



The Circle of Giving... Comes Right Back to You! *By Shari Alguire, PA-C*

Volunteering is a great way to help others but you might not know there are possible health benefits for those who give their time and energy. Studies have shown that individuals who regularly volunteer – particularly older adults – have a lower incidence of health related illness and depression and generally feel healthier than those who do not. Volunteering is even more beneficial to those experiencing life stressors such as the loss of a loved one, divorce, job loss or illness.

One study found that seniors who donated their time for two or more organizations were almost half as likely to die during the following five years than their non-volunteering peers. A similar study conducted with couples age 65 plus who provided practical help or emotional support to others, or their spouses, had a lower risk of death than those who did not. They also reported elevated feelings of well-being and fewer

physical limitations than their peers.

The reason? Giving to others seems to decrease stress, which when uncontrolled, may lead to other types of health conditions. It also promotes social connections and positivity, both of which reduce stress. A third study shows that volunteering may increase the release of oxytocin which in some may produce a “feel good” type of high, as well as the feelings of connection, nurturing and empathy.

For professionals, volunteering as part of their work appears to have positive career benefits. According to a Forbes magazine article, this may be related to added networking and enhanced engagement and feeling of connectedness. These benefit the person volunteering as well as increasing work productivity and job longevity.

If you’re wondering if monetary donations produce the same benefits,

unfortunately the answer is no. Although it feels good to financially support a good cause, it doesn’t seem to produce the physical health benefits that volunteering time produces.

So, if you need another good reason to donate your time, now you know that doing for others can be good for the body and soul! Ready to get started? Here are some places to start searching for volunteer opportunities:

Salvation Army - (602) 256-4500 / <http://www.salvationarmyphoenix.org>

St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance - 602-343-2535 / www.firstfoodbank.org

VolunteerMatch.org (Searchable to find “good match” volunteering by location, dates and opportunities)

Phoenix Children’s Hospital - (602) 933-1000 / <http://www.phoenixchildrens.org/volunteer>

Arizona State Park - (602) 542-6948 / <http://azstateparks.com/volunteer/>

Improving Your Health in 2016

While a third of Americans make a sincere attempt at New Year’s resolutions, less than half are still on target three months later. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have several dozen ideas that are so easy they each take less than five minutes a day! From buckling up to checking your vaccination record, these suggestions are simple ways to optimize your health and well-being. Have a minute? Learn more at <http://www.cdc.gov/family/minutes/>.

LOCATIONS

Thunderbird Internal Medicine – Glendale
5620 W. Thunderbird Rd #C-1, #F-1 & #G-2
Glendale, Arizona 85306

Thunderbird Internal Medicine - Phoenix
9150 W. Indian School Rd #118
Phoenix, Arizona 85037