
Suggestions for Community Service

1. *Offer to create a virtual greeting or write letters for those who you had been serving!*

Have you been a regular volunteer at a nursing home, youth group, hospital, or reading organization? If so, the people you've been serving-- the elderly, the kids, etc-- might love to hear from you. Contact your supervisor and see if they would like a short video message or letters to brighten the day of someone who was being served by the organization.

For example, you could say "Hi! This is [first name] and I just wanted to say that I miss working at [service location] with you. I hope you're staying safe and healthy. Can't wait to be back and [example of activity: play bingo/read/pray...] with you again soon! Take care!" If you're doing a video, make sure that your supervisor wants this type of video before you go through the trouble of making it.

Some organizations might not be able to accept videos because of privacy concerns, because they don't have a way to share the videos, or because they have been overwhelmed by other work caused by COVID/social distancing. Don't take it personally if organizations say no. If they say yes, spend a few minutes watching some examples that were submitted to a nursing home network in another region of the US. Then, you'll spend around 5 minutes getting ready for your own. You'll record yours, and we can expect it to take a few recordings to get it just right. Another 5-10 minutes might be spent finalizing your video file and sharing it with the organization.

Overall, it should take 20-30 minutes for a 20-30 second greeting.

If you're writing a card or letter, again, ask the supervisor if they can accommodate mail from you before you take the time to write them out. They will prefer the letters and cards in unsealed envelopes and with generic messages that could be distributed to anyone.

2. *Find online opportunities*

- The Smithsonian Institute is looking for people to transcribe records: <https://transcription.si.edu>
- You can scan or proofread books for Bookshare: <https://www.bookshare.org/cms/get-involved/volunteer/opportunities-us>
- Index records for the Ancestry.com World Archives Project: https://blogs.ancestry.com/worldarchivesproject/?page_id=1023
- Sign up to volunteer with elementary school students who are eligible for free tutoring through Pencil and Screen: <https://pencilandscreen.com/>

- Points of Light, an organization started by George H. W. Bush, has an enterprise called Generation ON. People can sign up to participate in letter writing campaigns to ask leaders to help endangered animals: <https://www.generationon.org/projects/save-animals-letter-campaign>

3. Create a how-to video for YouTube

Do you have a skill that would benefit others to learn? For example, can you play an instrument, write calligraphy, use a complicated Excel function, replace the screen in a screen door, or do an interesting cooking technique? Or maybe you have an idea for a neat kids' craft? You might even have an inner Bob Ross who can show how to create a beautiful scene. If so, consider making a video to share.

First, watch other how-to videos on YouTube to first of all make sure you are offering something that's not already there a lot. And secondly, figure out what works and doesn't work as far as the lighting, angle, pace, and ways to explain.

To make sure that you stay safe and don't have your video flagged or deleted:

- Make sure that everything in your video is G-rated.
- Create and upload your video under a username that does not reveal who you are.
- Do not say or show any identifying information, such as your name, location, age, school, etc.
- Disable comments.
- Make sure that you have not plagiarized: do not use anything that isn't your own work, including the wording of your instructions, diagrams, or even background music. Even if it seems like other YouTubers have gotten away with it, you don't know who had already gotten permission from others to use their work and you don't know whether YouTube might very soon delete the video or suspend the account for violating its terms of use.

These instructions are given in part to prevent your video, that you worked so hard to make, from being deleted. And it's first and foremost for your safety and protection.

4. Sew masks to donate

Carefully read the CDC's information on making an effective mask. You can do this with a local organization or you can contact MUSC about donating them directly.

5. Think outside the box!

If there's another organization that you're interested in or that you've worked with before, reach out! Again, don't be offended if they say that cannot use your volunteer work at this time. But, some may have some work that you can do remotely.

6. Complete a large chore for your family

Has it been years since the garage was cleaned out and organized? Do your parents want all of the windows thoroughly washed inside and out, but just haven't had the time? Do Grandma's hand-written recipes finally need to be digitized and organized? Maybe there's a simple repair, like replacing a toilet valve that no one has gotten around to. Or, maybe by helping a younger sibling with their school work on a regular schedule, your sibling will do better at school and your parents would have more time for their own work. If you do a home project it should be something that is important, outside of your normal chores and responsibilities.