

Your kids can make a difference this summer

July 2015 Newsletter



Summer gives kids a break from homework, tests and school schedules. It's also a good time for them to use their talents and energies to help others.

Kids of all ages can do this. And there's a big benefit for them: Helping others builds new skills, self-esteem and a sense of generosity. Here are just a few ways your kids can make a difference this summer:

- 1. Make get-well cards for kids who are sick.** Even little kids can create cards that send happy, hopeful messages to children who are ill. You can drop them off in the Social Services office at a nearby hospital.
- 2. Help out at the local animal shelter.** Call your local shelter or pet adoption agency to find out if your children can volunteer. Kids will enjoy – and learn—from helping animals in need.
- 3. Visit older adults who are homebound.** Are there older adults in your own family who could use weekly visits? Would your kids like to help run a game of bingo or trivia at a local assisted living facility?
- 4. Plant and care for a tree.** Visit <http://treemusketeers.org> to learn about the positive impact of planting just one tree.
- 5. Volunteer at a local food pantry or soup kitchen.** Kids may be able to stock shelves, pack food bags or boxes, set tables or clean up.
- 6. Write or make care packages for service members.** Help your kids send “thank you” notes or cards to our troops and veterans. They can also make care packages with snacks, toothbrushes, hats and other small items. Read about ideas for letters, cards and care packages at www.operationgratitude.com.
- 7. Collect money for a good cause.** Help your kids find a charity they'd like to support and make flyers that outline their goal. Then they can set up a lemonade stand or offer to pull weeds, rake leaves or walk the dog for trusted neighbors. In return, their “customers” give a donation of a few dollars. Your kids collect the money and you can help them send it to their chosen charity with a check or money order.
- 8. Take part in a walk or run.** There are many fundraising and awareness events in the summer. Take your child's age and ability into account and try to find an event you can do as a family.
- 9. Clean up a beach or park.** Have your child invite a few friends for a clean-up day. Bring gloves and trash bags. After picking up trash, let them play. They'll enjoy the clean space they've just created.
- 10. Send emergency aid to other kids.** Contact your local Red Cross (www.redcross.org) to find out what your kids can do to help other kids who've been affected by hurricanes, floods and other disasters.

Don't forget to praise your kids for their efforts. You'll help them start a lifetime practice of giving back!