

**Effective Practice: Finding Summer Service Opportunities in Your Home Community**  
**Source: Kelly Sappington, Michigan Service Scholars AmeriCorps \*VISTA 2005-2006**

**Issue Being Addressed:**

Many students who are heavily involved in service and service-learning opportunities on their campuses during the school year often have difficulties finding similar opportunities during the summer months. Students who return to their home communities may be less familiar with the possibilities because they may not be as aggressively advertised as on a college/university campus. This effective practice will give suggestions to help students stay engaged or become connected with their home communities over the summer.

**1. Contact your local volunteer center**

- Volunteer Centers are non-profit agencies in the community that connect people with opportunities to serve, build capacity for effective volunteering, promote volunteering, and mobilize volunteers to meet local needs.
- Your volunteer center will be able to connect you with opportunities that fit your personal interests and you availability.
- To contact your local volunteer center you can visit <http://www.mivolunteers.org> or call 1-800-VOLUNTEER

**2. Contact your local recreation department or Boys and Girls Club**

- Recreation departments and Boys and Girls Clubs often run summer camps, sports programs, classes, and childcare programs for youth in the community during the summer months when kids are out of school.

**3. Volunteer with Habitat for Humanity**

- Habitat for Humanity builds houses in many communities across the country and around the world in partnership with families in need of safe and affordable housing.
- Activities can include construction, siding, painting, landscaping, etc...
- People with all abilities are welcome and you do not need experience in construction to volunteer as training is provided on the job site.
- Visit <http://www.habitat.org/> to find the contact information of your Habitat chapter.

**3. Help out in your neighborhood**

- Help an elderly neighbor with gardening or moving the lawn.
- Organize a trash cleanup with other neighbors.
- Clean out your closet and donate clothes, shoes, books, and personal care items that you no longer use. While you're at it, ask your neighbors if they have anything they would like to donate. (Your local shelter or religious institution may accept donations, as well as Goodwill, the Salvation Army, etc...)

**4. Stay civically engaged**

- Learn about issues that are currently affecting your community.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper expressing your opinions.
- Contact your legislator regarding an issue that is important to you. Visit <http://www.statelocalgov.net/> for a directory of state, county, and city government websites as well as current issues.
- Vote in local elections.