

Gwynedd-Mercy College

Are you interesting in helping others? Making the world, country, state, community a better place? Making a difference? You have come to the right place. Gwynedd-Mercy College offers many opportunities for everyone to get involved in community service. It doesn't matter if you are a freshman or an alum.

Below you will find information on some of the programs offered by GMC and other organizations for volunteering as a student/alum and finding post graduate service opportunities.

1.) So why should you volunteer?

Rewarding

Volunteering gives you an opportunity to make a difference to people's lives in your community. You can use your skills and experience to help and enrich the local community.

Improve job prospects & employability

Volunteering can enhance your future employment prospects and enable employers to see that you have developed the necessary skills you may need in their organization. It is especially useful when completing application forms and during job interviews to illustrate the skills you have developed through these voluntary experiences.

Experience

Volunteering gives you a chance to get experience in a field you would like to work in.

Training

Many of the volunteer projects will include training, which will be useful both on the project and in later life.

Experience diversity

Volunteering gives you the chance to meet people both from within and outside the University who you would not normally come across.

Influence career choice

Volunteering gives you the opportunity to test out potential career choices.

Opportunity for training and development

Volunteering provides you with development opportunities that are not always possible with paid employment, for example; communication and people skills, organizational and time management skills, planning and budgeting skills. It can help open up fresh opportunities and is a way to explore new career paths.

Builds links with organizations

Volunteering can help you build links with particular organizations like Schools, FE Colleges and specific community organizations.

Have fun!

Volunteering is fun and fulfilling, allowing you to experience many diverse opportunities not always available to you elsewhere.

To find volunteer opportunities go to:

- 1) On the Career Services website, www.gmc.edu/careerservices under the heading "Volunteer and Service Information."
- 2) College Central. www.collegecentral.com/gmc. This is GMC's Internet job posting system.
- 3) Career Services Center: We have a binder in our Career Center that has volunteer opportunities.
- 4) Contact GMC Campus Ministry and/or Mercy Works Program.

2.) Post Graduate Service/Volunteering

Post-Grad Volunteering
FULL-TIME OPPORTUNITIES

If you fit the profile of the average GMC student, you've probably volunteered some of your time in a local school, shelter, hospital or social service agency.

But what if your job after graduation could provide the same rewards on a full-time basis? Are you motivated by a desire to be of service to others, to broaden your experience and knowledge of the world, or to make a difference in other people's lives? Then full-time volunteer service may be just the solution to your job-hunting blues.

NOT JUST "A YEAR OFF"

Though a volunteer position may seem like an easy way to avoid the job hunting process, you need to put at least as much effort into your search as your friends are devoting to their corporate job quest. Whether you're involved in volunteer work for a few months or several years, this time provides a tremendous opportunity to develop skills that you will carry into future jobs.

A long-term volunteer position may, in fact, provide you with far greater opportunities for responsibility and growth than would most paying jobs. As a Mercy Volunteer Corps member, for example, you may be responsible for setting up and providing health care facilities or educational opportunities for an entire community. When you return from such a challenging work experience, the skills you have developed and the responsibilities you have undertaken will be greatly valued by any employer

PAY AND OTHER COMPENSATION

Working as a full-time volunteer does not necessarily mean that you will have to cover all your own living expenses. Many of the volunteer agencies that require a long-term commitment (a year or more) will provide free room and board and a monthly stipend to cover your personal expenses, and some will even pay your travel expenses.

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

How do you begin to track down volunteer opportunities that match your goals and interests? Let's say you're committed to serving the homeless. Ask yourself how you would like to see the issue approached. Would you prefer to work for an organization that advocates for adequate housing and job training programs, or one that focuses more directly on serving the immediate needs of homeless people?

Gather information on the ways in which the various organizations achieve their goals, and how often they succeed. Ask for information about each organizations' policies, agendas and programs, and ask to speak with current or former volunteers. An excellent place to start is at GMC Career Services where information is available on a number of service programs.

Some of the key questions you should ask of a potential volunteer employer include: Is health insurance provided? What kind of staff supervision and training will you receive, and what are the opportunities for additional responsibility? If you have student loans, can they be deferred? What are the living arrangements going to be? And what happens if you are not able to complete your term of service?

IS THIS REALLY FOR YOU?

Full-time voluntary service is not for everybody, of course. Even if you are motivated and willing, you need to ask yourself if you can deal with the frustrations and difficulties you may encounter. Can you cope with being away from your family and friends for an extended period of time? Are you willing to accept total immersion in another culture or total involvement in the community you serve? Could you handle being exposed to human suffering on a daily basis, or having your expectations thwarted by bureaucratic difficulties?

Finally, remember that while a year or two of voluntary service can be viewed as a transitional time before heading off to graduate school or a professional career, it can also be the first step in a challenging and meaningful lifetime career in the nonprofit and volunteer sectors

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