

Narrator: In honor of National Volunteer Week, the free Bridges Helpdesk for blind low vision youth, in collaboration with Sky's the Limit Communications, bring to you this five-part series on the benefits of volunteering. The Bridges Helpdesk for blind low vision youth logo shows horizontal view of a suspension bridge erected over a body of water. The word "Helpdesk" appears centered below the base of the bridge and above the water. Welcome to Part 2.

David DeNotaris: Oh, hello. It's so great to be back with you today. I'm here with my wonderful friend Hindley Williams of the IMAGE Center. And she is a project manager there. Hindley, can you tell us? What does volunteering mean to you? How has it helped you?

Hindley Williams: So my first volunteering experience took place when I was in high school. And it actually was something that I was asked to do. Someone recognized that I had some skills, and they were wondering if I could assist in tutoring some students in chemistry. And so I started doing that. And I realized that I really loved it. It allowed me to connect with others in my community. And also, you know, as I said, it was skills that I had, and I got to further develop those skills, just by you know, taking the opportunity to take the time to volunteer. And volunteering ended up. You know, as I as I continued through my educational career, volunteering ended up becoming a really big part of my schooling. When I was in college, I lived in a service learning community dorm, where I provided a variety of different services and volunteer activities. And that was a great opportunity to build leadership, to establish connections, to really expand my resume. And so when I graduated from college, I had so many connections under my belt, you know, so many, so many opportunities that I had for skill building. And so I had connections, I was ready to kind of delve into the workforce, because I had met so many people through all of the different work that I had done. And they knew that I was capable of it. So volunteering was great. I really enjoyed my experiences doing that. It's still a big part of my life now. And it still allows me to continue to grow my own experiences, and to always expand my network.

David DeNotaris: I love it. And so what advice would you give to high school students out there who are wondering, I don't know if I could really, I don't really know if I could volunteer? I don't know if I could do that. You know, I'm not really sure, I've never done that before. What advice would you give them?

Hindley Williams: You know, for me, and I really recommend this, especially for some of your first initial volunteering. For me, it was based on skills that I already had. And so yes, volunteering is a great opportunity for building skills. But when you're first starting

out, it's really helpful to be able to rely on those skills that you already have. Because then you build your confidence. And you learn to believe in yourself. So my suggestion would be, sit down, think about what you're good at. And you know, talk to people in your network, talk to your teachers, talk to your friends. What do you guys do for volunteering? What opportunities are you aware of? And while you're learning about those opportunities, keep that kind of bank of skills that you know that you have in the back of your mind, so that you can kind of compare the opportunities to what you know that you can do. And then you can find something that is going to really build up your confidence.

David DeNotaris: Hindley, thank you so much for taking the time and joining us today. We appreciate you sharing all your knowledge and wisdom about volunteering.

Hindley Williams: Absolutely. Thanks so much, David.

Eileen Rivera Ley: Perfect.

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