

Community Service Opportunities Around Ithaca

Here are a few places where you might volunteer; there are many more. It can be tricky to find the right spot, so please email or call me if you want help. My contact information is at the end of this list.

Poverty and Basic Needs

1. **Loaves and Fishes** – This is a community kitchen that serves many, many people lunch and dinner. You could volunteer anywhere from 3:30 – 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday and/or Thursday. Call 272-5457 or just show up and see if they need your help; it is located at 210 N. Cayuga Street in the back of the Episcopal Church.
2. **Food Pantries** – There are *many, many* food pantries that help many working people take care of their families here in our community, from downtown to Danby to West Hill. One great place to help is the Caroline Food Pantry – contact Pat Brhel at 539-9928. But you can find out about many other pantries by checking out - <http://friendshipdonations.org/pantry-schedule/> or contact me (Jon Raimon) at 279-4881 and I will help you find a pantry that works for you.
3. **Foodnet Meals on Wheels** feeds folks on a fixed economy, especially the elderly, by delivering meals to their homes. The agency is located at 2422 N. Triphammer Road. Call 266-9461 to volunteer.
4. **Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services** provides support to those in need of moderate and low income housing. You would probably need a parent, especially if you were to help with any hands-on work. But they may have office work and other tasks, too. 115 W. Clinton. Phone # 277-4500.
<http://www.ithacanhs.org/>
5. **Community Building Works!** – This group builds green, affordable housing, locally and internationally, using volunteer labor. You need to be 16 to do the labor without a parent or guardian. They have weekend shifts to help with building right downtown – contact Shelia Squire at ssquier@twcny.rr.com or at 227-1184.
6. **Habitat for Humanity** – this group builds housing for people who need it. There is an Ithaca High Club or you can also just contact the organization on your own -- Christy at 607 898-4148 or check out the website at <http://tchabitat.com/>
7. **Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga** helps folks in need in many ways, from supplying clothes to teaching about nutrition. 272 – 5062. 324 W. Buffalo St. <http://www.catholiccharitiestt.org/volunteer.html>
8. **Ithaca Health Alliance** – helps provide health care to those without insurance; there may be fundraising or clerical (paper work) tasks that need to be done. <http://www.ithacahealth.org/>
9. **Southern Tier AIDS Program** – provides services to those with HIV / AIDS and education to prevent HIV / AIDS. They have annual fund raising events, as well great educational programs. 501 South Meadow Street (607) 273-6280
10. **Cancer Resource Center** is an innovator in providing support to individuals and their loved ones facing cancer. Contact Sharon Kaplan at sharon@crcfl.net or 277-0960 ext. 229. They have a huge fundraising walk / run in October; but there are ways to get involved in the spring, too.
11. **Temples, Churches and Mosques** – If you belong to a religion, there is a good chance your temple, church or mosque somehow supports those in need in your community. Just ask the people leading your

congregation. If you do not belong to a religion, that is fine. As you see from this list, there are so many ways to volunteer.

12. **International Groups** – A) **Educate the Children** is an organization that assists women and children in Nepal; the organization is based right here in Ithaca. Contact them at 272-1176 and check them out at www.etc-nepal.org. B) CORAfrica (www.corafrica.org) – builds schools in Africa; they have an office in Ithaca; contact Carolann Darling at 319-4916 or jcaandd@yahoo.com.
13. **Red Cross** – the Ithaca branch of the Red Cross (including the club at Ithaca High) is a great place to volunteer; they help with disaster relief, homelessness (The Friendship Center), blood drives, and much more. 273-1900.

Human Services / People / Education

14. **Tompkins County Library** – volunteer to shelve books, do special projects, be part of the teen advisory group, and more. Contact Tonya Curran 272-4557 x226 or check out <http://www.tcpl.org/volunteer/index.html>
15. **Sex Ed through Planned Parenthood's PEERS program. PEERS**, which stands for Peers Educating Each other about Responsible Sexuality, is set up to have teens giving teens accurate information about sex and related topics. Through the PEERS program students are selected and trained to respond to questions from their friends about family communication, romance and responsibility, substance use, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted infection, diversity, and many other topics. Contact Jen Mainville at 607-216-0021 x157. This is a full school year commitment of an hour and a half week, not including school holidays.
16. **Senior Citizens** – There are many nursing homes and living centers for senior citizens in Ithaca, as well as the Office for the Aging. Visiting makes a huge difference to older folks; in addition to just chatting, you can also play music, do artwork, and read aloud. Instead of listing all the nursing homes, I will highlight one, but know that you can contact me to help you find one closer to your home. **Beechtree** is a nursing home that helps people from all walks of life, including folks who cannot always afford some of the swankier nursing homes. It is right downtown on 318 S. Albany St. Contact Beth Coveney at bcoveney@beechtreecarecenter.org / 273-4166, ext. 118
17. **City of Ithaca community boards** need volunteers – Community Police Board, Conservation Advisory Committee, Parks Commission, and Board of Public Works all need volunteers. This would be a commitment for the school year – 274-6570.
18. **After School Programs** - Many after school programs focus on kids in need. Some are listed below: Most schools and community centers have programs for little kids; this includes tutoring, playing, art, sports, etc. You can find your own way to help. You would be able to help from 4 – 5:30 p.m., as they wrap up the day. You can call the school or agency (#s in the phone book or on the Web), but if you have any trouble, please contact me at jraimon@twcnj.rr.com or 279-4881. However, I will list a few just to get you started.
 - BJM Academic Plus Program – Marie – 274-2209
 - Enfield After School Program – Vera – 274- 2221
 - Greater Ithaca Activity Center – Jenna – 272-3622
 - Caroline After School Program - 539-7422
 - West Village 4-H Program (great one and really needs folks this spring) – Matt at Cooperative Extension – mry7@cornell.edu / 272-2292

- Advantage After School Program Boynton and Dewitt Middle School 273-8816 ext 102 – through TC Action
- Belle Sherman After School Program - Terra – 274-2206, especially if you wish to work with ESL students

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20. **Family Reading Partnership.** The FRP promotes literacy and a love of reading for the whole community. They have a big book fest in the fall but other events and ways to get involved during the whole year. Contact Katrina Morse at 277-8602.

21. **Drop In Children's Center** – help with pre-school age children, especially after school. Ask for the volunteer coordinate at 272-7117. You do need finger prints for a childcare background check, but this done free. The need is great, especially from 4 – 5:30.

22. **Youth and Philanthropy Program** – Although you could not do this one this year, you could prepare to do it in the fall. A teacher or other mentor nominates you (I am sure an AVID teacher would do so) and you then serve on a board with other high school students from around Tompkins County. The group decides what agencies and causes are worthy of receiving thousands of dollars of grants.

23. **Coach** - most sports teams for little kids need assistant coaches; pick a sport you love and contact Michael Armitage at the Ithaca Youth Bureau (273-8364).

Environment

24. **Computer All Stars at IYB** – help rebuild old computers so they can be reused and given to folks who need them. Contact Marty at 273-8364.

25. **Your School's Green Team** – just ask students or other teachers already involved.

26. **Finger Lakes Land Trust** – help preserve the land in this area; both clerical (paper work) and trail maintenance needed, depending on the season. 275-9487.

27. **Finger Lakes Re-Use** – new group focused on recycling and much more. In the Triphammer Mall. <http://www.fingerlakesreuse.org/index.shtml> 257-9699

28. If you decided that you are against **gas drilling / hydrofracking** and you want to help, call Shaleshock at 273-3388. If you are on the other side, there are contacts we could find.

29. **Cayuga Nature Center** – from trail clearing to feeding the animals to special events – call 273 6260 and ask for the volunteer coordinator. (Less available in the winter.)

30. **Recycling / Solid Waste of Tompkins County** – has programs to get involved in, from reusing prom dresses to recycling fairs. Call 273-6632.

31. **Ithaca Children's Garden** – gets kids all around the community involved in gardening, composting, and more. Contact ithacachildrengarden@cornell.edu or (607) 272-2292, extension 122. They have a huge scarecrow festival in the fall!

32. **Sciencenter** - there are both long term and one time volunteer placements here. Contact BJ Siasoco -- 607-272-0600 ext. 10 or send an email to volunteer@sciencenter.org. There are age requirements, so you may need an adult with you.

Human Rights / Diversity

33. **MLK Festivities** in January (contact GIAC) and **Juneteenth Celebration** – (contact Southside Community Center). Two crucial African American related events that include our whole community. Of course, there are also projects through the **Latino/a Civic Association** (www.latinocivicasociationtc.org), the **Ithaca Asian American Association** (ithaca3a@ithaca3a.org), the **Cayuga / SHARE Farm** (Native American issues; contact me at jraimon@twcny.rr.com I can pass on your info), and a variety of other groups.
34. **Tompkins County Immigrant Rights Coalition** – working to support the rights of immigrants and immigration reform. <http://tcirc.wordpress.com/>
35. **Prison Express** – this is a program set up to help prisoners remain connected to what they call the “free world” and to do their best to better themselves through reading, art, poetry and simple human contact. The program helps to send books and letters to prisoners throughout the country, as well as provide newsletters about topics important to them. Tasks include typing in poetry, packing books, corresponding with prisoners (with parental approval), creating newsletters, and more. It is located at Cornell’s Anabel Taylor Hall in the Durland’s Alternative Library. The contact is Gary Fine: 255-6486 or gmf5@cornell.edu
36. **Recreation Support Services** (a department of the Ithaca Youth Bureau, formerly RMS). RSS provides recreation programs for children & adults with disabilities year round. You can help with dancing, singing, swimming, bowling, etc. This is a great way to think about our community from a new angle and have a great time. Contact the RSS folks at 273-8364.
37. **Southside Community Center** offers program on everything from nutrition to computers; they many programs from little kids. There is particular focus on celebrating the African American culture; all are welcome. 273-4190
38. **Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual (LGTB)** – IC has a good outreach program that would welcome teens to help with events, such as raising awareness about LGBT issues in April. Contact Lis Maurer at 274-7394. There is also a newer youth group in town; the contact info is 275-0067 or email glabe@berkshirefarm.org.
39. **SIFE Program** (Students with Interrupted Formal Education) has great after school settings at West Village and Belle Sherman. Many of the students are from other countries and English is not their first language. West Village contact is Matt Yaeger - mry7@cornell.edu; Belle Sherman contact is Suzie Schlough -- scs45@cornell.edu. The timing might be tricky, but you could help during a school break, such as in April.
40. **Worker’s Center** – supports the rights of workers through political action, like petitions, and raising general awareness. 115 The Commons – 269-0409.
41. **Multicultural Resource Center** – this organization promotes understanding among groups from different cultures; they sometimes have projects and events where you might be able to volunteer. Contact Liz or Audrey at 272-2292.

The Arts

42. **Music, Art and Writing in General** – If you enjoy any of the arts, there is a good chance you can share this through a service project. Here are just a few ways, but keep your mind open and think of others, too: make a video to promote a human service agency; create artwork to brighten up a nursing home; help fashion a cool Facebook page for a cause; write an article for the Ithaca Child or its teen magazine about a social issue; draw a mural about an important topic and share it in the community; play music at Hospicare

or a nursing home; take photos for a community event; pull off a benefit concert for a cause, local or international; sell beautiful cards you've made to raise funds the SPCA; and so on.

43. **Community Role Players** – a group that examines tough issues through theater; there may be some age requirements; call Lee Ellen at 272-1505. Part of Suicide Prevention and Crisis Services.
44. **Community Theater** – volunteer to do the postering, cleaning, ushering, paper work, etc. at The Kitchen Theater (272-0403), The State Theater (277-7273), Running to Places (www.runningtoplaces.org), Hangar Theater (273-8588), and so on.
45. **Ithaca Festival** – This is under the art category, but there are so many volunteer opportunities, from creating a float for the parade to composting to running sound equipment. 273-3646 or volunteer@ithacafestival.org
46. **Grassroots Festival** – have fun and help out this promotion of arts education and the fight against AIDS. <http://www.grassrootsfest.org/festival/>
47. **Rock the Arts** – youth run music and arts festival in the spring – contact rockthearts@gmail.com

Finally, the truth is that you can create your own service project. Think of a cause you care about – the environment, child abuse, human rights abuses, etc. You and your friends can easily contact an agency that would want help, especially in the form of raising funds and/or raising awareness about their cause. You can do this through benefit concerts, making and selling artistic cards, music, cooking and selling food, etc. And sometimes there is a need for photography, video work, website creation, artwork, etc. Offer your skills and your energy.

If you feel stuck and want guidance, I can try to help. Please contact me (Jon Raimon) at jraimon@twcny.rr.com or 279-4881.