

# Make a Difference. Volunteer.

## Information Sheet Youth volunteer opportunities

This information sheet highlights general information on volunteering with some practical ideas and contacts to point you in the right direction!

### Volunteering: What is it?

Volunteering is a choice made by you to **make a difference**. There are a number of different ways to volunteer. To find out what type of volunteering is best for you it is important to consider:

- What do I enjoy?
- What skills and talents can I offer?
- How can my skills and talents help a community organisation?
- What values and experiences would I like to explore?
- How much time do I have available?

No matter what your answers to the above questions there are volunteering opportunities available for you. Volunteering is about becoming involved and taking action on issues which are important to you. It involves volunteering your time, skills and enthusiasm to a worthy cause. Anyone can make a difference, including **YOU!**

Becoming a volunteer is a great way to make a difference but donating your time can also benefit you. It is a great way to make new friends with similar interests, develop new skills and expand those which you already have. It also looks great on your resume.

Starting volunteer work can often be a daunting task. There are so many questions about where to go for information, what exactly you can do, and what organisations you can help. There are three main options to consider when finding volunteer work. It just depends which path you would like to take.

### Volunteer Options

The three main options for students and young people considering getting involved in volunteering include:

1. Run your own project
2. School-based project or event
3. Volunteer with a not-for-profit in the community

#### 1. Run your own project

The Red Cross runs a volunteering initiative called Y Challenge. Through Y Challenge the Red Cross gives the support that young people (under 18 years of age) need to develop their ideas and create projects to benefit their community.

#### What is Y Challenge?

- This is a free program which is focused directly on Australian young people making a difference in the local community.
- The project is usually completed as a team so it would be great to get your friends involved and enjoy yourself.
- Think about what you want to achieve through the project and then establish the ways in which you are going to achieve these goals. Be creative.

#### Project ideas:

- Create an artwork to donate to the local community in places such as youth centres or a woman's refuge.

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- Plant a harmony garden to raise awareness of the need for harmony in society while also growing your own fruit and vegetables.
- Knitting and sewing teddy bears for local sick or vulnerable children.
- Assist primary school students to enjoy their playground by painting handball courts and hopscotch onto their yard.

For more information contact:

Sydney Region Kate Dixon (02) 9229 4113 [kdixon@redcross.org.au](mailto:kdixon@redcross.org.au)

Western Sydney Region (02) 9229 4272

[http://www.redcross.org.au/ourservices\\_acrossaustralia\\_youtheducation\\_programs\\_Ychallenge.htm](http://www.redcross.org.au/ourservices_acrossaustralia_youtheducation_programs_Ychallenge.htm)

## 2. School-based project or event

As a student you spend a lot of your time at school so this makes it the perfect place to take action through volunteering to set up a school-based project or event. Fundraising is a great way to both raise money to help an organisation while also raising awareness of their cause.

### Fundraising Ideas:

- Ask everyone in your class to bring in a cake or biscuits and hold a stall.
- Talk to the principal about holding a mufti day where students can wear casual clothes to school for a gold coin donation.
- Organise a school dance party for the students in your school.
- Sell raffle tickets and ask companies in your local community to donate prizes.
- Use your creativity and talents to raise money or collect goods for your chosen organisation.

School based events do not always need to involve fundraising. Many organisations encourage other ways of volunteering that raises awareness of important issues rather than money.

### Event/project examples:

#### • Invisible Children Inc

Invisible Children Inc. is an organisation which aims to help child soldiers in Uganda through large scale events, media, raising awareness and fundraising. The Invisible Children organisation began with a rough cut film called *Invisible Children* which is based on the experiences of these children. By holding a screening of the film at your school you will be raising awareness of the problem to the local community which might encourage others to volunteer.

Contact: Christina VandenHengel on 0415 948 079 or [cvandenhengel@invisiblechildren.com](mailto:cvandenhengel@invisiblechildren.com)  
[www.invisiblechildren.com](http://www.invisiblechildren.com)

#### • NSW Cancer Council

The NSW Cancer Council aims to raise awareness of cancer, find a cure and assist those people who have been affected by cancer.

There are many ways to get involved including:

- Run a fundraising event such as the Biggest Morning Tea
- Organise physical activity events at your school such as sporting matches at lunch time
- Lobbying for a healthier canteen or more shaded areas.

<http://www.cancercouncil.com.au/>

#### • Amnesty International

Amnesty International has developed specific resource toolkits to enable young people to support Amnesty International campaigns through School Action Groups.

For more information and great resources go to:

<http://www.amnesty.org.au/schoolaction>

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www.volunteering.com.au

## 3. Volunteer with a not-for-profit organisation

A not-for-profit (NFP) organisation aims at devoting all its profits to the cause in which it is working towards. There are thousands of NFP organisations who need your help. The first step in deciding which organisation would be best for you is thinking about your interests and what sort of volunteering you would like to take part in (for example welfare, environment, disability services, sports and recreation etc.)

For volunteering ideas and not-for-profit organisations go to:

- [www.actnow.com.au](http://www.actnow.com.au)
- [http://www.volunteering.com.au/youth\\_volunteering/youth\\_friendly\\_organisations.asp](http://www.volunteering.com.au/youth_volunteering/youth_friendly_organisations.asp)
- [http://www.volunteering.com.au/youth\\_volunteering/speaker\\_profiles/index.asp](http://www.volunteering.com.au/youth_volunteering/speaker_profiles/index.asp)

Once you have decided on what sort of volunteer work you are interested in there are a number of places you can go to organise this volunteer work.

### Youth-involving organisations

The following list includes a sample of different not-for-profit organisations open to involving youth volunteers:

#### Special Olympics Australia

This organisation provides year round sports training and competition for people with intellectual disabilities. Volunteer at training sessions after school or on weekends in your area.

For more information contact:

Head Office Aaron Saunders (02) 8116 9863 0410 312 773 [www.specialolympics.com.au](http://www.specialolympics.com.au)

#### St Vincent De Paul Society (Vinnies)

Vinnies youth programs provide volunteer opportunities for young people (16 years and over) to assist in supporting disadvantaged young people. Opportunities include Buddy Days; Kids Camps; Night Patrol; and working in the centres.

For more information contact:

Sydney Region (02) 9350 9600

Western Sydney Region (02) 9689 1900

Broken Bay Region (02) 9495 8300

<http://www.vinnies.org.au/home.cfm?CFID=821014&CFTOKEN=48977620>

### Environmental volunteering

If you enjoy getting out in the great outdoors and doing some hands-on volunteering check out organisations listed below:

- **Conservation Volunteering Australia.**  
Conservation and regeneration projects throughout Sydney and Australia (17 years and over). For current projects go to: <http://www.conservationvolunteers.com.au/> select *Volunteer Opportunities* → *Conservation Connect* → select location.
- **Forests NSW**  
Bush regeneration and site maintenance opportunities (mainly 14 years and over). For more information contact: Mike Hill, Volunteer Manager on (02) 9872 0561 or [Michael.hill@sf.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Michael.hill@sf.nsw.gov.au)  
<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forests/community/volunteer>
- Check if your local council has a bush care or community garden program.

