

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Evans C. Agrapidis Looks at the Benefits of Volunteering

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While volunteers come from all backgrounds and walks of life, there is one factor that unifies all of them regardless of whether they are helping to clean up a local park, offering some essential TLC to rescued animals, or carrying out any other worthy and often vital activity: they are getting far, far more than they are giving.

“One of the first things that new volunteers discover is that the return on investment is extremely rewarding,” commented Evans C. Agrapidis an experienced personal injury and accident lawyer based in Jersey City, NJ, whose volunteer efforts include serving as President and a member of the Parish Council of Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in Wyckoff, NJ. “Of course, I am not referring to financial gain, but rather to the myriad of health, social, and community-building benefits that are enjoyed by volunteers who contribute to their church or other charitable organization. It is a very energizing and uplifting experience, and the effort is always valued and important.”

Here are some of the benefits that seasoned volunteers have been enjoying for years, and new volunteers can eagerly look forward to:

Volunteering Promotes Better Health

Those who have long suspected that volunteering is a means to boost their physical and psychological health can stop speculating — because it’s true. A study at Carnegie Mellon University revealed that people 50 years and over who volunteered on a regular basis were less likely than non-volunteers or infrequent volunteers to develop high blood pressure (hypertension). The [Mayo Clinic also points to research](#) that links volunteering to lower rates of depression, and there is evidence to suggest that volunteering even boosts lifespan.

“The physical and psychological benefits of volunteering are available to volunteers of all ages, from children to the elderly,” commented [Evans C. Agrapidis](#), a founding member of the law firm Agrapidis & Maroules, P.C. whose areas of specialization include representing clients who have been injured in fall down cases, motor vehicle accidents, work-related accidents, construction site accidents, and a wide variety of other personal injury categories. “Plus, there are so many different kinds of opportunities based on an individual volunteer’s abilities and interests, including thousands of online options for those who want or need to contribute from home.”

Volunteering Builds a Stronger Connection to the Community

Despite all of the differences and divisions that we see in society these days — not just in the U.S., but around the world — many people may think that human beings are fundamentally wired to disagree and engage in conflict. However, scientific research has revealed that precisely the opposite is the case: human beings are innately driven to connect with each other and find common ground. In light of this truth, it is not surprising that volunteers generally report a much stronger connection to their community, because they are not just passive members of a group whose only real common denominator is a shared neighborhood or city. Instead, they are brought together under the banner of a unified and positive purpose — and that makes all the difference.

“Volunteers build, strengthen and evolve communities,” commented Evans C. Agrapidis, who was admitted to the New Jersey State and New Jersey Federal Bars in 1983, the New York State and New York Federal Bars in 1985, and is currently a member of the Bar of the U.S. Supreme Court. “Simply put, volunteers make communities better.”

Volunteering Expands Personal and Professional Networks

Volunteers greatly expand their personal and professional networks. For example, many people have connected with lifelong friends — and in some cases, future spouses — through their volunteer efforts. And in terms of career development, volunteers increase the volume of advisors and influencers who can help them move forward on their career path, or possibly even head in a new and better direction.

“One of the best things about volunteering is the different people one has the opportunity to meet and connect with along the way,” commented Evans C. Agrapidis. “At the same time, those who volunteer can be extremely helpful to others by offering advice, lending a hand, making an introduction, and so on.”

Volunteering Improves Time Management and Overall Success

We have saved the most surprising benefit of volunteering for last: research has found that rather than decreasing a volunteer’s overall availability of time, the opposite occurs — volunteers report having more availability of time than non-volunteers. Why and how is this possible? It is because volunteers tend to feel that they have an abundance of time, since volunteering is optional rather than mandatory (a feeling that has been described as being “time affluent”). In addition, volunteers feel that they are accomplishing something worthy and important, and extend this paradigm to their non-volunteering efforts — which further boosts their achievements and successes.

“Volunteers and non-volunteers are each given 24 hours each day and seven days each week,” commented Evans C. Agrapidis. “However, volunteers tend to achieve more outside of their volunteering efforts, because they have a healthier relationship with time, and they are self-motivated to make a valued contribution and achieve more. There are so many ways that this mindset can be tremendously beneficial.”

The Bottom Line

Volunteering is incredibly, and at times astonishingly rewarding — not just to the benefactors of volunteer efforts, but to volunteers themselves who boost their physical and psychological health, strengthen their connection to the community, expand their personal and professional networks, and increase rather than decrease their availability of time along with their list of accomplishments.

“These days thanks to the internet, there are countless opportunities to make a difference while

adhering to social distancing guidelines,” commented [Evans C. Agrapidis](#). “The most important thing is to get started. Even volunteering an hour a week is enough, or even an hour a month, and then building from there as the journey unfolds. The only thing that new volunteers will regret is that they did not start volunteering sooner. It is truly rewarding on all levels.”

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