Community service is healthy for teens

Most students find community service to be something that they have to do.

It is required to volunteer for government classes and the IB Middle Years Program Certificate.

Many clubs and honor societies also require completing service hours.

In order to earn the service learning cord, one must volunteer for 40 hours. An additional 10 hours will earn them the Virginia civic seal.

Others may see it as simply another thing to fill a transcript.

In reality, community service is one of the healthiest things a teenager can do.

When people volunteer to help others, whether it is children, the injured, elderly people, or even just a friend, they are establishing the mind-set of helping others without benefitting personally.

This makes people more giving and nicer.

"Volunteering has taught me to put others before myself," sophomore Karla Mercado-Dorado said. "It has made me more generous and encourages me to help others in my day to day life."

Also, knowing that they have helped others make people feel better about themselves and boosts self esteem,

"When I do volunteer work, I feel like I have done some good for the world," Mercado-Dorado said. "That feeling makes me feel like a better person."

Additionally, research shows that completing volunteer work helps people develop social skills and meet new people. This helps fend off things like feelings of loneliness.

"Community service is a social and fun activity," IB MYP Coordinator and Service Learning Liaison Laura Wells said.

Students agree with this, too.

"Through my volunteer work, I have definitely befriended a lot of people I wouldn't have come across or struck up a conversation with in other situations," junior Arafat Aliya said.

Community service is also beneficial in that it helps people build a connection with their community.

Environmental based volunteer work helps keep the area clean and safe for fellow inhabitants.

Helping people by tutoring and similar activities helps further the success of fellow community members. This in turn betters the community as a whole.

Community service is also a better way for students to spend their time doing.

Volunteer work distracts teens from spending time using their phones, and participating in detrimental activities such as drug use.

"If I didn't use so much of my time doing community service, I would probably be spending an unhealthy amount of time watching television or scrolling through social media," Aliya said. "So I'm thankful that I have something to take up my time."

Community service, albeit being tedious at time, is valuable.

"The key to letting service learning benefit you is doing something that you will enjoy," Wells said.