Well-Being: Volunteering

Volunteering...giving to yourself by giving to others.

Volunteering is not only good for our community, but it is also one of the best things we can do to enhance our own personal well-being. In fact, it may make the difference between living a good life and living an exceptional life (Rath & Harter, 2010). Volunteering increases social interaction and builds meaningful relationships. It makes us feel like we have more time, and who doesn't need that? It contributes to a sense of meaning and purpose and teaches valuable skills that are transferable to other areas of our lives. It also provides opportunities to be physically and mentally active (Horoszowski, 2015). Opportunities exist all around us to volunteer. One of the best ways to get started without any long term obligation is to take advantage of events such as The United Way Days of Caring or your college's paid time off to volunteer benefit.

In September, Middlebury College partners with the United Way of Addison County (UWAC) to support Days of Caring. On September 19th and 21st of this year, the UWAC will send out hundreds of volunteers to complete dozens of projects at non-profits throughout Addison County. In May, Champlain College participates in a similar event called, "Dare to Contribute". In previous years, Champlain employees prepared meals for guests of the Ronald McDonald House, collected and packaged personal hygiene kits for the Committee on Temporary Shelter and helped build plots for a community garden in Burlington. St. Michael's College offers a host of volunteer opportunities and service trips through their MOVE program and both St. Michael's and Norwich University provide very generous paid time off to volunteer.

To find out more about volunteer opportunities available through your college, check out your school's well-being resource guide posted on the GMHEC/well-being/resources page or contact your school's human resources department. Giving the gift of your time is one of the best things you can do for yourself and for your community.

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