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## Importance Of Community Service For Students

High school is not only preparation for college, it prepares you for the future. In high school you start having an idea of what it means to be a good citizen. An extensive factor of being a good citizen is interacting with your community. The most common ways of involving in community activities are through volunteerism. Community service can be extremely valuable in the development of both character and academics, but the negative effects of forcing students to participate by making such programs a graduation requirement offset the benefits. Mandating community service is unconstructive and can have a negative effect on students' attitudes toward volunteering later; schools should encourage students to participate in community service without making it mandatory for graduation. Even without a service-learning requirement, students have shown that they are passionate to be involved in their community. Howe and Strauss indicate that "five out of six Millennials believe their generation has the greatest duty to improve the environment" and would accept additional "civil duties" to introduce needed change. Surely, students are investing themselves and their time in service activities besides to fulfill a school requirement.

In "Millenia's Rising" Neil Howe and William Strauss say, "For teenagers, "community service" came to mean punishment for drunk drivers and Breakfast Club miscreants." This supports why students should not be forced to participate in Community Service because it can make them resent Community service and even make them view it as a punishment, rather than an opportunity to better themselves and their communities and even enrich their lives. In addition, "Study: "Resume Padding" Prevalent in College-Bound Students Who Volunteer" Dennis Chapman shares a study conducted by Lewis Friedland, a professor of journalism and mass communication, in which he found that "(Students) held an overwhelming belief that volunteering would be a key to college admission". Although some may be doing it out of the goodness of their heart, the vast majority are doing Community service to help them get into the college of their choice. These students are less concerned with the people or causes they are volunteering to help, as they are with how their Community service can help benefit them. Community service should not be about what the person volunteering can get out of it, but about helping those in need. It has been demonstrated that making public service mandatory can kill the natural spirit of volunteerism. According to two studies published in the journal Psychological Science, harsh requirements mandating community service "can have negative effects on students' intentions to volunteer freely in the future." The same studies also found that students were more likely to volunteer in the future if they began volunteering out of "free choice." Furthermore, the sense that service-learning is "required" not only to graduate school but to get into a good college has driven many students to volunteer out of self-interest rather than nobility. "Many young people said that their motive in becoming involved was to make a stronger case to please college admissions officers," reported an article in the University of Wisconsin-Madison News. In "Youth Attitudes toward Civic Education and Community Service Requirements" Mark Hugo Lopez provides 2 graphs from the "Council for Excellence in government youth Survey", and these graphs shows that people from ages 15-20 (which encompasses the majority of people who attend High School) who were forced into doing Community Service received vastly more "unfavorable" outcomes than "favorable". This could be for a variety of reasons, such reasons could include lack of motivation causing insufficient work or the experience not being enjoyable for the student doing the Community Service. Since

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students are not wanting to participate in Community Service, they are doing lousy work and not gaining anything from the experience. Instead of making community service mandatory, educators should provide and encourage students to volunteer. It is within human nature to reject an idea when it's forced upon them.

Making community service mandatory defeats the purpose it's trying to accomplish, it should not be about those who are doing the volunteering, it's about those who are receiving the help. By making it mandatory, the focus shifts from an act of kindness to students doing it just so they can graduate. They won't be able to enjoy the experience nor will they be able to gain any knowledge from it. It might even have a long-lasting negative effect on the students' lives, they might never volunteer nor be involved in their community in the future. Students should be encouraged to do community services and schools should provide opportunities for students to be involved in their communities. Society can benefit from striving youth who are driven instead of those who are forced to engage in their community in the interest of getting credit to graduate.

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