

Student Success Portfolio Program

June Discussion Starter

As we move into the month of June, Grade 12 students are excitedly preparing for their completion of high school and exploration of their future, whatever direction they are selecting to pursue. If you are supporting a relative who is currently completing Grade 9, 10 or 11, the summer lies ahead with many opportunities for learning experiences which can prepare them for Graduation and be incorporated into their portfolios.

Volunteering in the summer in whatever endeavor is of interest to your student will offer them some lifetime learning experiences and valuable personal growth assets to include in their applications for future scholarships, awards and bursaries. Volunteering to support sports teams, work as a counsellor in a summer camp, help with the family business, assist seniors with outdoor work and other activities provide some excellent experiences to learn many social and experiential skills while supporting others.

There are many benefits of volunteering including the development of connections with others, practices in preparation for their future careers, the growth in social skills vital to future success in life and others, all accomplished while increasing relationships with others in your community. Volunteering is a “win-win” situation as it feels good as the volunteer to be able to help others and others feel good as a result of the contribution you are making to their lives. According to Segal and Robinson, volunteering helps “counteract the effects of stress, anger and anxiety, combats depression and makes you feel good!”. Depending upon the activity, “it can support you staying physically active and healthy and increase your self-confidence.” Volunteering by means of phone or computer can teach valuable skills for future job applications.

Some questions you may want to ask your students to begin their process of determining how they will spend their summer months may include:

1. What are your plans for your summer holidays?

2. Once you have a relaxation time upon completion of school, what can you be doing to support your development of lifelong skills and knowledge over the upcoming two months?
3. Do you have any career aspirations you would like to pursue whereby you can learn some leadership skills or a better understanding of the demands of the career by volunteering in your local community?
4. Do you have any interests you can enjoy over the summer through volunteering such as planting a community garden, walking dogs for a local animal shelter or helping out at a children's camp?
5. What can you be doing over the summer to expand your fun and fulfillment while gaining skills and knowledge to advance your upcoming university and career choices upon completion of Grade 12?

When it comes to volunteering, Segal and Robinson suggest you need to enjoy yourself and the only other requirements are passion and positivity. The support you offer your student will allow them to have a creative fruitful summer spending time doing what they love the most and learning from the experience as they support others in their endeavors!