

## **Making Ripples**

### **Volunteerism Creates Ripples**

by Amanda Bancroft

Those who make ripples in the world are rarely bored. There are plenty of ways to earn money, reduce student loans, or best of all, have a great time in your local community through civic engagement. Make today a meaningful one by volunteering, and receive surprising benefits – you never know when your career or marriage will start at a food pantry or community garden.

For students, the first stop on the path to volunteering is the Center for Community Engagement (CCE). The CCE connects students, faculty and staff with nonprofit organizations in the area. By visiting [www.volunteer.uark.edu](http://www.volunteer.uark.edu), volunteers can browse organizations and projects to find one that interests them, log their service hours, and gain recognition.

The CCE also runs the Volunteer Action Center (VAC). Through the VAC, students can get involved with the on-campus Full Circle Food Pantry or off-campus service events like Make a Difference Day in October and MLK Day of Service in January. You could also join student organizations connected to non-profits, such as Heifer International.

Volunteering tends to span fields of study or global issues facing the world, so if you're passionate about the environment but also want to end world hunger, your volunteer site may address both. For example, at TriCycle Farms, you can grow healthy food in an urban setting and reduce local hunger. At Habitat for Humanity's ReStore, you can divert materials from a landfill and help sell them to raise money for homes. Bicycle Coalition of the Ozarks encourages cycling, a green transportation option, while you can also help them keep kids safe on the road at helmet fittings. Yvonne Richardson Center has a nice kid's garden to teach youth where their food comes from, and other area community gardens connected to the Fayetteville Community Garden Coalition offer similar garden-based projects.

Students (as well as anyone ages 17 and up, including seniors) can earn money from volunteering in AmeriCorps, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), EnergyCorps, FoodCorps, Episcopal Service Corps, and more. Simply google the type of corps you wish to learn more about, and discover local positions listed online. They range from summer to year-long terms (or longer), and many help with student loans and offer scholarships. Don't be discouraged if your desired position isn't listed – often, small organizations have trouble managing their listing, and may have a need for your help, so contact them directly.

When you volunteer, you're inspiring others to make a difference, too. This ripple effect can, believe it or not, span years or lifetimes. The colleague you inspire today could graduate and found a non-profit organization. Inspire more people and share what you're doing by sending a photo and brief description to: [MakeSomeRipples@Gmail.com](mailto:MakeSomeRipples@Gmail.com) for a chance to be featured in People Making Ripples!

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