CONTENT SPOTLIGHT

International Volunteer Day

Background reading

Recognizing volunteers

International Volunteer Day is celebrated every year on December 5. The United Nations established the day to recognize volunteers around the world and the benefits of volunteering. It celebrates the positive difference volunteers make in their local communities, across their countries, and internationally.

Many ways to contribute

Volunteers contribute their time, skills, and compassion to address needs in society. Their efforts support people and causes in many different settings. Volunteer opportunities cover a wide range of interests, allowing people to find a cause that matters to them and a way to contribute to positive change.

Examples include environmental conservation, education, support for disadvantaged people, gender equality, peace building, public health, and animal welfare. These are among the many causes that volunteers can support in their communities and around the world.

Benefits for volunteers

Volunteering can also benefit the people who give their time. Helping others can bring positive feelings, strengthen self-confidence, and develop useful practical and interpersonal skills. The experience can make a difference both to the people receiving help and to those providing it. International Volunteer Day recognizes these contributions and draws attention to the value of volunteers throughout society.

Adapted from Content Spotlight: International Volunteer Day, American English, U.S. Department of State. View the archived source (February 2, 2025).