

SENIORS

Seniors Find That Doing Good Is Good For You

NewsUSA

(NU) - There are two things that older adults have in spades these days: time and knowledge. And both make them the perfect match for volunteering.

By giving back as little as two hours a week, or about 96 hours a year, older adults are discovering how to keep their lives active and healthy.

Research shows that seniors who volunteer can combat depression, stave off chronic pain, and boost brain power. In short, volunteering can promote longevity.

Still need another reason to get out and volunteer? With the number of volunteers age 65 and older expected to double in a few years, chances are you'll reconnect with old friends and make new ones.

"Volunteering gave me a reason to get up in the morning and stimulated my brain as I learned about topics and issues that were completely unfamiliar to me," says one volunteer.

To help educate older adults about the benefits of volunteering, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) launched a public education campaign to raise awareness of the issue and to prompt older adults to take action. The centerpiece of the campaign is a publication, "Doing Good Is Good for You: Volunteer!"

This brochure provides you with a Self-Assessment Checklist that can help you evaluate the range of issues and activities that you may find most interesting in a



volunteer setting.

For example, are you interested in animals, politics, or art?

Do you enjoy activities such as gardening, tutoring, or counseling?

The Checklist gives you dozens of options.

One prospective volunteer who completed a checklist of his interests was a lifelong musician. He checked "arts and culture" as a favorite and said he loved teaching others. When the local volunteer coordinator signed him up, she had no idea that his instrument of choice was a ukulele. Two years later, his lessons have become so popular, he's teaching in two senior centers to packed classes.

The point is, there's a volunteer opportunity for everyone, and it can be found with the simple click of a mouse.

For more information on volunteering, and to download your free copy of the brochure and other resources, visit www.n4a.org and find the "Volunteer Resource Center" under n4a Initiatives.