Memory Moment

Volunteering is good for you!!!

By Shannon Nosbisch, CDP, DCS

I know that all of us are busy living our lives – working, caring for families, enjoying grandchildren, doing household chores, and everything else that makes up our lives. But, giving a small portion of your time to a local agency, business or organization by volunteering can be good for you! Most of us volunteer to help others, to make a difference. There are many benefits to volunteering. There are social, emotional, physical and professional perks. How does volunteering relate to reducing your risk of dementia? Read below to see all of the benefits!

Volunteering:

1. Builds community – Volunteering can help you feel connected to the people you are helping.
2. Ends Loneliness – According to the Campaign to End Loneliness, 45 percent of people in the U.S. admit to feeling lonely.
3. Increases Socializing – Social interaction improves mental and physical health, brain function, lowers risk for depression and anxiety and improves your immune system.
4. Builds bonds, creates friends – Working together with other people for a common cause brings people together.
5. Develops emotional stability – Depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem and others have all been helped by volunteering.
6. Improves self-esteem – Everyone, especially teens and young adults, develop self-esteem, confidence and feelings of self-worth.

7. Promotes longevity – Long term volunteers live longer lives, have less disease and better overall health.
8. Reduces Risk of Alzheimer's disease – Studies indicate that social service improves elasticity in the brain. Social interactions, learning new skills can improve brain health.
9. Can teach you valuable job skills and provides job prospects – You may learn skills such as teamwork, public speaking, communication, organization and marketing skills. You may meet people while volunteering who can become mentors or a part of your professional social network.

There are many opportunities for volunteering in our community. Here is a list of places to look into.

Local service organizations (e.g., Rotary Club, Lions Club)
Youth organizations (e.g., after school programs or sports groups)
Park districts or parks
Libraries
Senior centers
Political organizations
Family shelters
Food pantries
Animal shelters and rescue organizations
Places of worship
Memory homes, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living homes
Hospitals
The Cross
Meals on Wheels

Look for other places in your community that may need volunteers. Find one that you have an interest in and may be passionate about. Most of

these places are always looking for volunteers! To protect the people they serve, some places may require a background check.

The most valuable skills you can bring to any volunteer effort are compassion, an open mind, a willingness to do whatever is needed and a positive attitude. (wcsu.edu)

Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness (EAAA) is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organization founded to provide education and support to all families, caregivers, and people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia in Effingham County and the surrounding area. For more information about Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness, check out the website at www.effinghamalz.org. If you are a caregiver & have specific questions or situations you would like information on, please feel free to call Shannon Nosbisch at 217-663-0010 or Amy Sobrino at 618-363-8372.