

*“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.” - Author unknown*

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Service remains the main driving force of good in many communities around the globe. These communities thrive on the good done to them by ordinary people. Every act of service has the ability to change the direction a community is heading in. As an anonymous source puts it, “Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.” Service has a great potential to make a difference in your community.

The aforementioned quote describes volunteering and its role in democracy. Democracy involves people participating in and determining how their government works. When you provide service to a community, you voice your opinion and state your position on certain matters. Volunteering for the Red Cross means you think that disaster relief is important, while helping out at the animal shelter means you believe in animals receiving a home. In the way, service is a more direct and perhaps a more effective form of voting – and this establishes volunteering as the ultimate exercise in democracy.

One aspect that I enjoy about volunteering is its ability to make you find something you like that you wouldn't have otherwise. One experience I am fond of is Teen Court, an alternative to the main judicial system. Here, a minor who committed a crime would be judged by his or her fellow peers in a real court proceeding. With this activity, I assisted the judicial process, and by doing this, I both helped out my local community and received the opportunity to do something I liked. Likewise, I am enthusiastic to improve and benefit my school as a whole. I now participate in student government and my choices change the conditions I'm surrounded by almost every day.

Every person has their own sense of duty. Volunteering is one of the best ways to fulfill it. Several foundations have been created to allow people to satisfy their civic and moral duties and to encourage individuals to give their communities a helping hand. Take for example, the Make-A-Wish Foundation, the Salvation Army, or the Red Cross. These organizations, together, retain a presence both nationally and internationally and are devoted to driving positive changes in a community. People all over the world have their lives changed or restored because of these organizations' efforts. Volunteers strive to make life better for people all around the world.

In the future, I look forward to participating in more volunteering programs, and I believe in the importance of other people taking part as well. People are empowered by the ability to do good for others, and can create a dramatic change in the community. Being a responsible citizen and doing your part in the community helps to create those changes, and this indeed does make volunteering the ultimate exercise in democracy. The amount of impact someone's service can have on a person, a household, or even an entire community truly is astonishing.