

National Volunteer Week

Celebrated throughout the world, **National Volunteer Week** is an annual celebration observed to promote and show appreciation for volunteerism and volunteering.

National Volunteer Week was first conceived in 1943 in Canada, as a way to celebrate the contribution made by women on the home front to the war effort. After World War II ended, National Volunteer Week declined in popularity until the 1960s when it revived and eventually began gaining popularity in the United States as well.

National Volunteer Week in the United States was first established via Presidential Proclamation 4288, signed by Richard Nixon in 1974.

Former President George H. W. Bush showed his support of American Volunteering in his 1991 State of the Union Address, commending "a volunteer's generous gesture", and calling it "an idea that is simply right."

Benefits of volunteering

Besides the benefits to society, scientific studies have shown that individuals who volunteer enjoy psychological and physical benefits, including increased satisfaction, improved sense of belonging, lower blood pressure, increased protection from Alzheimer's, and decreased mortality.

The Ypsi Food Co-op, as most food co-ops in the U.S., was started by volunteers. Over time it became apparent that a more involved staff would be helpful for the co-op to be an efficient business, and staff were hired and paid!

We have continued to have volunteers as an important part of our organization. We have transitioned the work of volunteers from helping with all aspects of operations, to being a support to our outreach and sustainability projects like the Solar and Local Honey Projects. We still appreciate the extra hands in the store when things are outside of the day to day scope of the work of the grocery store, and during our renovations we have had crews help as we had to move or clean or paint. Yesterday we moved the deli and cheese cooler into our new deli and the extra help from several volunteers helped staff manage the extra work needed. We want to extend a hearty thank you to Aaron Stark, Marlene and Steven Moore, and Jeff Muir for coming to help with carrying product and cleaning!

Volunteer work can also be used to leverage valuable experiences where work experience is lacking, or to build on an area of interest and expertise when writing a resume for work or applying to schools. Benefits of volunteer work are enjoyed by the community effected, but also

by the volunteers themselves, in knowing that they contributed to the betterment of society in some way. We will continue to post volunteer opportunities in the weekly newsletter!!