

## **Want to meet new people, make a positive difference and develop skills? Try Microvolunteering**

**You have a demanding job, a busy life and yet you feel like one of the lucky ones and would like to find a way of supporting and benefiting our community. What if there was a way that you could just offer small amounts of your time, as and when you were able, without a big commitment? Maybe you know how to get the best out of social media or you know your way around Excel spreadsheets, perhaps you love chatting on the phone? Whatever your unique qualities, microvolunteering could be for you.**

### **What is microvolunteering?**

Have you ever considered volunteering but find the same old reasons keep holding you back? You can't find the time. You would rather not have to commit to anything long term in case you feel you could let someone down. A disability or health challenge is an important priority in your own life. None of these things should hold you back or limit the benefits you can offer. This is where microvolunteering comes in. Microvolunteering is quick and convenient – a microvolunteering opportunity may take just a short amount of time, or as much or as little as you want to make of it. There are even useful activities that can be done while you are already out and about, from a smart phone, or from your own home in your favourite comfy clothes.

Microvolunteering could be weeding a garden, picking up a prescription or building a database and every bit you can do counts just as much. Being able to give back in bite-sized chunks of time or at a time that suits your lifestyle makes volunteering accessible. It can be a 'taster' if you would like to volunteer but aren't sure what's right for you.

The key benefit is flexibility. You don't have to make a long term commitment or volunteer every weekend. It also enables a wide diversity of people with different experiences to be included in teams where otherwise, they might not be able to participate in more traditional volunteering roles.

### **Why volunteer?**

Volunteering can help you to meet new people, learn new things or improve your own skills, to make a positive difference in our community. With the right opportunities you could even feel happier and healthier or develop in ways that help with your own personal goals, or overcome your own challenges. Volunteering offers vital assistance and support to people who find themselves in challenging circumstances, it contributes to worthwhile causes, and the community, but the benefits can be even greater for you, the volunteer.

### **Make a difference**

One of the more well-known benefits of volunteering is the positive impact on our society. Volunteering allows you to connect with the community and make it a better place. Even helping out with the smallest tasks can make a real difference to peoples' lives for different reasons. And volunteering is a two-way street: It can help you to discover new ideas, opportunities and personal qualities that perhaps you didn't know you had, or maybe you

just forgot you enjoyed using. The experiences could benefit you and your family as much as the cause you choose to help. Dedicating your time as a volunteer helps you meet people, build confidence, expand your network, and boost your social skills.

### **Get healthier and happier**

Giving to others can help protect your mental and physical health. In the right circumstances and with a balanced approach, it can reduce stress, combat depression, keep you mentally stimulated, and provide a sense of purpose. Setting aside small amounts of time for giving as a volunteer helps counteract the effects of stress and anxiety. It provides a different perspective on life and puts the usual schedule into context of something really rewarding.

Opportunities to turn new encounters into friendship or positive social experiences can also be part of the team-working. Contributing to volunteering can restore a bit of faith in the kindness of the human spirit or just give us a happy, 'warm-fuzzy' feeling that comes with doing something good with a bit of spare time. A constructive, meaningful connection with another person can have a profound effect on overall wellbeing or provide an important opportunity to spend time focusing solely on something other than life's usual problems.

By measuring hormones and brain activity, researchers have discovered that being helpful to others delivers immense pleasure. Human beings are hard-wired to give to others. The more we give, the happier we feel!

### **Get ahead at work**

Volunteering gives you the opportunity to put into practice important skills used in the workplace, such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, project planning, task management, and organization. It can also help you build upon skills you already have, or improve and develop qualities that also benefit the greater community. For instance, if you hold a successful sales position, you can raise awareness for your favourite cause as a charity fundraiser or facilitator, while further developing and improving your public speaking, communication, and marketing skills. It might just be that you fancy trying something different and before you make a big career decision, you would like to put your new qualification or skill to real use.

Whatever the reason, the opportunities are there and microvolunteering has a lot to offer, **passion and positivity are the only requirements.**

**Age Concern Guernsey provides support and social events for active older adults in Guernsey. We aim to increase public awareness by representing the views and requirements of the ageing individuals in our society and we encourage positive attitudes towards the older members of our community. If you are interested in microvolunteering, please contact David Inglis on 07781 144718 or 263228.**

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