

Top 10 Places for Students to Give Back

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Elizabeth Hoyt

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Searching for meaning in the [season](#) of giving? If you want to give back, there are plenty of opportunities to do so. Volunteering can be as easy—and enjoyable—as pie if you seek out the right opportunities. Are you a people person? The next Top Chef? Whatever your strengths, put them to good use this holiday season by sharing them with those in need, making a difference in the meantime. Check out our suggestions of places always in need of you do-gooders:

- 1. Homeless Shelters** are in constant need of volunteers, especially during the holiday season. It may be through meal service assistance or, even, as a visitor to lend an ear to someone who may be suffering and deliver some needed conversation and companionship.
- 2. Soup Kitchens** are always looking for onsite volunteers for set-up and clean-up, cooks and, of course, people to provide a warm atmosphere that will allow the homeless to have a Thanksgiving meal that can enjoy with the dignity and respect they deserve.
- 3. A Food Bank** needs help organizing donation drives, collecting and assembling collected items for food bag or box donations for those in need. They usually also need assistance with packing trucks and delivering items, as well as [volunteer](#) transportation.
- 4. A Nursing Home** is a great place to volunteer since many elderly people experience loneliness and isolation among the holiday season, especially if they don't have families to share it with. Nursing homes always welcome volunteers to socialize and visit with residents and, during the holiday season, may host events, such as Thanksgiving meals or meet-and-greets, where you can volunteer in other ways. For example, show off that special musical talent and tickle those ivories for some elders. They'll appreciate it more than you can imagine.
- 5. Animal Shelters** are often forgotten about on most holidays, but animals need care on those days, too. If you prefer friends of the four-legged variety, you can still volunteer. Shelters can always use volunteers ready to give out some extra attention and TLC to these seemingly forgotten fur balls. Jobs are readily available taking care of the animals, playing with them, cleaning up after them or, if you're looking for a slightly longer commitment, fostering a rescue animal over the holidays. If you love animals, there are always opportunities to help those in need.
- 6. A Domestic Violence and/or Women and Children's Shelter** is a wonderful place to volunteer, especially if you love children. Domestic Violence Shelters often need assistance with looking after children in the program while staff members work one-on-one with the women discussing adult issues. Often times, aiding these mothers with their children gives them some much needed relief of the overwhelming stresses they've been experiencing, particularly if they family has been suffering during the holidays.
- 7. A Church, Temple, Mosque or Any Other Religious Location** usually hosts holiday meals for those in need or the elderly and donation drives they will likely need assistance with. Most religious locations will accommodate any last minute volunteers, so no worries if you haven't planned ahead.
- 8. Hospitals** can be scary, especially when you're all alone. As long as hospitals will always have inpatients that could use visitors, there will always be a need for caring and compassionate volunteers. A simple visit can steer away the lonely holiday days and help brighten theirs—as well as your own.
- 9. A Community Center** or other government location often hosts events like community meals for those in need or the elderly, donation drives to food banks or shelters and, even telethons or walks and races for great causes within the community.
- 10. Colleges and Other Schools** often host community dinners and are in need of volunteers to help with cooking, cleaning, service and transport for local senior citizens or can host holiday events for organizations, like local women and children's shelters or domestic violence shelters.