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# Philanthropy & College

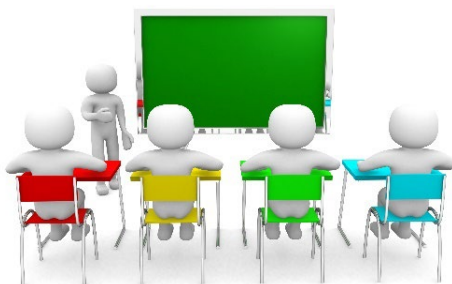


*“What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.”*

## Philanthropy & College

In today's competitive world, a college degree is a basic necessity for a successful career. Many families spend a lot of time and effort to make sure their children get accepted into a top ranked college. Although high SAT scores, Advance Placement (AP) classes, and good grades increase a student's chance of being accepted at a competitive college, extracurricular activities are equally important. These activities include sports, community service, arts, volunteering, participation in clubs, and other social activities. College admission boards are increasingly looking for versatile students who participate in many life activities outside of the classroom.

Guess what else colleges consider? Philanthropy! You should motivate your children at an early age to get involved with helping others. Now, don't force your children to help others. Instead, lead by example. If you are a good citizen of your community, religious organization, or philanthropic group, it is more likely your children will also focus on good citizenship. Getting involved in various aspects of philanthropic activities in your own community is a good starting point.



Those who consistently volunteer from their childhood into their teen years demonstrate to college boards that they have leadership and teambuilding skills along with a desire to help others. Students who are well rounded in all aspects of life will have a greater chance of being accepted into more competitive schools, and receiving scholarship money.

I interviewed a number of college admissions officers, and below is what they want from their students. Although not one of admissions directors with whom I spoke wanted to discuss their specific admission programs or reveal details of acceptance criteria, the following comments were most frequently mentioned.

Please note that when making a reference to student, it is a reference to teenagers who are planning to later attend college or are currently engaged in the college admissions process. When making a reference to an admissions director, or director, it is in reference to one or more people who work for a college or university who directly evaluate students who are actively involved in

the admissions process for their college. When using the terms community service, project, or philanthropic activity, it is in reference to anything that a student does to help others.



### **My findings from interviews with admissions directors**

Admissions directors may prefer students who not only demonstrate excellent test scores and grades but who are also well-rounded students involved in a variety of extracurricular activities. Those students who are passionate or even dedicated to activities outside of school will be viewed most favorably.

Directors may be most interested in students who use out-of-school time in productive ways to benefit others, in areas like their community, church, or even school.

It is imperative that students show why they participated in various philanthropic activities. Explaining the motivation behind the actions is important.

Directors examine if or how the involvement in a philanthropic project has changed a student's perspective, and whether their involvement in this project has impacted the organization.

For students who have many different philanthropic activities, directors recommend they explain, perhaps in an essay, how the numerous activities blend together to support a larger philanthropic theme, such as "poverty" or "health."

At more competitive colleges, it is normal for candidates to have participated in some form of community service. Typical community service will probably not “wow” the admissions board. As a result, students should consider atypical (unique) philanthropic ideas by thinking “outside of the box.”

Students should have consistency with their philanthropic participation. Those who support a long-term focus to one cause over a long period of time will demonstrate commitment and perseverance to the admissions board, which is viewed positively.



Students should focus on community service in areas they are passionate about that fit their interests, desires, and goals. Officers may view favorably students who can show how their interests tie to their activities and can demonstrate it consistently throughout their college applications.

Students who are self-leaders, who start their own non-profit, organize their own fundraising events, or collectively lead others to help a cause which is near to their heart will be viewed very favorably by admissions directors.

Students who do participate in a number of community service ideas should consider leadership roles rather than just simply a few volunteer hours. Admissions directors appreciate students who lead rather than those who are simply followers

Officers are not normally impressed with students who just participate in random causes for short periods of time in a variety of different areas. Too many different activities could actually be dilutive rather than accretive in helping the student’s chance of being accepted.

Students should not blindly participate in community service to look good “on paper” or follow random suggestions by a guidance counselor. Students who just go through the motions because it will look good for college will be easily spotted by admissions directors and may not be viewed favorably.

A few admissions officers stated they could distinguish when a student was being disingenuous about a commitment to community service. This is especially evident when there is a long list of activities with minimal commitment or follow through.

The most competitive college admissions directors look beyond the list of community activities, and hours of participation on the application, but rather focus on the accomplishment that resulted from these activities.

College essays to explain community service should be written in language that is “active” using such words as “excited,” “desire,” “passion,” “initiated,” and “created,” rather than words that are passive and boring such as “project,” “task,” “requirement,” “fulfillment,” or “suggestion.” The key is to demonstrate you are a motivated, self-starter who wants to help others, rather than just a student filling a requirement suggested by a teacher.



### **Ask Yourself!**

Does your child participate in community service through school, church, organization, or family?

What does he do?

Does your child have a hobby or skill that can be used to

The majority of students who are in high school will already have participated in community service activities through school or with the family.

For students who either do not have any community service or those who are looking for additional ideas, review this list.

1. Start your own non-profit organization. This is a huge undertaking that will require intense commitment, but for students who are extremely passionate about something who wish to remain active in a cause and want to include others, starting a non-profit could be the best option. Note, there will be startup costs along with ongoing fees to keep the organization active. This idea is not recommended unless the student will have a long-term

commitment to his cause, wants to include others to be a part of the organization, and is willing to spend the time to start the organization and maintain it.

2. Organize a fundraiser to support a passion: A student could organize an event to raise money to help an organization or someone in need. For instance, the student could host a bake sale to raise money for families at Thanksgiving or organize a 10k walk/run event to raise funds for a homeless shelter. It is important that a student organizes an event that it is consistent with their philanthropic focus rather than just a random event to champion a cause that the student has not supported in the past and will not support in the future.
3. Start a service project: Rather than participating in an organized charity, consider starting your own service project to help others. For instance, a student could found their own tutoring service in mathematics to help other students in their school. A student could start a project to help elderly people in their church learn to use their computers.
4. Use a skill to help others: For students who excel in a particular area, or have a special talent, use this talent to help others increase their skill in the area. For instance, a student who is a proficient piano player could use this skill to host classes to help young children learn how to play the piano. A student who excels at soccer could use their skills to host a camp to help others increase their skills in the sport.
5. Volunteer in your community: Students should consider volunteering at a homeless shelter, a soup kitchen, or a food bank. There are a variety of different services in every community that support people who are disadvantaged. A good website to locate opportunities in your own community is volunteermatch. This website brings people and good causes together. [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)
6. Participate in religious bases activities: Every religion supports a variety of causes from those that are local to those in distant lands. If you are a member of a religious organization check with your director for ideas to help others.

7. Become active in school-based projects that help others. Many schools have organized activities that students could easily participate in to help various people and various causes. For students who are applying to competitive colleges, consider a leadership role rather than passive participation.









## Call to Action Philanthropy and College



Community Service Worksheet	
Today's Date	
What are your child's passions?	
What skills does your child possess that could assist with community service?	
How can you assist your child to use their passion for community service?	
What are some ideas your child could pursue using their passion?	
Which ideas appeal the most to him?	
How is your child currently volunteering in his community?	

### Teaching Children

What organization could help him move forward with his idea?

Has he volunteered here before?

If so, why does he continue?

If not, would he try to volunteer at the organization?

### Further Actions

Would your child start his own volunteer organization or be part of an existing charitable idea?

What steps would your child have to follow to be charitable in the community?

Who would help him?

How much time does he have to devote to his idea?	
Where will he get the money to run the organization?	

## Service Awards

Kids love getting awards for a job well done; there's just no way around it. And there are a number of different awards that your family can work towards that can be inspiring for children. I've highlighted eight, and if your family is serious about consistently volunteering, you should register and work toward these awards. Some children will love the idea of working toward a prestigious award and will find it a challenge to qualify for the various levels. Awards can serve as additional motivation for families to do more to help others.



### President's Volunteer Service Award

The President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) was started by the President's Council of Service Participation in 2003, as a method to thank and honor American citizens engaged in volunteer service. The purpose for the award is to honor people across the United States who consistently volunteered during their lifetime. The award is given to those who achieve a required number of hours of service over a twelve-month time period or a cumulative number of hours over the course of a lifetime. The service must be to an approved Certifying Organization that is legally established in the United States, Puerto Rico, or one of the US territories.

There are five main age or group levels, each requiring a different number of hours to achieve the respective award level. They include: Children ages five to ten, teens ages eleven to fifteen, young adults ages sixteen to twenty-five, adults ages twenty-six and older, and families and groups of two or more. The awards are offered in multiple levels and are designated to recognize each level of the service achievement. The levels include bronze, silver, and gold. The highest honor, the President's Lifetime Achievement Award, is given to those who contribute over four thousand hours of service in their lifetime. Along with the honor, recipients get a personalized certificate, an official pin, medallion, or coin, and a congratulatory letter from the President of the United States.

It is very easy to get started to qualify for the award. By visiting [www.presidentalserviceawards.gov](http://www.presidentalserviceawards.gov), you can set up a profile. Once your profile is set up, you simply track your qualifying volunteer hours and activities. You then submit a record of service to a registered certifying organization, which then verifies your hours. If the organization where you volunteer is not approved, you can invite them to apply.

## **The Congressional Award**

The United States Congress Award for Young Americans is open to all individuals aged fourteen to twenty-eight. The Congressional award was established in 1979, to recognize initiative, achievement, and service in young people. Participants can earn a Bronze, Silver, and Gold Congressional Award Certificates and Bronze, Silver, or Gold Congressional Award Medals. The certificate levels require much less time than the medals levels. For instance, the silver certificate is the easiest level to achieve, while the gold medal level is the most difficult. The program allows the participant to move at their own pace, either on their own or with friends. Once an award is received at the lowest level, the child can then work toward the next level. (See chart 2)



This award is about challenge. It allows young people to get more involved in either areas they already participate or new areas they have never experienced. Participants can register either online at [www.congressionalaward.org](http://www.congressionalaward.org) or by mailing a completed form to the office in Washington, DC. Note, there is a registration fee to create your profile. Each participant must select an adult advisor who will help them with their goals and the activities needed to reach their goals.

### **Each of the six levels involves setting goals in four program areas:**

- **Volunteer Public Service:** sharing your time and talents for the benefit of others.
- **Personal Development:** consists of developing individual interests, social and life skills.
- **Physical Fitness:** participation in various fitness activities.
- **Expedition/Exploration:** interaction with the wilderness or by experiences in unfamiliar cultures.

Each June, children are honored in the Washington DC for earning the highest award (Gold Medallion). The celebration brings together gold medalists from across the country for a week of celebration, consisting of special events and the ceremony. Each year, a number of the members of Congress present the youths with their medals. At the last ceremony, there were two hundred and sixty-seven youths nationwide who received the highest honor.

### **Youth Volunteer Corps Award**

Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC) is a network of affiliated organizations across the US and Canada engaging youths aged eleven to eighteen in team-based, structured, diverse, flexible, service-learning opportunities. Their affiliates include United Way, YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, various volunteer centers, parks and recreation departments, and other youth-serving organizations. They offer three different community service awards for qualifying students:

**100-In-1 Award:** youths who dedicate one hundred hours of community service in the span of a year

**Ethic of Service Award:** youths who have served at least five hundred hours of community service over their lives

**World Changer Award:** anyone, regardless of age, who has volunteered one thousand or more hours.

For more information, visit <http://www.yvc.org/volunteer/awards/>



## Everyday Young Hero Award

Youth Service America's (YSA) mission is to help all young people find their voice, take action, and make an impact on vital community issues. Since 1986, YSA supports a global culture of engaged children and youth committed to a lifetime of service learning and leadership. Their model includes activities, funds (grants), training, and recognition (awards). Their programs lead community change through awareness, service, advocacy, and philanthropy. They offer a variety of awards such as the Everyday Young Hero Award. This award is offered to young people aged five to twenty-five, who are improving their communities through service to others and making significant progress in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information, visit <http://ysa.org/awards/eyh/>

## Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

This program is the United States' largest youth recognition program based exclusively on volunteer community service. The goals of the program are to applaud young people who already are making a positive difference in their communities, and to inspire others to think about how they might contribute to their communities. Since 1995, over one hundred and fifteen thousand young people have been officially recognized for their volunteer efforts. In order to qualify for the award, a student must be in grades five through twelve and engage in a volunteer activity that occurred during the prior twelve months. In addition to an award, state and national honorees receive financial awards.



For more information, visit <http://spirit.prudential.com/view/page/soc>

## Hasbro Community Action Hero Award

Hasbro Children's Fund and generationOn celebrate ten young people each year between the ages of five and eighteen who have performed remarkable community service activities in the prior twelve months. The nominees for the award must demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics: Outstanding service to one's local, national, or global community,

extraordinary effort in creating innovative solutions to community needs, leadership, or exceptional service, or advocacy activities.

For more information, visit <http://www.generationon.org/teens/awards/hasbro-community-action-hero-award>

### **What is generationOn?**

It is a global youth service movement that empowers kids to make their mark on the world. The organization “partners with teachers, parents, schools, community organizations, and businesses to give kids the opportunity to see firsthand the issues in their communities and the tools and resources they need to respond and become part of the solution. To learn more about how generationOn can empower your child, visit their website:

For more information, visit [www.generationon.org](http://www.generationon.org)

### **Girl Scouts Gold Award**

This award represents the highest achievement in girl scouting and is open to girls in high school. Note, the girl does not need to be a girl scout to qualify. The award challenges girls to change the world. Girls are asked to follow a seven-step project to solve a community problem, not just in the short term, but for years into the future. The steps include identifying an issue, investigating it thoroughly, building a team, creating a plan, presenting the plan to get feedback, taking action, and telling your story. In addition to the award, some girls will also get scholarships. The top ten exceptionally inspiring recipients are chosen as National Young Women of Distinction. (NYWOD).

For more information, visit <http://www.girlscouts.org/en/our-program/highest-awards/gold-award.html>

### **Lions Club Youth Leaders in Service Award**

Lions is the world’s largest service club organization with forty-six thousand clubs and over one-point-four million members. The members do whatever is needed to help their local communities. One of their focus areas is helping children by making a difference in the lives of marginalized children, bringing hope and helping when needed. They





award the Lions Young Leaders in Service Award to young people aged twelve to eighteen who have completed fifty or one hundred hours of community service within the last twelve months.

For more information, visit,

<http://www.lionsclubs.org/resources/EN/pdfs/iad133.pdf>



### **Ask Yourself**

What awards do you think your child can qualify to achieve?

### **Scholarships for Youth Community Leaders!**

In addition to helping your community, your child can earn a scholarship through volunteering.

If your child has focused on helping others through community service, he should apply for scholarships that reward this action. There are a variety of scholarships available from many sources such as charities, government entities, private foundations, religious groups, and universities.



Some scholarships will help pay tuition costs, while others will help your child pay for future charitable projects. Many of the scholarships have very specific eligibility criteria, which allow students to choose their school-aged volunteering projects, increasing their chance to be eligible for one or more specific scholarships. Rather than wait until your child is already a student or a high school senior, have them apply early. Since some scholarships allow younger students to apply, it allows them the opportunity to build up their scholarship funds.

In the appendix you will find fifty scholarship ideas that may be appropriate for your child. The list provides the name of the scholarship, qualifications, amount (award), and a link to the scholarship page. Note,



## Call to Action Philanthropy and College



Service Awards Worksheet	
Today's Date	
What or where has your child specifically volunteered?	
Has this been consistent?	
How long has your child volunteered?	
What were some of the responsibilities involved?	
How well did your child manage his volunteer duties?	
Did he enjoy the experience?	

Teaching Children	
Using your child's experience volunteering, which award do you think he is most qualified to receive?	

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