Volunteering and Community Service in Adolescence

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In recent years, the phrase positive youth development has become ingrained in the work of researchers and practitioners.7,12,23 This focus on understanding and promoting the positive aspects of adolescent development represents the integration of lessons learned through the empirical study of protective and risk factors9,18,19,24 and developmental assets32 and through application and program evaluation.1 This chapter focuses on one area of research and practice—the role of volunteering and community service in promoting positive youth development.

Moore and Allen1 reviewed theoretical, empirical, and applied research published from 1980 through the early 1990s on the effectiveness of youth volunteer service programs. Their review found promising evidence that volunteering may contribute to reducing risks for problem behaviors (e.g., teenage pregnancy, substance use, and school failure) and improving academic functioning. However, they found little evidence that volunteer experience leads to other hoped-for gains. For example, Calabrese and Shumer3 found short-term reductions in feelings of alienation and school discipline problems during participation in community service, but those reductions were not maintained at follow-up 10 weeks after program completion. Moore and Allen also found mixed evidence regarding increases in social competence, problem-solving abilities, sense of responsibility to succeed in school, career exploration, political participation, and social responsibility. They also noted several variables of interest that had not been studied in relation to community service,
including empathy, abstract thinking skills, and leadership skills. It may be that the immediate gains associated with participation in community service do not generalize to developmental domains (e.g., career development) that are not linked directly to the volunteer experience. It is clear that efforts to involve youth in community service have the potential to promote important developmental outcomes, but there remains much to be learned.

Moore and Allen\(^1\) noted that the rationale for most programs was not rooted in clearly articulated theory. Specifically, they noted a lack of research addressing basic questions, including the following:

- Why is community service expected to promote positive developmental outcomes during adolescence?
- What are the developmental outcomes?
- Under what conditions does community service benefit youth development?

These questions provide the organizational framework for the present review. In only 5 years since the publication of Moore and Allen’s review,\(^3\) there has been a proliferation of basic and applied work that has begun to address these questions. In this chapter, we concentrate on how recent work since the mid-1990s has addressed the gaps in knowledge regarding the effects of volunteering and community service. In keeping with the dual emphasis on gaining knowledge through both empirical research and practical experience that has characterized the field of positive youth development, we integrate findings from recent conceptual, empirical, and program evaluation literature toward informing research and practice. We review research on programs that engage youth in community service and both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies of “naturally occurring” youth volunteering.

**WHY IS VOLUNTEERING EXPECTED TO PROMOTE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES?**

Our thinking has been shaped largely by our experience in evaluating the Teen Outreach Program. Teen Outreach is a school-based program that involves young people in volunteer service in their communities and links youths’ volunteer experiences with curriculum-guided group discussions on various topics ranging from family conflict to human development.\(^1\) We have argued that successful youth programs are those that engage youth in activities that match their social-developmental needs and provide an environment that fosters active exploration and reflection. Specifically, we found that program sites that were most successful in promoting students’ sense of autonomy and relatedness were also most successful in reducing rates of teenage pregnancy and school failure.\(^1\)

The notion that community service during adolescence may serve important developmental functions is not new. Indeed, Youniss and colleagues\(^1\) trace back to early writings by G. Stanley Hall and William James at the turn of the 20th century the notion that youth learn from direct experience about society and the various orientations they may take toward it. Erikson\(^1\) argued that identity development proceeds optimally when youth are actively engaged in society, and that both society and the individuals benefit. He argued that adolescence is “a vital regenerator in the process of social evolution, for youth can offer its loyalties and energies both to the conservation of that which continues to feel true and to the revolutionary correction of that which has lost its regenerating significance” (p134).\(^1\) Consistent with those theoretical formulations, Youniss et al.\(^1\) found, in a sample of 13,000 high school students, that community service was independently related to high levels of political and religious involvement and low levels of substance use.
Researchers, practitioners, and policy makers have looked to community service as a mechanism for reducing the alienation and isolation experienced by youth who emerge from childhood without a well-defined social role. For example, Schlegel and Barry found that American and European societies give adolescents few responsibilities and offer fewer opportunities than most other societies to prepare, plan, and carry out activities that are critical for survival. Larson noted, in his samples of more than 16,000 random moments in the daily lives of white, working class and middle class adolescents, that those youth reported feeling bored for 27% of the time. Larson argued that many of the problem behaviors observed among adolescents could be traced to the absence of opportunities for engagement in positive activities. Larson did not differentiate community service from recreational or other extracurricular activities, but argued that structured activities can provide a context for the development of initiative and positive engagement. Such activities offer a means for collaborative and goal-directed learning with peers, adults, and the customers or clients served. Thus, community service may offer much more than a vehicle for filling time or merely keeping young people out of trouble, but rather, a rare opportunity to serve in a helping role and to experience involvement in meaningful activity.

Schine noted that the pool of volunteers in the United States has been shrinking in recent decades, as growing proportions of adult women (the traditional mainstays of volunteer service) have entered the paid labor force. Thus, adolescent volunteers are poised to fill a necessary role in American society. However, it may be the extent to which adolescents perceive their efforts to be meaningful that determines the contributions of community service to developmental growth. Maton defined meaningful instrumental activity as "task or skill related activity which has positive significance or value to the individual involved" (p. 298). Maton found that meaningful involvement was related to life satisfaction among high-risk teenagers and college students, independent of the effects of social competence and support from parents and peers.

Whereas research has focused on the role of self-enhancing behaviors in the development of identity and autonomy, several researchers have noted that adolescents value helping and sacrificing for others. Killen and Turiel's cross-sectional study found that from middle school through college, adolescents viewed helping others less as an obligation and more as a matter of personal choice. These findings call into question the popular assumptions about adolescents as apathetic and uninvolved. Helping others through high-quality volunteer service may provide an optimal context for the development of identity and autonomy as well as supportive relationships with peers and adults. Paradoxically, the experience of helping others over a sustained period may promote self-enhancing goals, such as building self-esteem, knowledge of social issues, and development of social skills.

Further elaboration of the links between community service and adolescent development can be found in recent work on the effects of service learning programs. Service learning involves programmatic efforts to link community service with traditional academic curricula. Service learning has the potential not only for promoting social and moral development but also cognitive development. For example, through the combination of participating in community service and reflecting on service experiences, youth are encouraged to articulate their expectations and either confirm or disconfirm those expectations. Stukas and colleagues reviewed findings suggesting that service learning programs provide a context for self-enhancement (feelings of self-worth and agency), gaining new skills and new perspectives (including empathic understanding), developing and expressing personal values, exploring career options, and satisfying the expectations of others. Moreover, when linked to careful assessment of
community needs and satisfaction with services, institutions and communities stand to gain greater efficiency in use of resources, richer intergenerational and interorganizational social networks, and more positive relationships among community members.41

In sum, research and theory suggest at least the possibility of a synergistic relationship of adolescence with community service. Adolescents may reap social, moral, and cognitive developmental benefits from participating in high-quality volunteer service at a time in American society when there is growing need for volunteers. On the other hand, volunteer service is not a panacea. Whereas available research suggests that community service promotes positive developmental outcomes, there is less evidence that gains associated with involvement in time-limited community service programs or “one-shot” experiences are maintained over time or that all youth benefit from volunteer experience in similar ways. Some authors have listed community service among a set of protective factors11 or assets12 that contribute to successful developmental outcomes. Those perspectives suggest that youthful community service should be considered in the context of comprehensive efforts to mitigate the negative effects of exposure to risk factors in community, school, family, and peer group settings.34

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES OF VOLUNTEERING AND COMMUNITY SERVICE?

In this section, we review cross-sectional and longitudinal studies of “naturally occurring” community service performed by youth and evaluations of youth programs that have incorporated community service as a major component. Cross sectional studies are valuable in that they can help to identify situational and behavioral correlates of community service, but they cannot inform hypotheses about the direction of effects, nor can they address the contributions of community service to developmental change.9 Moreover, cross-sectional research can provide only limited insight into the role of selection in producing positive results. For example, if youth who are at high risk for psychological, social, and behavioral adjustment problems are less likely than others to perform community service, then the positive effects of volunteering may have more to do with who volunteers than with the experience of volunteering. Longitudinal studies are able to address many of the limitations of cross-sectional studies but provide little practical guidance for how to design effective interventions that engage youth in community service. Carefully designed program evaluations offer the possibility of observing in vivo how community service experience may function to promote positive youth development. The outcomes examined in the literature range from political involvement to academic achievement to teen pregnancy.

Cross-sectional Studies

Cross-sectional studies have examined the associations between community service involvement and positive outcomes, such as religious and political involvement and the development of “moral identity.” Using nationally representative data on more than 13,000 high school students, Youniss and colleagues48,49,21 defined identity development in terms of orientations toward normative vs. unconventional attitudes and behaviors. Higher frequency of community service was related to greater involvement in political activities and higher levels of religious involvement. Community service was also strongly negatively related to marijuana use. Yates and Youniss47 examined data from 281 high school students and alumni who participated in service learning as part of a required junior-year religion course at a Catholic school—students worked in a soup kitchen for a minimum of 20 hours throughout an academic year. They found that
the service program promoted a sense of engagement in the community and encouraged youth to think about the political implications of their experiences and their own political roles in society.

Youniss et al.\textsuperscript{51} examined effects of community service in the context of youths' academic and peer orientations. Four groups of students were identified: those who were school-oriented, 'peer-fun' oriented, all-around (school and peer-fun oriented), and disengaged. The school-oriented and all-around groups engaged in higher levels of volunteer activity than others, but volunteering appeared to be protective against marijuana use only for the school-oriented youth. These findings suggest that the combination of high levels of peer and community involvement may expose youth to opportunities for both socially desirable and undesirable activities. Such findings underscore the complexity of youthful identity exploration, as adolescents "must often test extremes before settling on a considered course" (pp 235–236).\textsuperscript{11}

Using data from the National Household Education Survey, Niemi and colleagues\textsuperscript{32} examined associations of community service involvement with political development among 9th through 12th graders. They found that regular participation in community service was positively associated with political knowledge and efficacy (e.g., understanding issues; feeling able to write a letter to a government official about an issue).

**Longitudinal Studies**

One of the key advantages of longitudinal research on adolescents' community service is that it enables an examination of selection effects.\textsuperscript{19,44} There is evidence that most adolescents do engage in some form of community service, with estimates ranging from 40% to more than 80%, depending on how community service is defined.\textsuperscript{14,32,36} Youth who engage in community service at age 18 appear to be more likely than others to volunteer 3 years later.\textsuperscript{35} In a 20-year panel study following individuals from their high-school years to their mid-30s, Janoski et al.\textsuperscript{17} found that early social participation and prosocial attitudes predicted later involvement in volunteer activities. These findings suggest that community service is itself an important adolescent outcome that predicts continued civic engagement into adulthood. Research has found consistently that girls are more likely than boys to volunteer, as are youth of upper socioeconomic levels.\textsuperscript{14,32,36} After controlling for demographic variables, ethnic minorities (African-Americans and Latinos) appear to participate in community service at rates similar to those of nonminorities.\textsuperscript{32} Research supports a contextual model of volunteering in that youth of greater economic means, with higher cognitive ability, and of more cohesive families are likely to engage in higher levels of volunteering than others.\textsuperscript{14,19,32,34}

Longitudinal studies support the role of community service in reducing risk for problem behaviors. For example, Eccles and Barber\textsuperscript{46} found that 10th grade students who were involved in prosocial activities (defined as "attending church and/or participating in volunteer and community service-type activities," p14) had better academic performance and reported less involvement in problem behaviors in 12th grade. Those youth were also more likely than others to be enrolled in college full-time at age 21. In a prospective longitudinal study of 1,000 adolescents followed from 9th grade through 4 years after most had graduated from high school, Uggen and Janikula\textsuperscript{44} found that early involvement in volunteer work predicted fewer self-reported arrests later in adolescence. The measure of volunteer work was a dichotomous indicator of whether youth performed any community service during the 11th or 12th grades. Effects of volunteer work were significant even when controlling for factors that might influence selection into volunteer status, including prosocial attitudes (e.g., valuing citizen participation) and antisocial propensities (e.g., school misconduct).
In a panel study of high school students, Johnson et al. followed 933 adolescents from their 9th grade to their 12th grade year in order to examine the effects of volunteering irrespective of selection effects. They found that once selection into volunteering was controlled, volunteering was unrelated to changes in academic and general self-esteem or educational plans. However, volunteering predicted increased intrinsic work values, increased reports of the importance of community involvement, and decreased perceptions of the anticipated importance of career. These findings suggest that volunteering encourages development of intrinsic work values and consideration of altruistic goals.

Scales et al. studied 1,153 students in the 6th through 8th grades in three middle schools that had well-established service learning programs. All three schools used an academic team structure in which students had been randomly assigned to one of two or more teams per grade level. The researchers randomly assigned teams to service learning or control groups. In most cases, participants were involved in choosing the service activities, which ranged from working on a nature trail to serving as buddies in a nursing home. Service activities were linked to academic content in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics and involved active reflection by students on their experiences. Duration of service programs ranged from 2 weeks to a full academic year. Service learning students maintained high levels of concern for others' welfare, whereas control group students declined in their concern for others. Service learning students also reported that they talked more frequently with their parents about school than did control students. Students who performed 31 or more service hours and participated in high levels of reflection increased their feelings of efficacy and maintained high levels of academic motivation relative to controls.

Program Evaluations

Several studies have investigated the outcomes of adolescent volunteering through evaluations of community service programs. We review four programs that involved youth (middle through high school ages) in community service. The four programs are distinguished in that they each published a recent (since the mid-1990s) evaluation that included behavioral outcome measures and a rigorous, quasi-experimental or experimental design. The programs included are the Teen Outreach Program, the Early Adolescent Helper program, Across Ages, and Quantum Opportunities. It should be noted that in each case, community service represents one component of a comprehensive program that addresses multiple ecological domains (e.g., school, home, or community) and multiple aspects of youth development (e.g., prosocial bonding, self-determination). Where possible, we note findings that attempted to differentiate the effects of the community service component from other components of the programs.

One of the most extensively evaluated programs is Teen Outreach. As noted previously, Teen Outreach is a school-based program for middle and high school-aged students that engages participants in supervised volunteer service, classroom discussions of volunteer experiences, and classroom-based discussions and activities related to developmental issues for adolescents. A recent experimental evaluation focused on a subset of data from 25 sites (n = 695) that had randomly assigned students to program or control groups. Results largely replicated those of previously published quasi-experimental studies in that by program exit, Teen Outreach participants were less than half as likely as controls to be suspended from school, fail a course, or become pregnant/cause a pregnancy. Analyses of dosage effects among program participants showed that youth that performed more hours of volunteer service were at lower risk than others for course failure during the program.
Another effective volunteering program is the Early Adolescent Helper Program.46 Similar to the strategy used by Scales et al.,27 existing (randomly assigned) groupings in the school were used to determine assignment to program (n = 85) or control (n = 86) groups. This program is geared toward junior high school students in the 7th grade and has both a community service component and a seminar component, which provides students with the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon their volunteer experiences. Program students volunteered once per week for 7 months as tutors for non-English-speaking children, as companions to elders at a senior center, or as volunteers in service projects self-selected from a list provided by the school (e.g., working in environmental organizations). Relative to controls, program students showed improvements in self-image, commitment to school, levels of problem behavior, and commitment to helping others.

Across Ages is a comprehensive, intergenerational mentoring program that includes a community service component and a life skills curriculum.51,46 The evaluation of 562 middle school students randomly assigned to a full intervention group (n = 180), a community service plus life skills curriculum group (n = 193), and a control group (n = 189) indicated that students who received the full intervention improved on attitudes toward school, future, and elders; attitudes toward older people; attitudes toward community service; reactions to situations involving drug use; well-being; and frequency of substance use.

Quantum Opportunities7,13 is a comprehensive 4-year program that begins in 9th grade and follows participants through high school. The program includes a range of activities, including community service projects, tutoring, college and job planning, mentoring by an adult, and life and family skills. High-risk students (primarily ethnic minorities, receiving public assistance, and living in single-parent homes) were randomly assigned to participant and control groups. Over a 4-year period, participants had significantly higher high school graduation rates (63% vs. 42%), were more likely to attend college (42% vs. 16%), and received more honors and awards (60% vs. 12%) than controls.

Summary

Available literature indicates that community service in adolescence is related to a host of positive outcomes in domains ranging from social and psychological to political and cognitive development. Findings from the cross-sectional, longitudinal, and program evaluation studies reviewed provide support for Moore and Allen’s conclusions31 that volunteering and community service can contribute to improved academic functioning and reduced risk for involvement in problem behaviors. Moreover, findings from the recent studies reviewed here add to the weight of evidence indicating that youthful community service contributes to sustained political and civic involvement, as well as gains in psychological well-being, empathy, and prosocial attitudes. It is important to point out that significant effects of volunteer service were found even in studies that used relatively insensitive or restrictive measures of volunteering (e.g., self-reported, dichotomous indicators of whether youth participated in any community service). Whereas knowing the positive outcomes of community service for adolescents is important, it is equally important to examine the conditions under which community service is likely to produce such outcomes.

UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS IS VOLUNTEERING MOST EFFECTIVE?

In this section, we consider three sets of conditions that may influence the extent to which volunteering and community service may contribute to developmental growth.
in adolescence. The first two relate to the youth participants: (1) Do characteristics of the youth who volunteer influence the outcomes of volunteering?, and (2) Do qualities of the volunteer experience itself influence the outcomes? The third relates to organizational features: Do organizational or structural characteristics of programs influence volunteering outcomes for youth? Research is only beginning to address these issues. Thus, we review relevant findings and suggest directions for future research in each area.

Characteristics of Youth Volunteers

As noted previously, adolescent girls are more likely than boys to perform volunteer service, as are youth from middle and upper socioeconomic levels. Rates of volunteering also appear to increase from early to late adolescence. Such findings inform hypotheses about processes of selection into community service but offer little insight into the possibility of differential effects for youth that vary by age, gender, and economic background.

In a recent analysis, Allen and Philliber found that the Teen Outreach Program was most effective for teens who were at the greatest risk for teenage pregnancy and school difficulties. Specifically, they found that the program was most effective in reducing second pregnancies among teens who already had given birth to a child. Similarly, the program was most effective in preventing academic failure for those who had already been suspended, and it was more effective for members of a racial or ethnic minority group who were at greater risk for academic failure. The findings are consistent with those of other recent studies that have shown protective processes to be more powerful predictors of well-being for youth who have few developmental assets and are exposed to high levels of environmental risk. The qualitative case studies presented by Terry on community service activities among gifted students underscore the possibility that community service can offer benefits to youth across a broad range of backgrounds.

Little research has addressed whether age or gender moderate the effectiveness of community service on adolescent outcomes. Schine argued for expanding opportunities for young adolescents (aged 11 to 14) to become involved in community service and reviewed several community- and school-based programs that appeared to produce positive results. Using an experimental design, one of the programs reviewed by Schine, the Early Adolescent Helper program, has since published data that confirm the role that community service can play in promoting positive developmental outcomes for young adolescents. On the other hand, evaluations of Teen Outreach have found that the program was more effective with high school students than with middle or junior high school students. These findings suggest that careful attention needs to be paid to providing appropriate support structures that are sensitive to the developmental needs of the youth. Future research must identify how those structures may differ for early vs. late adolescents.

The evidence on gender effects of volunteering programs is inconclusive and deserves further attention. Stukas et al. found that a mandatory service learning program was more effective in increasing likelihood of helping in the future for girls than for boys and for those students whose parents served as helping role models than for those whose parents did not. The authors indicated that differential socialization might have contributed to the gender difference. Helping and altruistic self-image may be more valued in girls than boys. Additionally, the authors suggested that boys have more negative attitudes toward mandatory courses than girls do, and the mandatory nature of this particular program may have contributed to this finding (we will return to the issue of "mandatory voluntarism" in the section that follows). On the other hand, Switzer et
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al.43 found that the Early Adolescent Helper Program was more effective for boys in increasing self-esteem and community involvement and for decreasing depressive affect and problem behavior. Girls had lower initial levels of self-esteem than did boys, and the authors speculated that their negative self-concepts may have been more resistant to change. Girls had higher altruistic self-image scores than did boys at pre-intervention, which may explain the substantial intervention effect for boys.

Qualities of Youths' Experience

Does the particular type of community service experience matter? Do the effects of community service differ from those of engagement in activities (e.g., school extracurricular activities, sports)? How much community service is necessary to produce positive results?

Two independent examinations found that engagement in either community service or extracurricular activities predicted positive outcomes, including academic achievement and sense of community.5,12 These findings are consistent with those of Mahoney and Cairns46 on the positive effects of involvement in extracurricular activities but offer evidence of differential effects of volunteering as compared to other types of activities. Specifically, whereas community service lead to decreased association with deviant peers, sports involvement lead to greater association with deviant peers.

In a case study of a hotline that uses adolescent volunteers to answer phones, Schonadel et al.9 suggested that hotlines are a type of volunteer service opportunity that improves problem-solving skills and interpersonal communication skills and increases opportunities to experience a variety of different roles and situations. They argued that contributing to the hotline afforded youth the opportunity to help themselves work through the developmental issues that confront them. Through qualitative methodology, Krueger21 described seven themes that characterize rewarding community youth work that emerged during round-table discussions with eight youth workers. The themes included: a sense of permanence in the community; youth's presence in the community; youth's ability to make successful transitions from one part of their job to the next; ability to deal with fear and confusion in the community; curiosity and openness to multiple meanings; and an interconnectedness between actions and attitudes.

The evaluation of Teen Outreach1 is one of few to examine quality of volunteer experience directly. Rather than attempt to classify service activities by type, the researchers focused on youths' and facilitators' perceptions of the quality of volunteer experiences and found that those perceptions correlated strongly with both decreased problem behaviors and greater feelings of autonomy and relatedness. Those findings suggest that the actual work performed by youth might be less important than the developmental processes the experience affects. Although more research is needed in this area, it seems evident that it is not merely involvement in any activity that produces positive outcomes for youth—the quality of the activity also seems to affect the outcomes experienced by the adolescent.

There is some evidence that sustained community service participation over time provides greater benefit to youth than "one shot" volunteer activities. Niemi et al.32 differentiated community service participation that was performed "once or twice" from regular (< 35 hours vs. > 35 hours) community service participation. They found that regular community service, but not service performed "once or twice," was related to greater political knowledge and efficacy and more positive attitudes. Yates and Youniss47 also found that higher frequency of community service participation was associated with more positive outcomes. As little as 20 to 40 hours in a year may be all that is necessary to produce the positive effects that have been reported by several studies.43237 It
should be noted, however, that positive effects of community service participation have been found even in studies that used relatively insensitive measures (e.g., a dichotomous indicator of whether the youth performed any community service in the past year). Thus, it is likely that even modest levels of involvement can have positive effects.

Organizational or Structural Characteristics

What additional features are critical to the success of community service programs? The provision of opportunities for reflection and discussion is one feature that has received considerable attention. Discussion and reflection is a hallmark of service learning programs\textsuperscript{37,41} and a key component of Teen Outreach.\textsuperscript{1,2,4} Youniss and Yates\textsuperscript{50} used qualitative excerpts from adolescents’ group discussions of their experiences volunteering in a soup kitchen for the homeless to demonstrate the importance of adolescents’ public discussion of their experiences in the development of their moral and collective identity. Terry\textsuperscript{45} reports that group discussions and other opportunities for reflection (such as keeping a journal) were a critical component of each of the three service learning programs in her case study. In all of these programs, the adolescents indicated that the opportunities for reflection were beneficial and added to their overall experience. Indeed, the lack of provisions for discussion and reflection may help to explain why quantitative analyses reported by Middleton and Kelly\textsuperscript{28} failed to find benefits of one community service program, even though participants completed 30 or more hours of service and reported qualitatively that they felt they had grown cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally from the experience. More empirical research is needed to establish the merit of discussion and reflection and to examine the contexts in which discussion and reflection opportunities are most beneficial.

A second set of organizational or structural features is the combination of community service with other program components designed to increase protective factors. For example, Across Ages and Quantum Opportunities employ both community service and mentoring in their designs. Across Ages was evaluated in such a way that the effects of receiving different components of the program could be examined.\textsuperscript{25,43} Students who received mentoring in combination with community service (M-plus-CS) scored better than a control group on measures of attitudes toward school, future, and elders, attitudes toward older people, attitudes toward community service, and reactions to situations involving drug use. This group scored significantly better than a group that performed community service but were not mentored (CS-only) on attitudes toward school, toward the future, and toward older people. The M-plus-CS group also reported marginally higher levels of well-being and lower levels of substance use than the CS-only group. The CS-only group scored better than M-plus-CS and control groups only on knowledge about older people. The results from this study indicate that the community service component of this program coupled with a mentoring component is more beneficial than community service alone.

A final condition of the effectiveness of volunteer programs that warrants attention is whether community service should be mandatory. Theoretically, some observers have questioned whether community service remains beneficial when adolescents are made to participate. Niemi et al.\textsuperscript{32} found that benefits that accrued to adolescents were stronger when community service opportunities were arranged by schools rather than required. However, Miller\textsuperscript{29} examined high school students’ attitudes toward a mandatory community service requirement (n = 91) and found that females were more likely to be interested in and accepting of mandatory service requirements. Her research suggested that males will be more likely to react positively if they receive some tangible reward for the service, when there are role models, and when student input is solicited
CONCLUSIONS

Although many research questions remain to be answered, findings from empirical and applied research employing multiple methods and widely diverse samples seem to converge on a similar conclusion: Adolescents who participate in community service are likely to be rewarded with experiences that help promote their social, psychological, and cognitive development. Viewed in the context of broader efforts to engage youth's talents and build positive relationships with adults and peers, volunteering can be considered as an important preventive approach, one that is much cheaper and less stigmatizing than treating the myriad of emotional, behavioral, and health-related problems of adolescence.

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