

Make it a family affair

Volunteer Edmonton

Get your children involved

Special to the Examiner

There's no other season that highlights the natural wonder of the outdoors better than summertime.

While many of us embark on trips to the lake or campgrounds, consider spending part of your summer volunteering with your children.

It's a meaningful, memorable and affordable way to spend time with your family while giving back to the community.

Aside from having fun, volunteering offers a few extra perks. It adds another dimension to your child's life by providing them with the opportunity to make a difference, learn about community needs and issues, take on responsibility and gain self-confidence.

Teenagers benefit by building their resume with relevant work experience that could count toward scholarships and awards, and parents have the satisfaction of knowing that they're setting a positive example for their children.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

"Involving children as volunteers is a great way to get them doing something a little different," explains Nana Thaver, Volunteer Edmonton co-ordinator.

Volunteering teaches the importance of helping others and giving back by participating in simple tasks like packing food for low-income families, visiting patients or seniors in hospitals and continuing care facilities, or spending the

weekend helping out at a festival.

It will leave them with a lasting impression of how they can make a real difference.

Many organizations welcome families who wish to volunteer in groups.

There are many areas to explore - from healthcare to environment to social services, sports and the arts. Finding the right opportunity starts with finding out what piques your family's interests.

You can visit Volunteer Edmonton's own website, volunteeredmonton.com, to access a number of different websites that list volunteer opportunities.

"We've gathered these websites that list volunteer opportunities to make it easier so you don't have to spend time searching the Internet. It's all in one spot," says Thaver.

Another quick and easy option is dialing 211. This is a free 24-hour phone number, with operators providing information on a wide range of community-related programs and events, including volunteer opportunities.

A FAMILY RECONNECTION

A few hours a week or a month is all it takes, according to Thaver.

"It doesn't have to be a lifetime commitment," she says. "Volunteering with your family can be a great way to reconnect, do some-

thing interesting and have fun, all while giving back to the community."

Look to this space to see the work that the city's volunteers and nonprofit organizations are carrying out. For more information, please contact Evelyn Pham, communications co-ordinator, at epham@volunteeredmonton.com, call 780-732-6655 or check out their website at www.volunteeredmonton.com.

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Thursday, June 10th, 4 to 8 pm
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