

# Mental Health Facts for Parents

## December is for International Volunteer Day

### Facts and Techniques for Success



#### **VOLUNTEERING: GIVING = GETTING**

“By giving their time and skills without expectations of material reward, volunteers themselves are uplifted by a singular sense of purpose<sup>1</sup>.” Research shows that volunteerism carries significant social benefits for kids. Among those benefits are self-satisfaction, learning new skills, improved confidence, and feelings of accomplishment. It sets a good example for others in the community. It is just as important and beneficial when children see their parents volunteer. Volunteering as a family produces even greater results for all involved. Overall, “the benefits of volunteer work for any age—are virtually endless<sup>3</sup>.”

#### **KEEP IT SIMPLE: YOU WILL BE APPRECIATED!**

Volunteering. How is it defined? It is defined as promoting goodness to improve the quality of human life. Even the youngest family member can make a difference. Volunteering doesn't have to take hours of your time; it doesn't have to be scheduled in an already busy calendar. Family schedules can be tough!

You may not have to look beyond your neighborhood. Consider helping a neighbor by:

- Raking leaves or cleaning off sidewalks
- Taking out their garbage or putting their garbage cans by the street
- Grocery shopping
- Babysitting or dog walking
- Making a meal or making dessert (Imagine what a plate of chocolate chip cookies can do to make a bad day better!)



#### **VOLUNTEER IDEAS FOR THE FAMILY:**

1. Write letters for nursing home residents.
2. Make bookmarks about family values (time together, reading as a family, family dinners) and donate them to the library.
3. Have kids pick out a toy or two to donate.
4. Volunteer a Saturday (or two) at your local shelter or food pantry.
5. Write thank you letters to teachers and other school staff.
6. Make a holiday ornament for a neighbor.
7. Invite your child's friends over to build a gingerbread house for the holidays.
8. Consider writing a letter to your child's school. Tell them you appreciate them for the care they provide for your child.