

Volunteering for wellbeing



Ever thought about volunteering?

- **Do you have time to spare?**
- **Want to meet new people and contribute to your community?**
- **Want to be enriched by enriching the lives of others?**
- **Fancy trying something a bit different?**
- **Why don't you consider volunteering?**

So what's in it for me?

There are over one million New Zealanders who volunteer. For older people and communities, voluntary work is a win-win opportunity! For example, did you know that volunteering enhances physical and mental health wellbeing?

You can use your expertise and knowledge, put your hobby to good use, develop some new skills or try something completely different.



Serving the needs of older people

“Giving my time and energy to “a good cause” for free makes me feel good.”

Volunteering in older age may take the form of additional social responsibility with older people being asked to take on leadership roles as kaumātua, advisors or mentors, or can be as simple as stuffing envelopes or helping with morning tea for a meeting. The knowledge and experience of a lifetime is shared with younger generations, or with an organisation, enabling maintenance, change and growth.

Without volunteers, many things would not be done and many community organisations would not exist. Take Age Concern, for example: we have a paid staff of around 150 people with the support of over 4,500 volunteers who donate over 5,000 hours of their time every week. We simply couldn't manage to run our vital services without our volunteers.

Volunteering for Age Concern

We always need help – behind the scenes or in the forefront, volunteering for Age Concern makes a difference in the lives of others. You too can make a difference – you can help Age Concern to serve the needs of older people by volunteering with one of the many local Age Concerns around the country.

Volunteers ensure that vital Age Concern services are available to older people in their communities.

Local Age Concerns offer many opportunities for you to put your time, skills and experience to good use. These vary from area to area, but can include helping with day-to-day tasks such as sending out newsletters or answering the phone, or becoming a trained visitor with Age Concern's Accredited Visiting Service. If you enjoy driving, why not consider becoming a volunteer driver for your local Age Concern? Or maybe you're handy with a hammer, are comfortable changing light bulbs or happy putting new batteries in smoke alarms.

Alternatively, if your skills are more around planning and strategy, you may consider becoming a Council Member of your local Age Concern. People who apply for and are voted into key volunteer leadership positions help to guide, shape and advance their local Age Concern's services to older people in the community.

Why not contact your local Age Concern for more information?

Other volunteering ideas

- Many areas have a local volunteer centre. If so, you can pop in and have a chat. The volunteer centre will recognise and acknowledge your skills, interests and time available, and help to match you with a volunteer role that will suit you.
- Check out www.volunteeringnz.org.nz where you can search for volunteer opportunities.
- Citizens Advice Bureaux can suggest possible avenues.
- Menzsheds are a great way for older men find companionship and contribute to the community. If you enjoy making things, and want to help others, join your local Menzshed.
- Offer your time at a local school.
- Keep in regular contact by phone or internet with a solitary friend if either or both of you have physical and/or transport difficulties.
- Rest homes often need volunteers, for example to spend time talking to an older person who may be lonely.
- Check out organisations that interest you on the internet or contact them directly.
- See what opportunities there are for volunteering by checking out noticeboards at your local marae/cultural centre or church.
- Talk to family and friends about what you could do – maybe see if a friend would like to volunteer with you.
- Check out www.ageconcern.org.nz for details of your local Age Concern. They will always welcome your help.

If you already volunteer, perhaps you can pass this information sheet to a friend or family member who has expressed an interest in volunteering.

For more copies of this information sheet please contact Age Concern New Zealand

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