

“HOURS AWAY” FROM GRADUATION? HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR 40 HOURS!

We've all heard of it, dreaded it and eventually will complete it; it's the illusive, mandatory 40 hours of community service needed for current high school students to graduate. It can be hard to devote your time, gather the energy and finally commit to a volunteer project, but *volunteering doesn't need to be boring*. So how can you make the most of your 40 hours? Follow these simple suggestions; you will fill your hours and, I know you will even have fun doing it.

1. Get your friends together.

It's your last year of high school which means that you and your friends will be heading in different directions come fall. Take this as an opportunity to get in some last minute bonding time with the people you've shared your life with for the last four years. Get your friends together and organize a community ball hockey tournament, sign up with a group of friends to help out at a local organization. When you're with your friends, you can find a way to make anything fun.

2. Volunteer for an organization that interests you.

Do you like animals? Why not reach out the Ottawa Humane Society. Do you like art? Why not volunteer at a local art gallery. Volunteering doesn't need to be boring. Everyone has something that interests them, and there are many opportunities that would allow you to do something you love, and fill those hours at the same time. Trust me, when you find an organization you enjoy working with, those 40 hours will fly by and before you know it, 40 hours will have turned into 60 or even a year-long adventure.

3. Use your connections.

A network is a group or system of interconnected people or things. You may not realize it, but you have already started building your own network. Do you play on a hockey team? Why not ask if you can work the 50/50 raffle during the upcoming tournament. Do your friend's parents volunteer on a board or for a local charity? Ask them if there are any opportunities that they think might interest you. You have your own connections – learn to use them!

4. Think ahead.

One of the words that you will get tired of hearing by the time you graduate college/university is the word 'networking'. You can never know enough people, be involved in enough extra curricular activities, or participate in enough events. The more people you know, the larger your network becomes. Networking will become one of the building blocks of your future career. Luckily for you, you get to start early! Volunteering offers an incredible opportunity to meet people in all stages of life, introducing you to people who can offer you opportunities and experiences that you would not have been able to get otherwise. Volunteering may be unpaid – but it doesn't mean you can't get something out of it. Volunteering is an amazing way to meet new people and network. Trust us, your future self will thank you.

5. Keep it up!

Community involvement doesn't end at 40 hours. New volunteer opportunities are popping up every day and the need for volunteers is constant. You may be done your high school requirement, but there are so many more reasons to continue to be involved in the community. Volunteering is a stepping-stone to success – it's up to you how you approach it.

NEED VOLUNTEER IDEAS?

- Volunteer at Sir Wilfrid Laurier – library, work with custodians, school events, sporting events, tutoring and etc (**only 20 of the 40 hours may be completed at Sir Wil**)
- Ottawa Food Bank, Gloucester Food Bank, Bibles for Missions Thrift Store (on Tenth Line)
- Ottawa Public Library
- Ottawa Museums and Science Centers
- Ottawa Festivals (so many to choose from)
- Volunteer in Elementary Schools (Library, Classroom helper, special events)
- Retirement Homes (Portobello Manor & Queenswood Villa Retirement Home)
- Shenkman Art Center
- Manotick Miller Run
- CN Cycle for CHEO
- Sporting Life 10K
- Canadian Tulip Festival
- Tamarack Ottawa Race Weekend
- Electronic Waste Recycling
- Salvation Army, YMCA
- Relay for Life (Millenium Park in Orleans)
- CHEO BBQ & CHEO Teddy Bear Picnic
- Touch a Truck Event
- Ottawa Fringe Festival

Come check the volunteer binder in Student Services as more volunteer opportunities are added daily.



You can't miss class to volunteer and you can only volunteer for a not-for-profit organization. **Volunteering for a business where its purpose is to make a profit is not eligible.** A few examples of volunteer activities that are not eligible are: restaurants, garages, hair salons, construction, general business office help and retail stores.