

Research on Volunteering in America

There is a strong spirit of volunteering in America. Americans contribute more than a hundred billion dollars a year to charitable purposes. In addition to donating, tens of millions of Americans give time as volunteers in a variety of ways. People find the giving of their time, talent, and treasure to be a necessary part of being a caring citizen. Giving also just makes you feel good. Volunteers are people who care about others enough to set aside their own problems and take action.

Brian O'Connell is the former president of the Independent Sector, which is a national coalition for all voluntary nonprofit organizations. Mr. O'Connell classified the purposes of our giving and volunteering into nine categories:

- To discover new frontiers of knowledge
- To support and encourage excellence
- To enable people to exercise their potential
- To relieve human misery
- To preserve and enhance democratic government and institutions
- To make communities a better place to live
- To nourish the spirit
- To create tolerance, understanding, and peace among people
- To remember the dead.

-from *Philanthropy in Action*, The Foundation Center, 1987

"How wonderful it is that nobody needs to wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."
Anne Frank

"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have. Sadly, too often creativity is smothered rather than nurtured. There has to be a climate in which new ways of thinking, perceiving, questioning are encouraged. People also have to feel needed. Frequently, we just offer a job and "perks." We don't always offer people a purpose. When people feel there is a purpose and that they're needed, there's not much else to do except let them do the work."
Maya Angelou

