. Steve Carpenter, English teacher and licensed amateur radio operator, helped a group of students to form the Amateur Radio Club. Knowing ham radio's long and distinguished service record, Mr. Carpenter saw an opportunity to teach important academic skills while providing students with the opportunity to serve. Club members established two objectives: the club would be public service-oriented and educational in nature. For National Youth Service Day 2002, members of the Amateur Radio Club traveled to neighboring Mary Blount Elementary School to provide auxiliary communications for a school-wide walk-a-thon and fundraiser event. With club members stationed around the campus, student radio operators provided an easy way for staff members and event volunteers to get accurate messages across several hundred yards. In the event of an emergency in the community, students are now trained and ready to provide critical communications services.

United Way of the Coastal Empire

The United Way of the Coastal Empire in Savannah, Georgia, created its own youth advisory council "because it was important to have youth input when many funded programs serve young people, and because they are the volunteers and donors of the future." Now that the youth council has been in operation for several years, students are bringing in other youth and schools are nominating new members to represent them. Youth are involved in the allocation process; they also participate in agency site visits and budget reviews. The United Way of the Coastal Empire is working toward having a youth representative as a voting member of the board of directors for the next board cycle.

www.uwce.org

This important information indicates the need for another paradigm shift: that excelling in service and civic engagement activities is as important for students as their sports and academic achievements. In the two examples included in this section, students are learning and practicing specific values and skills that address community needs. Although many schools already include service-learning as part of the curriculum, not all students participate. The findings of the report imply that service and volunteering must become an integral part of every young person's education if schools are to achieve their mission of forming active, caring, and responsible citizens.

Youth in Philanthropy

Believing that philanthropists are created, not born, foundations and fundraising organizations have also recognized the benefits of engaging volunteers when they are young and encouraging them to learn firsthand the challenges and rewards of grant-making. Foundations and other funders play a powerful role in shaping the future of communities, and it is in their interest to cultivate the next generation of donors to support that community development

Youth in Policymaking

If democratic communities are those where all segments of the population are trusted, respected, and expected to make a contribution, then youth should also be involved in the democratic process. Involvement in policymaking extends the impact of youth service because it allows young people to have an influence at higher institutional levels, increasing the potential for long-term solutions to social problems. The survey findings clearly indicate that offering youth opportunities for participation in the present increases the likelihood that they will remain active in the future and that they will instill those same values toward collective responsibility in their own children.

The implications of these findings are particularly important for governments. Although young people give their time to social causes, there are indications that they feel distanced from and disappointed with political institutions. Opening up opportunities for young people to participate in government may perhaps dispel negative notions about policymaking institutions, while instilling a long-term willingness to continue their engagement in the political process. A number of local governments have experimented with special youth commissions; the Boston Mayor's Youth Council and the San Francisco Youth Commission are examples of youth engagement that are being institutionalized and

Michigan Community Foundations' Youth Project (MCFYP)

The Michigan Community Foundations' Youth Project (MCFYP), founded by the Council of Michigan Foundations and funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, is an initiative aimed at involving youth in philanthropy and providing every citizen with access to a community foundation. MCFYP was founded on the notion that the value of giving one's time and money is not automatically transmitted through the generations, and that adults are not always aware that young people can be strong philanthropic assets.

The initiative has achieved its goals through establishing new community foundations, strengthening existing ones, and involving young people in substantive leadership roles in philanthropy. Since MCFYP was founded in 1988, the number of community foundations has increased from 34 to 65, and where there were no Youth Advisory Committees there are now 86. More than 1,500 high school students are annually involved in overseeing these 86 endowed youth funds and making grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000 depending on the size of their youth endowment.

Some important outcomes from this project can be found in renewed attitudes that adults have toward youth: they see youth can be trusted to successfully raise and approve funds for youth projects; they see them as effective community foundation board members; and they see that with the appropriate training and opportunities, all students can be effective philanthropists. Among the very positive outcomes for youth, one that is especially relevant to this report, is that Youth Advisory Committee members tend to stay involved with nonprofits and charitable organizations after their term of service has ended.

www.mcfyp.org

Michigan Women's Foundation's Young Women for Change

The Michigan Women's Foundation began the Young Women for Change program in 1995. The committee members range in age from 14 to 18 years, representing ninth through twelfth grades. Those selected to serve on the committee are drawn from rural, urban, and suburban schools and represent a range of socioeconomic and racial groups. YWFC is organized to maximize the girls' experiences in gender-focused philanthropy and grantmaking and to provide leadership development and team building training in a diverse setting. Committee members typically serve a two-year term, and then select new members to succeed themselves. The young women implement the entire grantmaking process, from writing and releasing the Request for Proposals, to conducting site visits, to selecting the final grant recipients. Each committee grants a minimum of \$20,000 annually to nonprofit groups serving the needs of young women and girls in their geographic area. In order to accomplish this, they meet at least once a month during the school year. YWFC grants funds to programs

specifically serving young women and girls and addresses gender correlation to poverty, low self-esteem, health and healthcare, access to jobs, domestic violence, and sexual assault. The program's focus on gender issues not only increases the amount of funding that reaches young women and girls, it also increases awareness of these problems in its young women participants. YWFC is designed to address the needs of girls and young women through its program structure, committee activities, and grantmaking. In addition, YWFC teaches philanthropy as a habit and a lifelong tool for social change.

www.miwf.org

incorporated directly into the government's structure.

Youth involvement at the policy level can also be achieved by young individuals creating their own organizations to influence public policy. Adult support for young people's ideas is a critical step toward building future civic involvement. The case of Kidz Voice-LA, initiated by two middle-school students and supported by adult allies with influence at the policymaking level, is a good example of a youth-led organization whose members are likely to continue to be actively engaged in the civic process in the future.

Barriers to Youth Service

Despite the many benefits, there still remain some barriers to youth service that must be overcome if programs are to be successful. The first one is the organizational "mindset" preparation needed for adults and youth so that working together is a productive and enjoyable experience for both groups. Some issues to address in the preparation stage include:

- Advice to adults about "dos and don'ts" on how to work with youth, and for youth on how to work with adults;
- An open discussion about stereotypes that adults and youth have of each other;
- Exercises to practice "shared power";
- Appropriate training for various age groups;
- Clear definition of roles and responsibilities for both adults and youth;

- Decision-making processes that include youth in meaningful ways; and
- Attention to logistics such as the availability of transportation, suitable scheduling, and snacks for young volunteers who come after school.

Adult staff not used to working with youth as peers will need to consider some adjustments in behavior—avoiding judgmental attitudes, being flexible, providing feedback, and delegating responsibilities. Perhaps the major adjustment needed is for adult staff and volunteers to be willing to take risks—accepting that the form will be filled out with a child's handwriting, that the task will not have been completed exactly as an adult would have done, and that children may have viable suggestions on changing the current systems and accepted ways of doing things. All of the cases offered as examples throughout the text share the same advice: Adults need to be ready to listen to young people's perspectives, be patient, and take advantage of their energy and new ideas. Involving young volunteers is a long-term investment, both for the youth and for the nonprofit organization.

Another potential barrier is related to adapting assignments to young people's school schedules, as well as their homework commitments, family responsibilities, medical appointments, and special transportation needs if they are not of driving age. These scheduling difficulties, however, are not very

Boston Mayor's Youth Council

The Boston Mayor's Youth Council was established in the spring of 1994 to provide young people with an active role in addressing youth issues. Members of the council survey local youth organizations to gain their input on issues that concern youth, such as summer jobs, teen/police communication, and public transportation access. The MYC has the support of adult volunteers who mentor council members. The youth also have access to city agency staff who connect them to different resources relevant to the topic they are working on. The Youth Council meets periodically with the mayor and other city officials to present young people's perspectives. Scheduling meetings in which adults and youth need to be present can be challenging, but adults are moving many of their 8:00 a.m. meetings to 3:30 p.m. to accommodate teen school schedules.

By being involved in the planning of youth services, young people can help to create programs that will better meet the needs of their generation. In addition, teens who have been part of the planning are the best people to promote the resources to their peers. In Boston the Youth Council helped to design a Youthline "peer listening line" to connect teens to resources, and the data was the basis for a website designed for youth by youth. www.bostonyouthzone.com

San Francisco Youth Commission

The San Francisco Youth Commission is a chartered city commission made up entirely of young people between the ages of 12 and 23. The commission's 17 members represent the diversity of San Francisco and serve as youth voices in City Hall. The commission advises city leaders on the needs and ideas of young people and ensures that city policies and decisions accurately reflect the priorities of San Francisco's youth. Through legislation, public hearings, community events, and meetings with elected leaders, the commission works to engage youth in the political process and to bridge the gap between youth and the government that serves them. Any young city resident is eligible to become a member and recruitment takes place year-round at schools and community-based organizations. During an orientation retreat, commissioners receive training covering city government issues, history of youth movements, organizing, public speaking, writing legislation, and other related topics. www.ci.sf.ca.us/youth_commission

Kidz Voice-LA

In 1998, over 150 youth were shot in the city of Los Angeles, 53 of them fatally. Aware of the danger caused by ammunition being sold in their city, twin brothers Theo and Niko Milonopoulos—then 11 years old—co-founded Kidz Voice-LA, a nonprofit organization by kids, for kids, to provide youth with a voice in public policy and to lobby for gun control legislation. Through petitions, attendance at anti-gun violence marches, public speeches, and testimonies, Kidz Voice-LA has helped change the city's gun policy. With support from city, county, and state legislators; gun control organizations; student councils; at-risk youth groups; and parent-teacher organizations, Kidz Voice-LA coordinated a gun meltdown rally with the Los Angeles Police Department. In April 2001, they successfully lobbied the Los Angeles City Council to pass a partial ban on ammunition sales. On National Youth Service Day 2002, Kidz Voice-LA led a “Get Out the Vote” campaign and distributed 300 bilingual voter registration forms in preparation for the city's June elections.

different from those of adult volunteers who also have work- and family-related duties and sometimes transportation difficulties. As mentioned in the example of the Boston Mayor's Youth Council, many of the city's boards changed meeting times from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. to accommodate the school schedules of their youth representatives.

Addressing Liabilities and Legal Concerns

Liability risks and child labor laws may often be raised as obstacles to the inclusion of young people as volunteers. While these issues clearly need to be addressed, for the most part they are similar to concerns raised about adult volunteer programs. Nonprofit organizations should check with their insurance carriers to ensure that liability and accident coverage extends to younger volunteers. If the children are referred through a school service-learning program, some insurance coverage may be provided by the school district. Of course, leaders will want to educate young volunteers about risk management practices and safety procedures—just as they do with adult volunteers.

Even though the Fair Labor Standards Act does not generally apply to volunteers, nonprofits will want to stay on the safe side of federal child labor laws. The Department of Labor deems some occupations too hazardous for children under 14, and some too hazardous for minors under 18. Since very few nonprofits would wish to assign even adult volunteers to hazardous activities, these prohibitions are unlikely to present a problem. And in fact, the Department of Labor regulations on work experience and career exploration programs offered through state departments of education provide some exceptions to the hazardous work rules for children as young as 14. It is also a good idea to check with the state Department of Labor as some states have additional restrictions on children's work activities than those imposed under federal law. KaBOOM! is one example of a program involving children in safe and age-appropriate activities while also giving them the opportunity to contribute to the project in creative and substantive ways.

Conclusion

This report demonstrates that through their volunteering, youth are involved in every aspect of community life—they help other children, they form strong partnerships with adults, they help strengthen family bonds, they support those in need, and their efforts also contribute to

vibrant civic and philanthropic initiatives. The most important implication of the report's findings is that it is critical to civil society's continued strength that organizations cultivate lifelong volunteers and donors by providing meaningful opportunities for involvement while they are young. There are challenges to this effort, but for every obstacle and question raised, there are resources, options, and stirring examples of programs that are making the inclusion of young volunteers work.

How can we make a start? Adults can strive to be open-minded to young people's ideas; they can recognize that taking risks is a necessary step toward developing high-quality programs that truly represent the youth perspective. Organizations can work toward changing traditional volunteer and governance structures and adjusting their schedules to incorporate youth. Businesses can make an important investment in their community's well-being by expanding employee volunteer initiatives to include families. Nonprofit organizations can educate youth about the nonprofit sector's role in society and encourage young people's involvement in addressing community needs.

The impact of engaging young people in meaningful service to others is evident: The service opportunities we offer children and youth today are the foundation of the volunteer and philanthropic sector in the future.

KaBOOM!

KaBOOM! is a national nonprofit organization, headquartered in Washington D.C., that promotes community partnerships among neighbors and organizations to join together to build safe and accessible playgrounds around the country. A playground-building project is considered a construction site and therefore only volunteers 18 and older are allowed to participate in the building itself. Younger children and youth, however, do have substantive roles before and during the project.

Two to three months before a playground is built, a KaBOOM! project manager and the community chair for the project facilitate a “Design Day” especially for children in the neighborhood where the playground will be constructed. On large sheets of paper each child draws his or her “dream” playground with their name and age. The project manager collects the drawings and identifies common requirements for the future playground. Sometimes, the children even present the drawings to each other, leading to giggles and discussions about what makes a good playground. Involving the future users in

the planning stage benefits the children because the playground includes the features they wished for; the community benefits because it invests in a playground whose components have been selected by those who will put the equipment to good use.

During the construction of the playground, children aged eight and older can be in charge of distributing food for the volunteers and developing games and activities for younger children. Since most playground “builds” take place on Saturdays, non-community volunteers working on the project, such as sponsors, bring their own children as well. At the end of the project, children are in charge of the ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the completion of the new playground. After every playground construction, the children’s drawings are bound and presented to the projects’ sponsors as a thank-you gift.

www.kaboom.org

Additional Resources

The following list includes many valuable resources available from the members and partners of INDEPENDENT SECTOR and Youth Service America in the field of youth service, volunteer programs, and research. Other resources are also available at the national and local level; through state commissions on volunteering; and through school systems, religious congregations, and other organizations. This is only a partial list.

America's Promise—The Alliance for Youth

909 N. Washington Street, Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314-1556
703-684-4500

www.americaspromise.org

America's Promise works to mobilize people from every sector of American life to build the character and competence of our nation's youth by fulfilling Five Promises for young people, including ensuring youth have opportunities to give back through community service.

Association for Volunteer Administration

P.O. Box 32092
Richmond, VA 23294-2092
804-346-2266

www.avaintl.org

The Association for Volunteer Administration, an international professional association, enhances the competence of its members and strengthens the profession of volunteer resources management.

Boy Scouts of America

1325 West Walnut Hill Lane
P.O. Box 152079
Irving, TX 75038-3008
972-580-2000

www.scouting.org

Boys Scouts of America espouses community service as one of its building blocks of scouting. The organization offers service workbooks and other resources.

Boys and Girls Clubs of America

1230 West Peachtree Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30309-3404
404-487-5700

www.bgca.org

The mission of Boy and Girls Clubs of America is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens. Through its character and leadership programs, Boys and Girls Clubs give youth the opportunity to plan, participate in, and receive recognition for community service.

Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL)

37 Temple Place, Suite 401
Boston, MA 02111-1308
617-695-2665

www.cool2serve.org

The mission of COOL is to educate, connect, and mobilize college students and their campuses to strengthen communities through service and action.

Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE)

University of Maryland
School of Public Affairs
College Park, MD 20742
301-405-2790

www.civicyouth.org

Based in the University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs, CIRCLE promotes research on the civic engagement of Americans aged 15 to 25.

Communities in Schools

277 South Washington Street, Suite 210
Alexandria, VA 22314
703-519-8999

www.cisnet.org

Communities in Schools champions the connection of needed community resources with schools, helping children learn and prepare for life. Programs include community service opportunities and Junior ROTC Program.

Community Partnerships with Youth, Inc.

550 East Jefferson Street, Suite 306
Franklin, IN 46131
317-736-7947

www.cpyinc.org

Community Partnerships with Youth, Inc., is a national training and resource development organization dedicated to promoting active citizenship through youth and adult partnerships. CPY offers technical assistance, consulting and training programs, curricula, and publications.

Corporation for National and Community Service

(see USA Freedom Corps)

Department of Labor

U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210
866-4-USA-DOL

www.dol.gov

The Department of Labor offers several resources on youth labor regulations, hazardous jobs, and links to the youth labor laws of each state.

Girl Scouts of the USA

420 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10018-2729
212-852-8000

www.girlscouts.org

Girl Scouts' four program goals include "contributing to society." Girl Scouts and the Girl Scout Research Institute offer publications and other resources on encouraging volunteering among girls.

Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation

4801 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, Missouri 64110-2046
816-932-1000

www.emkf.org

The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation's mission is to identify unfulfilled needs and to develop breakthrough solutions that have a lasting impact. *Like Now: Changing the Future Today with Youth Advisory Boards* shares the Kauffman Foundation's experience with starting a youth board.

Learn and Serve America National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

ETR Associates
4 Carbonero Way
Scotts Valley, CA 95066
866-245-SERV (7378)
831-438-4060
831-461-0205 TDD

www.servicelearning.org

The Learn and Serve America National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC) supports the service-learning community in higher education, kindergarten through grade

twelve, community-based initiatives and tribal programs, as well as all others interested in strengthening schools and communities using service-learning techniques and methodologies. The clearinghouse offers materials, references, referrals, and current literature on service-learning.

Learning to Give

630 Harvey Street
Muskegon, MI 49442
231-767-8600

www.learningtogive.org

A program of the Council of Michigan Foundations, Learning to Give is a K-12 curriculum project that works with teachers nationwide to develop, field test, and implement teaching units about philanthropy and volunteering.

National Association of Service and Conservation Corps (NASCC)

666 11th Street NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20001-4525
202-737-6272

www.nascc.org

NASCC is the national organization of service corps that organize crews of young men and women to carry out a wide range of conservation, urban infrastructure improvement, and human service projects around the country.

National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC)

1667 Snelling Avenue, North, Suite D300
Saint Paul, MN 55108-2131
651-631-3672

www.nylc.org

NYLC's mission is to build vital, just communities with young people through service-learning. NYLC sponsors the National Service-Learning Exchange, a peer-based training and technical assistance center, the National Service-Learning Conference, and creates curricula and training programs for young people and adults.

Nonprofit Risk Management Center

1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-296-0349

www.nonprofitrisk.org

The center offers technical assistance, publications, software, training, and consulting help on risk management for nonprofits. Several publications on liability issues regarding volunteer programs and youth involvement with nonprofits are available.

Points of Light Foundation

1400 I Street, NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005
202-729-8000

www.polf.org

The foundation's mission is to engage more people more effectively in volunteer community service to help solve serious social problems.

Search Institute

The Banks Building
615 First Avenue NE, Suite 125
Minneapolis, MN 55413
612-376-8955 or toll-free 800-888-7828

www.search-institute.org

Search Institute, a nonprofit, independent research organization, has identified 40 concrete, positive experiences and qualities—developmental assets—that have a tremendous influence on young people's lives and choices.

USA Freedom Corps

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500
877-USA-CORPS

www.usafreedomcorps.gov

Created by President Bush to encourage all Americans to serve their communities, the USA Freedom Corps encompasses the Corporation for National and Community Service and its programs targeted at engaging young Americans: AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America.

Youth on Board

58 Day Street
Somerville, MA 02144
617-623-9900, ext. 1242

www.youthonboard.org

Youth on Board prepares youth to be leaders in their communities and strengthens relationships between youth and adults by providing publications, customized workshops, and technical assistance. Youth on Board is a project of YouthBuild USA.

Youth Venture

1700 North Moore Street, Suite 2000
Arlington VA 22209-1921
703-527-4126

www.youthventure.org

Youth Venture empowers young people to create and launch their own enterprises, and through these enterprises, to take greater responsibility for their lives and communities.

Youth Volunteer Corps of America

4600 West 51st Street, Suite 300
Shawnee Mission, KS 66205-3501
913-432-9822

www.yvca.org

The Youth Volunteer Corps of America's mission is to provide volunteer opportunities for youth ages 11 to 18. Tapping the talents and energies of young people across the country, YVC establishes Youth Volunteer Corps programs nationwide that engage thousands of young people in meeting local community needs.

Also of Interest

Youth Service Day

National Youth Service Day and Global Youth Service Day occur each spring and engage thousands of young people across the nation and around the globe in service projects. Contact Youth Service America for more information.

Online Resources

www.servenet.org
www.idealists.org
www.learningindeed.org
www.networkforgood.org
www.volunteermatch.org





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www.servenet.org