

Finding the Right Opportunity

OK, you want to volunteer in addition to your SGI-USA activities. But how do you find the opportunity that's right for you?

Susan J. Ellis of Energize Inc. says the key to finding the volunteering opportunity that best matches your needs is to first ask the right questions, including:

— **What causes or issues matter the most to me?** Do you know what organizations address these issues in your community? Do you think they are doing a good job and deserve your support? Have you, in fact, already given them a financial donation?

— **Do I want to volunteer for something that uses the skills I apply in my paying work or do I want to do something completely different?** What types of things are you good at? These can be professional skills or even hobbies and recreational talents. Almost every type of skill is needed somewhere. The better you are at explaining exactly what you can offer, the easier it will be to find the right type of volunteer work for you.

— **What would I most like to learn by volunteering?** As a volunteer, you have the freedom to experiment with new activities. Is there something you wish you had the opportunity to learn?

— **What don't I want to do as a volunteer?** It's OK to identify certain things you want to avoid as a volunteer. The happier you are about what you will be doing, the better you will be as a volunteer.

— **Do I want an ongoing, regularly scheduled assignment, or a short-term assignment, or a one-time assignment?** Some volunteer assignments do require a lot of time. But others can be accomplished in a short time. More and more organizations are designing volunteer work that can be done in the evenings and on weekends, and in short bursts of intensive time.

— **Am I willing to participate in a training course or do I want to start my volunteer work immediately?**

— **How do I find information about volunteer opportunities?** See if your community has a "volunteer center," "voluntary action center" or "volunteer bureau" (try the phone directory) that is a clearinghouse for information about volunteer opportunities. If you can't find an organization that does the work you want most to do as a volunteer, maybe you should found a new agency.

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