1 General Ideas

- Donate or raise money for a local nonprofit.
- Send cards to soldiers serving overseas.
- For your next birthday, ask for charitable donations instead of gifts.
- Read books or letters to a person who is visually impaired.
- Organize a wheelchair basketball team.
- Participate in a charity race.
- Volunteer to help at a charity auction.
- Contact a tree farm about donating Christmas trees to nursing homes or hospitals or to families who can’t afford to buy their own.
- Help register people to vote.
- Help deliver meals and gifts to patients at a local hospital.
- Volunteer at a crisis hotline.
- Organize a blood drive.
- Write articles/give speeches advocating volunteerism.
- Make care packages to send to military personnel.
- Sit with a patient in hospice care.
- Tutor adults in English as a second language program.

2 Helping Children and Schools

- Tutor children during or after school.
- Organize games and activities for children in hospitals or who are visiting hospitalized relatives.
- Knit or crochet baby blankets to be donated to hospitals or homeless shelters.
- Sponsor a bike-a-thon and give away bike safety gear, like helmets and knee pads, as prizes.
- Volunteer at a summer camp for children who have lost a parent or who are sick or disabled.
- Sponsor a child living in a foreign country, either on your own or as part of a group.
- Coach a youth sports team.
- Put on performances for children in hospitals.
- Give free music lessons to schoolchildren.
- Become a volunteer teen crisis counselor.
- Organize a summer reading program to encourage children to read.
- Organize an Easter egg hunt for neighborhood children.
- Create a new game for children to play.
- Organize events to help new students make friends.
- Babysit children during a PTA meeting.
- Organize a reading hour for children at a local school or library.
- Work with the local health department to set up an immunization day or clinic to immunize children against childhood diseases.
- Volunteer to help with Vacation Bible School or other religious camps.
- Organize a Box Tops for Education program.
- Help a prospective college student complete admission and financial aid applications.
- Share your special skills and talents with a school or after-school group.
- Run a station at a school’s field day or book fair.
Helping Senior Citizens

- Read to residents at a nursing home.
- Deliver groceries and meals to elderly neighbors.
- Teach computer skills to the elderly.
- Drive seniors to doctor appointments.
- Mow an elderly neighbor’s lawn.
- Host a bingo night for nursing home residents.
- Host a holiday meal for senior citizens.
- Make birthday cards for the elderly.
- Donate and decorate a Christmas tree at a nursing home.
- Organize a family day for residents of a retirement home and relatives to play games together.
- Ask residents of a retirement home to tell you about their lives.
- Pick up medicine for an elderly neighbor.
- Perform a concert or play at a senior center.
- Help elderly neighbors clean their homes and organize their belongings.
- Rake leaves or wash windows for a senior citizen.
- Deliver cookies to a homebound senior citizen and make him/her your new “grandfriend.”

Helping Animals and the Environment

- Take care of cats and dogs at an animal shelter.
- Clean up a local park.
- Raise money to provide a bulletproof vest for a police dog.
- Plant a tree for Arbor Day.
- Place a bird feeder and bird fountain in your backyard.
- Start a butterfly garden in your community.
- Sponsor a recycling contest.
- Grow flowers in your backyard then give bouquets to hospital patients or people who are housebound.
- Help create a new walking trail at a nature center or park.
- Update the signs along a nature trail.
- Adopt an acre of rainforest.
- Help train service dogs.
- Participate in the cleanup of a local river, pond, or lake.
- Foster animals that shelters don’t have space for.
- Organize a spay-and-neuter-your-pet program.
- Care for a neighbor’s pet while they are away.
- Donate newspapers to an animal shelter.
- Train your pet to be a therapy animal and bring it to hospitals or nursing homes.
- Organize a carpool to reduce car emissions.
- Campaign for more bike lanes in your town.
- Volunteer at a nature camp and teach kids about the environment.
- Test the water quality of a lake or river near you.
- Plant native flowers or plants along highways.
5 Helping the Hungry and/or Homeless

• Build a house with a homebuilding organization.
• Donate your old clothes.
• Volunteer at a soup kitchen or food pantry.
• Host a Thanksgiving dinner for people who may not be able to afford their own.
• Offer to babysit or nanny for a family in need.
• Prepare a home-cooked meal for the residents of a nearby homeless shelter.
• Collect grocery coupons to give to a local food bank.
• Help repair or paint a local homeless shelter.
• Help organize and sort donations at a homeless shelter.
• Babysit children while their parents look for jobs.
• Become a Big Buddy for children at a homeless shelter.
• Make a welcome home basket to give to homeless shelter clients once they move into a home.
• Bake a batch of cookies or loaf of bread and deliver it to a soup kitchen.
• Make first aid kits for homeless shelters.
• Make care bags for the homeless.
• Participate in homeless outreach programs.

6 Reducing Crime and Promoting Safety

• Volunteer at a police station or firehouse.
• Become a certified lifeguard and volunteer at a local pool or beach.
• Paint over graffiti in your neighborhood.
• Organize a self-defense workshop.
• Organize a drug-free campaign.
• Sponsor a drug-free post-prom event.
• Start or join a neighborhood watch program.
• Create and distribute a list of hotlines for people who might need help.
• Teach a home-alone safety class for children.
• Create a TV or radio public service announcement against drug and alcohol use.
• Become CPR certified.
• Volunteer as a crossing guard for an elementary school.

7 Promoting Community Enhancement

• Paint park benches or fences.
• Paint a mural.
• Become a tour guide at your local museum.
• Plant flowers in bare public areas.
• Organize a campaign to raise money to buy and install new playground equipment for a park.
• Participate in or help organize a community parade.
• Clean up vacant lot.
• Produce a neighborhood newspaper.
• Volunteer with theater groups – usher, sell tickets, build sets, advertise, perform.
• Campaign for more lighting along poorly lit streets.
• Create a newcomers group in your neighborhood to help welcome new families.
• Petition your town leaders to build more drinking fountains and public restrooms.
• Volunteer to clean up trash at a community event.
• Adopt a local highway or road and clean up trash along it.
• Help fix or raise funds to repair a run-down playground.
• Clean up after a natural disaster.
• Help a nonprofit with mail-outs, filing, answering phones, yard work, or fundraisers.
Skilled Volunteers
If you have a professional skill, consider lending your talents to help a nonprofit. Most agencies cannot afford to hire professionals. Your skills could help the nonprofit itself (such as repairing a leaky roof) or the agency’s clients (such as teaching them budgeting techniques).

- healthcare professionals
- carpenters
- electricians
- plumbers
- HVAC specialists
- landscapers
- website designers
- social media experts
- custodial personnel
- maintenance specialists
- grant writers
- event planners
- nutritionists
- financial literacy experts

Items to collect and donate
You can hold a drive for these items or simply donate individually (to places such as women’s shelters, children’s shelters, hospitals, homeless shelters, schools, after-school programs, low-income housing, and animal shelters).

- personal care items
- stuffed animals
- baby items
- used sports equipment
- books
- gently used clothing
- toys
- food
- blankets
- coats, scarves, hats, gloves
- art supplies
- feminine products
- school supplies
- dog and cat food