



Research, Best Practices & Logic Model – VOLUNTEERISM

Research says:

- Those who volunteer have lower mortality rates, greater functional ability, and lower rates of depression later in life than those who do not volunteer (1-4).
- Volunteering can benefit the physical and mental health of the population, as well as creating a more interconnected community (2).
- Health and Veterinary Research Suggests: There are a number of health benefits to owning a pet. Factors contributing to the well-being of individuals include (5) (6) (7):
 - Lower Blood Pressure
 - Lessen Anxiety
 - Pediatric exposure to pets reduces risk of allergies and asthma
 - Reduces social isolation and shyness

Volunteering at local animal shelters make a difference in people's health, the community and help (8).

- Volunteering helps with unmet community needs, and saves resources by providing valuable community services so more money can be spent on local improvements. The estimated value of a volunteer's time in 2013 was \$22.55 per hour (9).
- Volunteering is an investment in local communities and the people who live in them, and promotes civic responsibility (10).
- Research indicates volunteering may lead to (11):
 - Greater health benefits for older adults
 - Greater life satisfaction and lower rates of depression
 - Physical well-being
 - Longevity

1. Musick, M. and Wilson J. (2003) "Volunteering and Depression: The Role of Psychological and Social Resources in Different Age Groups." *Social Science and Medicine*, 56(2): 259-269.
2. Thoits, P.A. and Hewitt, L.N. (2001) "Volunteer Work and Well-Being." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 42(2): 115-131.
3. Van Willigen, M. (2000) "Differential Benefits of Volunteering Across the Life Course." *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 55B(5): S308-S318
4. Brown, S., Nesse, R. M., Vonokur, A. D., & Smith, D. M. (2003). "Providing Social Support May Be More Beneficial than Receiving It: Results from a Prospective Study of Mortality." *Psychological Science*, 14(4): 320-327
5. James E. Gern, MD, pediatrician at the University of Wisconsin Madison, in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*
6. Nadine Kaslow, PhD, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia
7. Lynel Hart, PhD, associate professor at the University of California at Davis School of Veterinary Medicine
8. http://www.humanesociety.org/animal_community/resources/tips/reasons_volunteer_shelter.html.
9. http://independentsector.org/volunteer_time.
10. Corp for National & Community Service, Youth Engagement Zone; http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/factsheet_lsa.pdf.
11. Grimm, Robert Jr; Spring, Kimberly; Dietz, Nathan, *The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research* (April 2007).

Best Practices Are:

- Based on research the following actions may contribute to positive health and well-being:
 - Enhance community health by promoting pet adoptions
 - Educate the public on proper pet care, bite prevention and the benefits of pet ownership
 - Collaborate with organizations to provide pet adoptions to active and retired military families
 - Provide support services to keep companion pets, owners, and the public safe and healthy. A pet may become a stimulus for exercise, reduce anxiety, and provide an external focus of attention. Pets are also a source of physical contact and comfort and may decrease loneliness and depression (1).
 - Utilize various media, technology and communication strategies to promote benefits of pet ownership.
 - Increase partnerships such as Pets for Patriots to promote adoptions.
 - Develop and increase community awareness programs regarding responsible pet ownership and public safety.



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- Promote services regarding pet health and protection.
 - Creating tools and training, and Websites with valuable information, can encourage persons with questions or doubts about abilities to research volunteer opportunities, and help retain volunteers (2)(3).
 - Senior volunteer programs, such as You Are Not Alone (YANA), Senior Volunteer Patrol (SVP), and Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), benefit sponsor organizations, volunteers, and the communities they serve. Positive outcomes include (4):
 - Relief to understaffed/overburdened organizations
 - Enrich the lives of volunteers, become more engaged in the community, and promote better health & quality of life
 - Provide valuable services to help meet needs in the community
 - Conduct wellness checks and intervention services to elderly, disabled & homebound individuals living alone
1. Jennings, L.B.; US Natl Lib of Med, Potential benefits of pet ownership in health promotion, Dec 15,1997; <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9397745>.
 2. See, for example, Susan Ellis (1996) *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success*, and Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch (1996) *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing all the Resources in the Community*.
 3. http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/Management_Brief.pdf.
 4. http://independentsector.org/volunteer_time.

Logic Model:

