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# Serving Others

By Jim Filmore

**H**ow often have you heard someone say that they received more than they gave when participating in some form of volunteering? In my experience that outcome is common especially when the volunteer activity involves interaction with others and goes beyond just a financial donation.

My company is in the midst of an eight week health and wellness challenge. The concept is simple: form teams and compete both against other teams and yourself to be healthier. The criteria that the program utilizes are a balance between simplicity and effectiveness. The categories are water, fresh fruits and vegetables, exercise, sleep, and weekly volunteering. The first four categories should be obvious to most people. However, one may question why volunteering belongs as a main criterion for a health and wellness program as at first it appeared out of place to me. However, upon further reflection, I realized that volunteering is an important component of a well-rounded program of health and wellness as I will explain below.

When the program launched, a few individuals from our pricing and marketing areas decided

to form a team and take on all challengers. We stocked up on fruits and vegetables and regularly re-filled our water bottles throughout the work day. We then searched for volunteer opportunities in our local community that were flexible in terms of accepting people to help outside of normal business hours. During the first week, we volunteered with the Atlanta Community Food Bank. It was eye-opening for all of us to find out how much this charity does for our local community. Our group washed and sorted fresh fruits and vegetables which the food bank then sells at cost through three local farmers' markets that they organize. They told us how the program is focused in some of the poorer sections of town to help make fresh fruits and vegetables more affordable to those who otherwise may defer to eating less nutritious meals. At the end of our volunteer assignment, we felt good about what we had accomplished. We also learned to appreciate those who consistently give their time and energy to help others and to ensure that our local community is thriving.

This experience reminded me that one of the greatest gifts that we can give ourselves is to serve others. Serving others could involve talking to elderly peo-



ple who are in nursing homes, serving meals to those in need, fostering homeless animals, or volunteering with a section of the Society of Actuaries (hint, hint). This article will be published around the end date of my three-year tenure of service on the Product Development Section Council. While my official capacity on the council is coming to a close, I will take with me numerous relationships that have been formed or enhanced over that time period. I also now have expanded my knowledge of multiple topics that can be applied in my daily personal life and work life. My overall investment of service on the council has figuratively yielded a tenfold return.

I encourage everyone to find a way to serve others. You may very well find that both your personal well-being and your professional life will grow and prosper as a result of your service.

Thank you for allowing me this time to serve as the chairperson of the Product Development Section Council! ■



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