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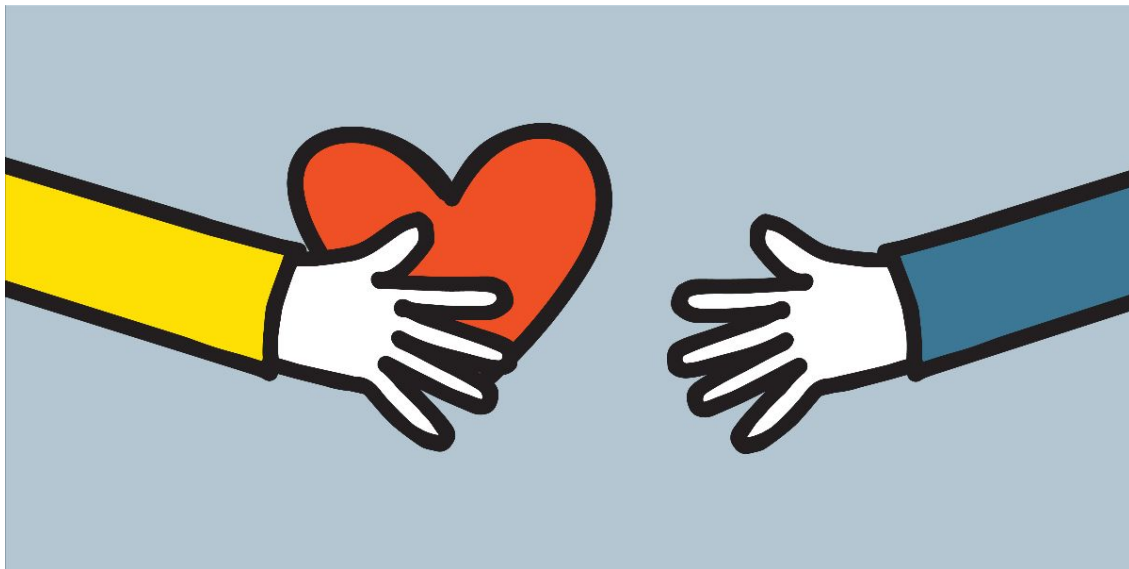
Did you know your child may boost their own mental health by focusing on the well-being of others?

When your child volunteers for a cause, they may feel happier, less stressed, and more compassionate toward others. Kids and teens can advocate for a cause that's meaningful to them right now, or they can devote themselves to organizations whose ideals mirror their own. Children who volunteer may be thrilled to realize they have the power to help others and give back to the community.

How Children Can Benefit by Giving Back

When kids and teens volunteer for causes that matter to them, they're likely to:

- **Improve their moods.** Giving back can be enjoyable, especially if your child can see the impact their efforts have on others. If they make friends while volunteering, they may look forward to participating again with their new friends in the future. Volunteering also helps to reduce stress levels and improve life satisfaction.
 - **Boost self-confidence.** Kids who volunteer often learn new skills, become more certain about their leadership abilities, improve communication with others and become more self-sufficient.
 - **Become more empathetic.** Volunteering and working for others help build skills related to empathy, such as understanding the perspectives of others and thinking about their needs. As children work for a cause they care about, they may become more compassionate and generous as well.
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3 Ways to Help Your Child Give Back to the Community

Some families, schools and organizations encourage children to volunteer their time or advocate for causes that are meaningful to them. You can inspire your child to get started, even if you've never volunteered before. Try these three ideas:

1. Find out what your child is passionate about. Do they love baking? Reading? Caring for animals? There may be organizations in your area where they can volunteer their time or talents to make a difference. They'll be more inclined to participate – and stick with it – if they choose an activity they enjoy and find personally rewarding.

2. Make it a family event. Young children typically can't volunteer without being accompanied by a parent or guardian. Become engaged in the activity instead of sitting on the sidelines or dropping them off. Your child may become even more motivated to improve the world if they see you're helping to further a cause they find significant.

3. Commit time and resources to the cause. When you regularly set aside time for giving and advocacy, your child will realize that you prioritize helping others. If your child finds something they're passionate about and participates on an ongoing basis, it may inspire them to continue giving back well into adulthood.

Need some help finding ways to get involved in your community? Check out [United Way of Northeast Florida](#).

On Our Sleeves Giving Heart

Studies show giving can boost your physical and mental health. As parents and caregivers, it's important to teach children the benefits of giving back and making a difference. Share an activity you can do as a family to experience the greater happiness and satisfaction that comes from giving back.

Instructions

1. Use a large brown paper grocery bag.
2. Print out this instruction sheet.
3. Color and cut out the heart icon below.
4. Glue or tape the heart icon to the grocery bag.
5. Fill the bag with items you and your family would like to donate (clothes, toys, nonperishable food, etc.).
6. Donate the bag to your local thrift shop or food pantry. You could even donate the items to a friend or loved one in need.



Share your giving activities with us, and stay new ideas you have, by using #OnOurSleeves on social media.

ON OUR SLEEVES
The Movement for Children's Mental Health

Wolfson
Children's Hospital

www.onoursleeves.org

Click here to download our **On Our Sleeves Giving Heart** activity (also available to **download in Spanish**) to help motivate and inspire your family to give back to the community. You can donate gently used clothing, toys or nonperishable food to local charities or even friends or loved ones in need.

Share your giving stories by using **#OnOurSleevesJax** and **#OnOurSleeves** on social media.

How are you using *On Our Sleeves* resources? Hit the reply button to tell us your *On Our Sleeves* story.

Sincerely,
Wolfson Children's Hospital

The mission of *On Our Sleeves* is to provide every community in America access to free, evidence-informed educational resources necessary for breaking stigmas about child mental health and educating families and advocates. For more information, visit OnOurSleeves.org.

To access educational resources and revisit the mission of *On Our Sleeves*, visit wolfsonchildrens.com/onoursleeves.

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