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How seniors can find a suitable volunteering opportunity in their community

Volunteering is a rewarding experience that engages people from all walks of life. While young adults and adults in middle age may find it hard to squeeze volunteering into their schedules, retirees are free of many of the professional and personal obligations that prevent younger adults from volunteering.

Retirees can reap some unique benefits from volunteering. Volunteering can provide retirees new opportunities to socialize, which can help them avoid feelings of social isolation and loneliness that many seniors confront after retiring. Volunteering also can provide an opportunity for seniors to utilize their professional expertise to the benefit of others.

With so much to gain from volunteering, retirees can start looking for opportunities in their communities. Many such opportunities exist, and the following tips can help retirees find the most suitable one for them.

? Identify your motivation to volunteer. Identifying why you want to volunteer can be a great first step. Many retirees who had long and distinguished careers in the professional arena aspire to give back by employing their expertise in new ways. For example, retired attorneys may want to volunteer with a nonprofit organization that provides free legal advice to those who cannot afford to hire their own legal representatives. Once retirees have identified why they want to volunteer, they can then look for opportunities that align with that motivation.

? Consider any potential limitations you have. Some volunteering opportunities are physically demanding, which makes them difficult for retirees. Seniors may not be able to handle a volunteering opportunity that requires heavy lifting or one that asks volunteers to spend hours on their feet. Be honest about any physical limitations, and discuss any uncertainty you might have with your health care provider before committing to a volunteering gig.

? Decide how much time you can volunteer. Volunteering is often characterized as a rewarding experience that offers homebound seniors a chance to get up and go. But some retirees already have active social lives, so it's imperative that prospective volunteers identify how much time they have to volunteer. Many organizations allow volunteers to determine how much time they spend volunteering, but others may ask more of volunteers in regard to a time commitment. For example, volunteering to organize community events may require a significant time commitment that some retirees do not necessarily want to make.

There are many great reasons to volunteer. Retirees considering volunteering can give the prospect ample consideration before they begin searching for the right opportunity to give back.

-Metro Creative Connection