

GOOD CITIZENSHIP

What Makes Young People Volunteer?

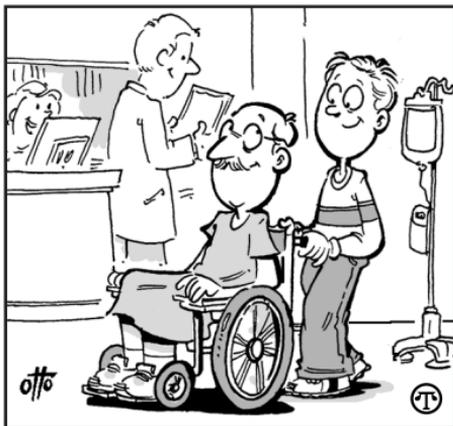
(NAPSA)—Many believe that volunteer work can be beneficial for young people's personal development and that their communities can benefit as well.

When teenagers volunteer, it's thought they typically become more sensitive to the needs of others, build self-esteem and self-confidence, develop organizational and leadership skills and gain a great deal of personal satisfaction. As a result, many parents want to know: What motivates young people to become volunteers?

The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, the nation's largest youth recognition program based solely on volunteer service, recently took a look at its top honorees over the past 10 years and found some answers to that question.

According to its analysis, the most common motivators appear to be:

- Exposure to a need—first-hand experience in seeing others who are poor, sick, homeless or who need assistance for some other reason;
- Parental example/encouragement—learning from a mother or father that volunteering is important, and receiving strong encouragement and support to get involved;
- Organizational activities—fulfilling a community service requirement for a school, church or scout troop, or joining a club that emphasizes volunteerism;
- A personal crisis—such as an illness, or the death or injury of a friend or family member;
- A simple request—being asked by someone to lend a helping hand.



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When that same analysis looked for the factors that successful youth volunteers seemed to have in common, it found that, in general, students succeeded by:

- Choosing activities in fields they were interested in;
- Recruiting friends, family members and others to help;
- Seeking advice and guidance, when necessary, from experts;
- Promoting their projects through public speaking, news media outreach, the Internet and other communications channels;
- Refusing to be discouraged when told they were too young or inexperienced.

For a free copy of "Catch the Spirit: A Student's Guide to Community Service," write to Federal Citizen Information Center, Catch the Spirit, Pueblo, CO 81009, call (888) 8-PUEBLO or visit www.pueblo.gsa.gov.

Information is also available at www.prudential.com/spirit.