



# 5 undeniably awesome reasons to volunteer

*By Megan Reilly, ALIVE Intern*

Ever notice that if you ask anyone the best reasons to volunteer, they'll always come back with: to make a difference, to help others, etc? Well here are a couple of lesser known reasons on why volunteering is great for *you*:

**1. THE VARIETY:** Possibly the best thing about being a self-confessed volunteer addict is that you're not tied down to one organisation. Think of yourself as a free-lance artist, bouncing around into different areas. Feel like doing some gardening? No problem. Want to teach children the violin? (Knowing how to play the violin might be useful here) Or maybe you want to make friends with elderly? Rescue abandoned kittens from the streets? Work in a charity shop? What people sometimes don't realise is that you can do all of this. The absolute best place to find this variety of opportunities is our website: [www.nuigalway.ie/alive](http://www.nuigalway.ie/alive) where you can search by discipline or event, for whatever you want to do, literally!

**2. CONNECTIONS, CONNECTIONS, CONNECTIONS:** I don't mean those strategic, handy-for-the-future sort of connections (though you'll make plenty of those too), but the amazing spectrum of people you get to meet. Basically, you're going to meet people that you'll want to have in your life for one reason or another. Whether it's a new friend, love interest, or perhaps a final year English student who will tell you the plot of all the novels you've been putting off reading (well, you never know).

**3. FREE STUFF:** It's the world's best kept secret that volunteers get to keep a few goodies to themselves after a long day doing good work. My personal total tally of freebies includes three t-shirts, two very warm very snuggly hoodies, a mug, oh and of course all the free food.

**4. PEOPLE THINK YOU'RE GREAT:** Volunteers are stereotyped as being kind, devoted, passionate and generous people right? Therefore as a volunteer you are automatically all of these things. And who doesn't want the bragging rights to say to a group; 'Oh yes, Ireland's education system is in total disarray, why just the other day I was volunteering at the homework club I go to...' \*cue gasps of admiration and exclamations of appreciation at how much of an amazing person you are.\*

**5. MAKING THAT DIFFERENCE:** As well as having an immense effect on the community you volunteer within, your work will also make a difference to your life. Volunteering will change the way you time-manage; it will expand your interests and your circle of friends. It will make you happier about others and yourself. Even knowing that you're making a small difference in any environment is going to make you feel pretty good about yourself.

So there you have it, five of the many undeniably awesome reasons to volunteer. If you want to hear more reasons from us (trust me, we have plenty) then why not pop along to the ALIVE office at the back of the hub, we're open 2-5 from Monday to Friday. Or you can always just check out the website ([www.nuigalway.ie/alive](http://www.nuigalway.ie/alive)) to see all the opportunities around Galway city and on campus.