

TEEN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!

Health Care-related Opportunities

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

There is a Ronald McDonald House in almost every major city! When a child is very ill, he or she can be placed in a hospital for a long period of time. Families must then travel long distances to the hospital, and they can run into problems staying at expensive hotels night after night. The Ronald McDonald House provides a low-cost, comfortable, family-oriented atmosphere for families to stay during the child's treatment. You can read about volunteer opportunities and locate a Ronald McDonald House in your area by visiting www.rmhc.org.

HOSPITALS

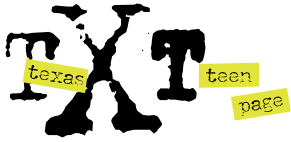
Most hospitals (larger and small) have volunteer programs you could join that help patients in and out of the hospital. These volunteers programs can allow you to check out certain medical careers and gain wonderful work experience. Contact local hospitals to learn more about the opportunities in your area.

SENIOR CITIZENS CENTERS

Just like hospitals, many senior citizen centers offer volunteer programs where you could provide friendship and a helping hand to senior citizens in your community. If you would like working with older adults, make a call a senior citizen center in your neighborhood. They will be happy to talk to about any volunteer opportunities they have available!

Special Olympics

As described on their web site, "Special Olympics is an international program of year-round sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with mental retardation." Special Olympics volunteers can get involved at the state/provincial, national or international level, or offer their services locally at a Special Olympics Program in their community. Some volunteers offer a few hours of their time a year at specific events, while others work several hours a week year-round. Go to www.specialolympics.org for more information. ➡



Habitat for Humanities

Habitat for Humanities builds and gives the houses to unfortunate people in many communities worldwide! There are MANY ways to get involved! The Youth Programs department at Habitat for Humanity International seeks to engage the imagination, energy and hope of young people, ages 5 to 25, worldwide in order to productively and responsibly involve them as leaders in the work of Habitat for Humanity. You can find a ton of volunteer ideas at <http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/>.

Animal Shelters

Whether you want to walk dogs or even help with a fund-raising event, you can make a difference in the lives of animals. To learn about volunteer opportunities with your local animal protection organizations, we suggest you check the Yellow Pages under the headings “animal shelter,” “humane society,” and “animal control,” or just call Information. You will need to contact each group directly to learn about volunteer needs and opportunities.

Red Cross

The American Red Cross helps people in emergencies – whether it’s hurricane or flood relief or providing blood for just one patient. The Junior Red Cross provides young people with meaningful opportunities for education, training, and volunteer/community service so that they remain a part of the Red Cross family throughout their lives. Young people up to age 24 make up 35 percent of all Red Cross volunteers. Go to www.redcross.org for more information!

Environmental Organizations

If you are passionate about the environment, think about volunteering for organizations like the Sierra Club or the Earth Day Network. You can lend a hand in many ways: writing letters or making phone calls to support environmental protection, by helping lobby on conservation issues, by leading hikes and other activities, or by lending a hand at the Chapter Office.

Homeless Shelters and Food Banks

Most cities are home to at least one homeless shelter that helps those people less fortunate with meals, beds and additional services. Most shelters welcome volunteers and have a range of programs through which you can get involved. You might be asked to: help prepare or distribute meals; work behind the scenes in the business office; help organize a food drive to stock the pantry, etc.; collect clothes for residents of the shelter; or deliver a “brown bag” lunch directly to the homeless.

Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels is always looking for helpful youth! Volunteers are needed to help prepare and package dinners to be delivered, organize schedules, make phone calls, load delivery vehicles, and deliver meals. Congregate meal sites need volunteers to plan, cook, drive vans, help serve seniors, clean up, and more. Give your local Meals on Wheels program a call! ■