



CHILDREN & YOUTH COMMUNITY PLAN (CYCP) REPORT CARD



ALEXANDRIA'S PROGRESS TOWARDS ENSURING EVERY CHILD SUCCEEDS TODAY AND TOMORROW

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

This issue reports on the progress made on connecting youth to volunteer opportunities between April 2021 - April 2025

CYCP GOAL

All Children, Youth, and Families have Positive Experiences

ALEXANDRIA SPOTLIGHT

Nearly 1 in 3 Alexandria residents experience food insecurity. This happens when a household has limited or uncertain access to food. To address this, Volunteer Alexandria invited 8 to 12 year olds to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for local food pantries.

Participants meet on a Saturday morning at the Great Harvest Bread Company. They are greeted with an introduction to food insecurity and why this project is important. Students wash their hands, put on gloves, then get to work. On a Saturday, students would make up to 100 sandwiches. After their project, participants re-convene in the lobby to recap what they just did and learn.

A parent said their kids had "a great experience...making sandwiches" and wanted to "know when they can do it again." The reaction from kids ranged from "I had fun" to "it felt good helping people."

During the 2024-25 school year, participants made and donated over 600 sandwiches to local pantries and shelters, which includes Meade Memorial Church, Grace Episcopal Church, the Alexandria Community Shelter, and True Ground Housing Partners.

If you are interested in learning more about this and other volunteer opportunities for youth, visit volunteeralexandria.org.

1 IN 3
ALEXANDRIANS
EXPERIENCE FOOD
INSECURITY



600 SANDWICHES
WERE MADE BY
YOUTH DURING THE
2024-25 SCHOOL
YEAR!



RESULT

All Alexandria youth recognize the value of helping others

WHY THIS MATTERS

Service to Others – as defined as a young person serves in the community one hour or more per week – is Asset #9 of [Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets](#) that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. When young people help others, they report receiving a lot in return.

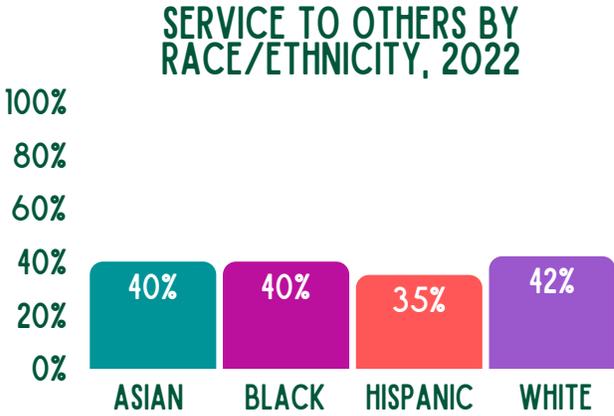
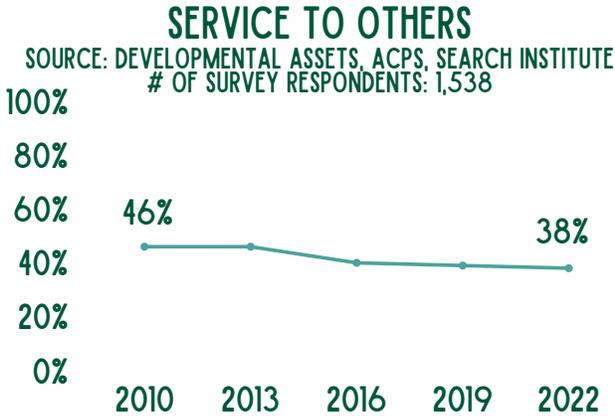
Serving others can help kids expand their worldview, grow their confidence, and show them that they can make a difference in the world. Youth who participate in service activities do better in school, feel more positive about themselves, and avoid risky behaviors (Moore, C. W., & Allen, J. P., 1996). Research also shows that young people who engage in community service once a week are more likely to respect others, and be helpful, patient, and kind. They are also more apt to value diversity, vote, have a positive work ethic, and grow up to be socially responsible adults. The contributions made by youth through volunteering not only benefit themselves, but they can also make a difference for society.



There are, however, many barriers that prevent young people from engaging in service. Studies have shown that youth from advantaged backgrounds, such as teens in families headed by two parents, were more likely to volunteer than were teens from other backgrounds (Moore, C. W., & Allen, J. P., 1996). Other factors that get in the way include not knowing how to get involved, competing demands, lack of organizational resources to support volunteering, lack of youth confidence, negative perceptions of community service, site location, age discrimination, complexity or ambiguity of the work/role, lack of inclusive practices, and more.

We can all do our part to encourage young people to recognize the value of helping others. The best way to do this is to be a role model (Penn State, 2022). Youth with multiple role models are more likely to volunteer, as are youth who have friends who volunteer.

HOW WE ARE DOING



Trends: Since 2010, the number of youth reporting service to others has decreased by 17%. Compared with Hispanic youth, White youth are 1.2 times more likely to report this asset.

STRATEGY

Strategy #41:
Create more and expand opportunities for youth to volunteer in their community

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Progress with connecting youth to volunteer opportunities:

1
Strategy

2
Action Steps

100%
are in progress or fully implemented



CHAMPION



PARTNERS

- ALIVE!
- Adult Day Services Center
- Alexandria Community Shelter
- Dept of Community & Human Services
- Four Mile Run Conservancy
- Friends of Guest House
- Great Harvest Bread Company
- Holiday Project
- Meade Memorial Church
- National Park Service
- St. Martin de Porres

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SINCE 2021?



EXPAND AND ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER

Offered **18** youth volunteer days, including two 3-day program days.

Offered **6** opportunities for elementary school students to volunteer.

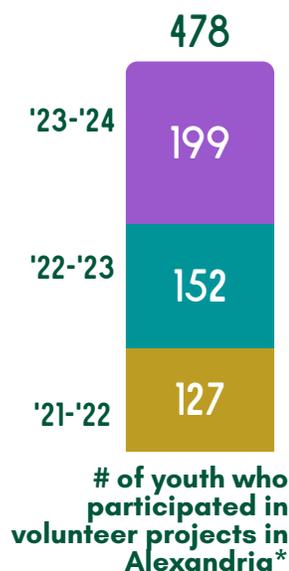
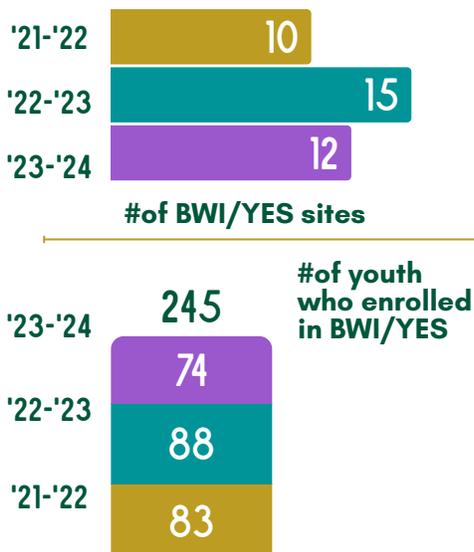


INFORM YOUTH OF THE AVAILABLE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Provided **monthly newsletters** specifically for youth and their families.

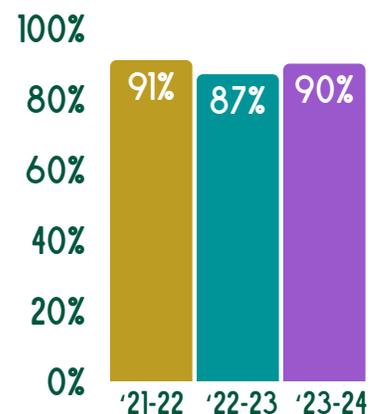
Created a **webpage** for youth to find volunteer opportunities easier.

HOW MUCH HAVE WE DONE SINCE 2021?



HOW WELL HAVE WE DONE IT?

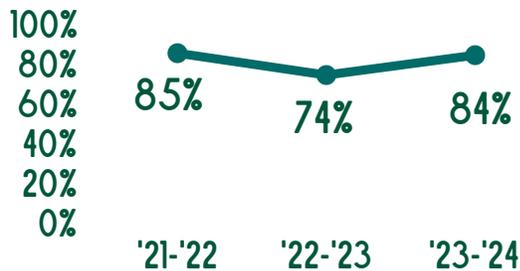
% of students said they are likely to volunteer again



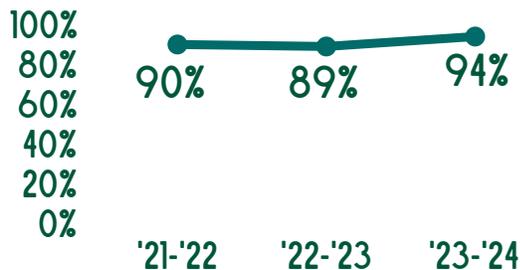
*Obtaining accurate data on youth engagement in volunteer projects in Alexandria is inherently difficult because often it is the parent who signs up their kids to volunteer, and when they do, they sign up under the parent's name. Therefore, these numbers reflect how many youth signed up and volunteered by themselves. It is estimated that the number is a lot higher.

HOW MUCH HAVE WE DONE SINCE 2021?

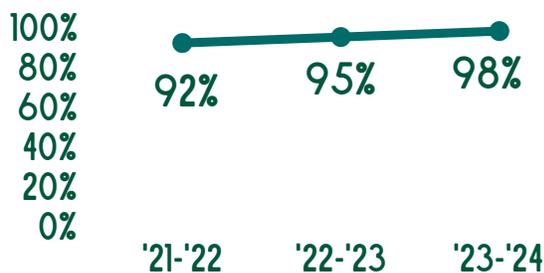
Program participants said they feel more valued in the community after volunteering with Volunteer Alexandria



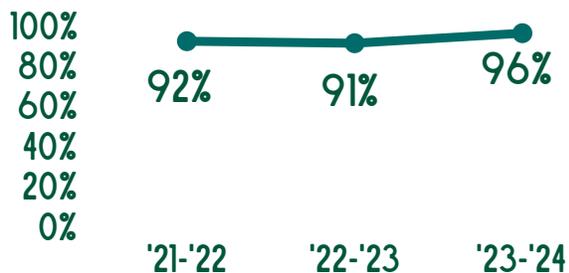
Youth learned more about how nonprofits work to change Alexandria



Youth learned how they can make their city a better place



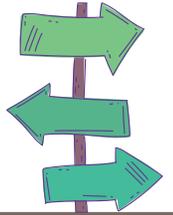
Participants reported they learned more about the issues facing Alexandrians



WHERE WE ARE HEADED

Volunteer Alexandria plans to provide:

- Make-A-Difference Day & Family Volunteer Day in the Fall
- Sandwich-making for elementary school students
- Volunteer opportunities on the weekends



RESOURCES

TIPS FOR BUILDING THIS ASSET

The best way to teach young people the value of helping others is to be a role model. Activities such as providing a meal to a new parent, driving a neighbor to an appointment, or babysitting can make a huge difference in someone's life. Look for service opportunities to do with a young person. Join organizations that involve—and provide leadership roles for—both young people and adults.

ALSO TRY THIS:

- **In your home and family:** Together, think of 10 ways your family can serve others. Choose one idea. Pick a date to do the activity. Afterward, talk about your experience.
- **In your neighborhood and community:** Find civic engagement opportunities and volunteer ideas for youth on Volunteer Alexandria's [webpage!](#)
- **In your school or youth program:** Seek learning opportunities for students and group members to engage in community service projects. Also bring community resources into the classroom or program setting.

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