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## **Community Participation**

**This section has information about your school activities, clubs, sports, and community activities.**

**Examples of information to keep in this section might include:**

- ☐ **School Activities - clubs, athletics, etc.**
- ☐ **Community Activities – certificates, 4-H, etc.**
- ☐ **Volunteer Activities –**
  - **certificates or letters of recommendation**
  - **record of hours worked, doing what tasks**
- ☐ **Social Contacts – forms, business cards, brochures**



# **Getting Involved in Your Community**

## **Your community needs you!**

There are many different ways to get involved in your community by helping others and making your community a better place. Not only will you be able to help others, you will meet new people and your community will have a chance to know more about you and your abilities.

Have you thought about helping others but don't know how to get started or what you would like to do? Consider these areas where people often need help: tutoring children, helping with animals, collecting or delivering food, visiting aging people, supporting people with disabilities to participate in community activities, cleaning the environment, and many more.

Civic groups often hold events and fundraisers for things that improve your community. Check with the local Chamber of Commerce for information about different civic groups like: Lions, Kiwanis, Elks, grange, etc. There may be other groups as well including: boy scouts, girl scouts, church groups, non-profits, cooperatives, and community foundations to name a few. Check with your local Mayor's office, sometimes they have a youth organization involved in city activities.

Once you find out about the groups in your area, contact them to find out about membership opportunities, what events they have planned, and if they need volunteers for those events. You can also find out about community organized events through your local newspaper. If there is a group or event that relates to your special interests it makes it even more fun.

## **Each person has something to contribute.**

If you are a person who needs support from others for your daily living activities, it doesn't mean you can't volunteer to help others. Every person has something valuable to share with their community and has the ability to make a difference in a positive way. Find out about the group, activity, or event you want to be involved with: where it is held, if it is accessible, what you need to know before attending, etc. Once you find out some of these things, it will help you and your support staff prepare for your participation.

## **Volunteering for career exploration and skill building.**

Volunteering in your community can help you learn job skills and build your resume. You can learn about jobs you would like to do by trying them out for a while. You might even meet someone who will become a mentor to you in your future education or career exploration. You know the old saying "It's who you know..."

When you are finishing a volunteer job or have helped with an event, ask the group organizers to write a letter of recommendation about the work you did for their group or

activity and the number of hours you volunteered. This will help you keep a record of your volunteer experiences. This is information you can include on your resume and is especially helpful if you don't have much paid work experience.

## **Places to find out about volunteering opportunities.**

You can learn about community groups and volunteer opportunities through your city's website, if they have one. To find volunteer jobs in Idaho, you can visit these websites that include listings and contact information:

Serve Idaho – find volunteer opportunities or create your own -

<http://serveidaho.labor.idaho.gov/>

Idaho Jobbing - <http://idaho.jobbing.com/jobs/volunteer>

Indeed.com - <http://www.indeed.com/q-Community-Volunteer-l-Idaho-jobs.html>

Eastern Idaho Community Action Partnership - <http://www.eicap.org/programs/volunteer>

AmericanTowns.com - a 'virtual town square' - you can click a town in your area and find out about groups and volunteering opportunities -

<http://www.american towns.com/id/>

Idaho Humane Society - <https://www.idahohumanesociety.org/>

Idaho Food Bank - <http://www.idahofoodbank.org/?page=volunteer>

HUD Homes and Communities – Volunteering in Idaho -

<http://www.hud.gov/local/id/homeless/volunteer.cfm>

Rustic Pathways – teens involved in global community service -

<http://www.rusticpathways.com/usa/usa.php>

# Social Networking Websites: Safety Tips for Teens

You've probably learned a long list of important safety and privacy lessons already: Look both ways before crossing the street; buckle up; hide your diary where your nosy brother can't find it; don't talk to strangers.

The Federal Trade Commission, the nation's consumer protection agency, is urging youth to add one more lesson to the list: Don't post information about yourself online that you don't want the whole world to know. The Internet is the world's biggest information exchange: many more people could see your information than you intend, including your parents, your teachers, your employer, the police — and strangers, some of whom could be dangerous.

Social networking sites have added a new factor to the “friends of friends” equation. By providing information about yourself and using blogs, chat rooms, email, or instant messaging, you can communicate, either within a limited community, or with the world at large. But while the sites can increase your circle of friends, they also can increase your exposure to people who have less-than-friendly intentions. You've heard the stories about people who were stalked by someone they met online, had their identity stolen, or had their computer hacked.

## Your Safety Is at Stake

The FTC suggests these tips for socializing safely online:

- Think about how different sites work before deciding to join a site. Some sites will allow only a defined community of users to access posted content; others allow anyone and everyone to view postings.
- Think about keeping some control over the information you post. Consider restricting access to your page to a select group of people, for example, your friends from school, your club, your team, your community groups, or your family.
- Keep your information to yourself. Don't post your full name, Social Security number, address, phone number, or bank and credit card account numbers — and don't post other people's information, either. Be cautious about posting information that could be used to identify you or locate you offline. This could include the name of your school, sports team, clubs, and where you work or hang out.
- Make sure your screen name doesn't say too much about you. Don't use your name, your age, or your hometown. Even if you think your screen name makes you anonymous, it doesn't take a genius to combine clues to figure out who you are and where you can be found.

- Post only information that you are comfortable with others seeing — and knowing — about you. Many people can see your page, including your parents, your teachers, the police, the college you might want to apply to next year, or the job you might want to apply for in five years.
- Remember that once you post information online, you can't take it back. Even if you delete the information from a site, older versions exist on other people's computers.
- Consider not posting your photo. It can be altered and broadcast in ways you may not be happy about. If you do post one, ask yourself whether it's one your mom would display in the living room.
- Flirting with strangers online could have serious consequences. Because some people lie about who they really are, you never really know who you're dealing with.
- Be wary if a new online friend wants to meet you in person. Before you decide to meet someone, do your research: Ask whether any of your friends know the person, and see what background you can dig up through online search engines. If you decide to meet them, be smart about it: Meet in a public place, during the day, with friends you trust. Tell an adult or a responsible sibling where you're going, and when you expect to be back.
- Trust your gut if you have suspicions. If you feel threatened by someone or uncomfortable because of something online, tell an adult you trust and report it to the police and the social networking site. You could end up preventing someone else from becoming a victim.

**For More Information** – a list of organizations is included in Chapter 8.