

**HOW TO:**

**SAVE ~~YOUR~~  
~~PORTFOLIO~~ THE  
WORLD WITH  
CIP**

**A Blind Mice Guide to Community Service**

**BY**



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# INTRODUCTION

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*“Volunteering for portfolio should not stop you from serving with sincerity or giving your all. Regardless of intentions, all that matters is whether someone has benefited from your actions.”*

## **Students These Days**

Adeline New

With earnest hearts, oh so sincere,  
They wish to help, volunteer.  
Is it really necessary, my dear?

For an hour, two, they appear.  
Convinced—I will make a difference!  
With earnest hearts, oh so sincere.

They say, “It’s not just for CIP!” then disappear,  
Without thought for what’s left behind,  
Asking, “Is it really necessary, my dear?”

To third world countries they steer.  
Fired up—I’ll change the world!  
With earnest hearts, oh so sincere.

Making promises through their tears, yet  
Leaving crying children and half-built houses.  
Is it at all necessary, my dear?

Through their actions, one thing is clear:  
They’re more trouble than they’re worth,  
Despite earnest hearts, oh so sincere—  
They’re really unnecessary, my dear.

There is an oft-told parable – popularised in the 1930s by social reformer and community organiser Saul Alinsky:

*A group of campers on a riverbank are just settling down for the evening when one of them sees a baby in the water. He immediately dives in, braving the fierce current, and rescues the infant. But as he climbs ashore, one of the other campers spots another baby in the river in need of help. Then another. And another. Overwhelmed by the sheer number of babies, the campers grab any passer-by they can to help them.*

*Before long, the river filled with desperate babies, and more and more rescuers are required to assist the campers.*

*At this point one of the rescuers starts walking upstream.*

*'Where are you going?' the others ask, disconcerted, 'We need you here! Look how busy we are!'*

*The rescuer replies: 'You carry on here ... I'm going upstream to find the bugger who keeps chucking all these babies in the river.'*

While all forms of volunteer work are supposed to be helpful, most are only treating the symptoms rather than solving the underlying causes of social issues. Like bailing water out of a sinking boat, there are countless more people for every person that we help.

At this stage, some would vehemently counter that doing something is better than doing nothing. And that is true, but we should also ask ourselves whether we are just doing something for the sake of doing it.

The point of the poem and parable is to help us acknowledge the reality of community service. As students, the impact and reach of our actions are usually limited. This is not to say community service is futile. The experiences and skills gained from CIPs now can help us better serve the community in the future.

**TLDR:** This guide aims to help you optimise your community service, especially in terms of personal growth. Whether you are doing it for portfolio or due to your 'innate altruism', remember to serve with your heart in the moment and actually learn something from it.

## **Choosing a Meaningful Community Service Opportunity**

If you're interested in getting involved, keep reading for some tips to help you choose the best community service opportunities for your goals.

### **Reflect on Your Passions**

When it comes to ~~scholarships/universities applications~~ serving the community, identify activities that you truly care and ~~can easily see yourself writing about~~. ~~You should also consider how relevant the opportunity is to your goal and whether it can aid your portfolio narrative~~. For example: A ~~wannabe~~ medical student may want to volunteer in a hospice to 'learn' about empathy and care for patients and how it has made him more appreciative of healthcare services blah blah blah.

### **Evaluate the ~~Portfolio~~ Community Impact**

Let's face it, the impact of your volunteering is not measured by the number of CIP points you have in your CCA records. Joining ad-hoc events such as distributing food to elderly in the neighbourhood will neither boost your portfolio nor give you any good learning opportunities. Unless you are the organisers of such events, you can definitely contribute more to the community as an individual. Having long term volunteering commitments such as mentoring students or leading community service initiatives not only reveals your dedication but also allows you to have more personal growth. The help rendered to your ~~portfolio~~ beneficiaries will definitely be more meaningful and impactful too.

### **Identify Potential Learning Opportunities**

Community service can give students the chance to gain valuable, real-life experience. Seek out relevant opportunities that can help you hone skills you are interested in. For example, if you are keen on learning Photoshop, you can try volunteering at organisations that may need help with publicity. If the organisation did not specify any of your interests in the roles and responsibilities of a volunteer, you can also offer to help in those areas. More often than not, they would be quite supportive of it. But please make sure you have a certain level of competency before making such offers, or else you are just making things worse.

## **Maximising Your Community Service Experience**

Joining CIPs in name only for portfolio is not advisable — for the sake of your conscience and personal development. Regardless of the activity, there are real people dependent on you once you have committed. So why not make the most of out of your time volunteering? Cliche as it may be, you can also benefit by helping others (~~i.e. portfolio~~);

### **Keep an Open Mind**

It is important to approach volunteer work with an open mind, especially because there is a good chance you will encounter work and scenarios that are very different from your everyday life. View these experiences as opportunities to learn something new and expand your horizons. The insights gained can also be interesting learning points that can be discussed in your personal statements and interviews.

### **Stay Connected**

Community service gives students the opportunity to meet peers outside of their classmates and connect with organisation leaders. Keep in touch with these connections even after you finish your volunteer work. If you really connected with your community service supervisor, you may want to consider reaching out to them to write a letter of recommendation for your college applications or for future internship opportunities.

### **Be committed**

Unlike classes, most volunteers don't receive grades or progress reports. However, this isn't an excuse to slack off or do half-hearted work. Volunteering is an opportunity to make an impact and give back to others, so strive to approach each task with a willingness to learn. Community service may take you a bit outside of your comfort zone – instead of avoiding this, embrace it as an opportunity to grow.

# CIP OPPORTUNITIES

No matter what kind of community service work you choose, volunteering can be meaningful and worthwhile. If you are looking for community service options and don't know where to start, we have compiled a list of organisations for you in the subsequent pages!

The list is split into the following categories:

1. Food Security
2. Elderly
3. Persons with Disabilities / Special Needs
4. Neighbourhood Assistance
5. Nature & Animals
6. Women & Children

The list is not meant to be comprehensive and should only be used as a starting guide. You can also consider joining CCAs in schools that are heavily involved with CIPs (Mentoring Club, Rotaract Club etc.).

## 1. Food Security

Organization	Volunteer Opportunity	Website / Address	Duration & Frequency	Remarks
Willing Hearts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duties change during every visit; depends on what is needed at the time</li> <li>• E.g., various kinds of food prep, meal packing, chopping vegetables, cleaning/washing up, etc.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Details</a>  11 Jalan Ubi Blk 6, #01-51 Kembangan – Chai Chee Community Hub, Singapore 409074	OTOT, they're open every single day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have to take initiative to learn from others and ask if they need help; some regular volunteers/ staff may be unfriendly / mainly speak Chinese, so that's something to note</li> <li>• Prepare to sweat!</li> </ul>
Food From The Heart (Packing Volunteer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sort, pack and distribute food/toys at the FFTH warehouse that gets distributed to their beneficiaries.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Details</a>  130 Joo Seng Road #03-01 Singapore 368357	Ad-hoc, 3 hours per session on weekdays (between 9am-6pm)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to sign up for slots on their volunteer portal</li> </ul>

## 2. Elderly

Organization	Volunteer Opportunity	Website / Address	Duration & Frequency	Remarks
Assisi Hospice Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist nurses in taking care of patients under palliative care</li> <li>Provide patients with companionship</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Details</a>  <a href="#">Registration</a>	Be able to commit at least 4 hours a week. Long term commitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be 17 and above</li> </ul>
Lions Befrienders (Befrienders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly home visits to seniors' residences</li> <li>Submit visit reports to Befriender Executive regularly &amp; inform them of concerning behaviour</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Details</a>  <a href="#">Registration</a>	Once a week, long-term commitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be 18 and above, if not accompanied by parent/guardian</li> <li>Ability to converse in Chinese dialects, Malay or Tamil is a plus</li> </ul>
Lions Befrienders (Senior Activity Centre Volunteers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist in centre-related activities: e.g., conducting activities for the seniors, befriending them, ensuring their safety during outings, etc.</li> </ul>	SACs can be found in Ang Mo Kio, Bendemeer, Ghim Moh, Clementi, Tampines and Queenstown.  <a href="#">Details &amp; Registration Here</a>	OTOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Need to reach out to individual SACs to volunteer</li> </ul>
Lions Befrienders (Caring Assistance from Neighbours Carer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visiting vulnerable &amp; socially isolated seniors at their homes</li> <li>Monitoring seniors, making sure they take their medication, run ad-hoc errands, etc.</li> <li>Alert staff of changes in seniors' well-being</li> <li>Provide emotional &amp; social support</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Details &amp; Registration Here</a>	Can be up to 3 times a week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training provided</li> </ul>

Note: Similar volunteering opportunities can also be found in many other nursing homes and hospices.



### 3. Persons with Disabilities/Special Needs

Organization	Volunteer Opportunity	Website / Address	Duration & Frequency	Remarks
Rainbow Centre Classroom Support & OOSH (Student Care Centre) Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting staff in any needs required for the smooth running of the class activities and outing</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Details</a>  <a href="#">Registration</a>	Weekly on weekdays for at least 3 months from either 8am - 12pm or 1pm -5pm (e.g. Monday morning from Jul to Sep)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NII</li> </ul>
Rainbow Centre Good Life Befrienders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help their 15-18 year-old students be meaningfully engaged and connected to the community and progress towards achieving their Good Life Visions</li> </ul>		Pair with another volunteer to visit weekly, fortnightly, or monthly for at least 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment talks are held once every quarter and befrienders should be above 18 years old.</li> </ul>

## 4. Neighbourhood Assistance

Organization	Volunteer Opportunity	Website / Address	Duration & Frequency	Remarks
Neighbourhood Meet The People Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading through letter replies from ministries and stat boards and doing admin work to input them</li> <li>• Writing letters on behalf of residents</li> <li>• Running the 'reception' area and checking people in</li> </ul>	You can usually find your zone's MPS session on a flyer at your void deck.	Once a week, usually 1.5-2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can email them to ask them about joining or just walk in and say you'd like to volunteer. I think different zones work differently.</li> </ul>
Ministry of Social and Family Development	<p>Various opportunities available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comlink (Community Link) Join various projects that provide support to empower families (and their children) living in rental housing to improve their circumstances and achieve sustained stability.</li> <li>• SG Cares Community Network Assist with areas such as event organisation, logistics, etc at interactive sessions co-organised by MSF, MCCY, community agencies and volunteers to foster relationships, generate new ideas and explore possible collaborations to strengthen social service delivery together.</li> <li>• KidSTART Support onsite programme delivery for the following programmes: Home Visitation Programme (Group Connect) &amp; KidSTART Supported Playgroups</li> <li>• Roles can include logistical set-up, tear down, childminding, translation and visual documentation.</li> <li>• Peers Network Join community partners for Night Walks (normally held on Fri or Sat, after 9pm) to befriend the homeless/rough sleepers, and build community. Roles can include befriending and also ferrying the homeless/rough sleepers we meet during our night walks to interim shelters.</li> <li>• Rehabilitation &amp; Protection Volunteer Befriend and support rehabilitation</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Details and Registration</a>	Depends on opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can register up to 3 different interests, but only 1 is mandatory.</li> </ul>

## 5. Nature & Animals

Organization	Volunteer Opportunity	Website / Address	Duration & Frequency	Remarks
ACRES (Wildlife Sanctuary Volunteer)	<p>The tasks will involve animal care where reptiles such as tortoises, turtles, lizards and snakes rescued from the illegal wildlife trade in Singapore are housed and cared for, before being rehabilitated and repatriated where possible</p> <p>Daily work includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning of indoor and outdoor enclosures,</li> <li>• Food preparation,</li> <li>• Feeding,</li> <li>• Enrichment programmes</li> <li>• Gardening and general maintenance</li> </ul> <p>Other types of opportunities available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach</li> <li>• Project-based volunteering</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Wildlife Sanctuary Registration</a>	<p>SHIFT 1: 9:30am - 1pm (Max: 5 volunteers)</p> <p>SHIFT 2: 2pm - 5pm (Max: 5 volunteers)</p> <p>The organisation requires at least one shift per month for a period of three months.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable for those aged 14 y/o and above</li> <li>• Volunteer call-outs are sent every 20th of the month to book for available slots for the following month</li> <li>• Please note that as rewarding the work can be, it can also be physically tiring working outdoors whether rain or shine</li> </ul>
ACRES (Wildlife Sanctuary Volunteer)	<p>Opportunity types available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends of the Parks</li> <li>• Citizen Science (research)</li> <li>• Community in Bloom (gardening)</li> <li>• Habitat Enhancement</li> <li>• Horticulture</li> <li>• Nature &amp; Heritage Education</li> <li>• Outreach &amp; Events</li> <li>• Visitor Services</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Details Registration</a>	Unspecified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers are required to select a Home-base based on their activities preference.</li> <li>• Volunteers from the Central Nature Reserve, Pulau Ubin, Singapore Botanic Gardens and Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve will be required to attend an orientation before their volunteering hours are logged. However, they are welcome to sign up for activities and events on a trial basis by contacting the officer-in-charge of the events.</li> </ul>

## 6. Women & Children

Organization	Volunteer Opportunity	Website / Address	Duration & Frequency	Remarks
Daughters of Tomorrow (need-based)	Various roles available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event outreach (logistics)</li> <li>• Graphic design</li> <li>• Videographer / Photographer</li> <li>• Community fundraiser</li> <li>• Poverty Simulation Workshop booth volunteer (18 and above)</li> <li>• Childminders</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Registration</a>	Unspecified	Read more about who they are <a href="#">here</a> .
AWARE (Association of Women for Action and Research) (need-based)	You can find a list of available types of opportunities <a href="#">here</a> , and list up to 3 that you're interested in when you register.	<a href="#">Details</a> <a href="#">Registration</a>	Unspecified	Read more about who they are <a href="#">here</a> .
Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (need-based)	Types of volunteer opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Star Shelter (Assisting in the following areas: tutoring, child care support, skills training, recreational activities)</li> <li>• New2U Thrift Shop (Help sort, price and sell donated items on weekdays, 3-4 hour shift)</li> <li>• IT (If you have a basic knowledge of the Internet, email and Microsoft programmes, you can assist as an IT tutor &amp; help to conduct IT classes on a weekly basis. 3-hour class.)</li> <li>• Events (Photography, logistics, registration, ushering etc.)</li> <li>• Research (Collecting and analysing data on the status of women in Singapore.)</li> <li>• Marketing/Media/ Communications</li> <li>• Legal</li> <li>• Library</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Details</a> <a href="#">Registration</a> (Currently the verification part of the form is broken so it might be more effective to email them if you're interested.)	Depends on the opportunity	Read more about who they are <a href="#">here</a> .  Star Shelter volunteers are required to go through a background check.

Note: If you are interested in mentoring or any other form of activities involving underprivileged children, Family Service Centres are a good place to start looking. Many of them have long term mentoring programmes and holiday camps that require volunteers.

# COMMUNITY SERVICE

## A. BEFORE JUMPING IN

**BEFORE** starting on any community service, use the following questions to determine whether it is actually worthwhile to pursue it.



- Is it something you truly care about?

*Your concern and passion should be the fundamental determinant of whether the opportunity should be pursued.*

- Are your actions sustainable?

*Refer to the FBM Community Service Guide to understand the significance of sustainability. A one-off volunteering event is often unlikely to have long term impacts. It also does not reflect well on your commitment to the cause.*

- Does it help to develop skills that you want to work on?

*Recall the attributes that you identified in Step 3 of "Planning Your Journey". You may also consider how the opportunity can help you develop relevant soft and hard skills.*

- Does the impact on the community match the intent you have?

*Given that community service can have a myriad of results, believing in the means and ends of the project is really important as it can influence your actions, interest and commitment in the long run.*

- Are you getting involved with the community in such a way that it serves their needs before yours?

*A reality check on whether you are doing it more for your portfolio than for the people in need.*

## B. FIGHTING THE BOSS

**DURING** your community service, use the following questions to evaluate your performance and determine how to maximise your growth and experience.



- How committed have you been (only applies to long term projects)?

*Commitment can come in many forms such as your contributions to a project or attendance for a weekly mentoring programme etc.*

- Are you receiving direct feedback from the community, and is there tangible documentation of this?

*Feedback from others is essential as this can help you identify areas for improvements and determine whether you are heading in the right direction. The documentation can serve as references of your contributions in the future.*

- Are you looking out for opportunities to maximise your help?

*Apart from having the heart to serve, helping others effectively also means helping them efficiently.*

- Has your efforts yielded any measurable and/or sustainable impact?

*Self-explanatory question to track your personal progress.*

- What new insights have you gained from the experience so far?

*A midpoint reflection.*



[Click here to view the final part of the checklist once you have defeated the boss!](#)



## C. UNLOCKING ACHIEVEMENTS & EXP

**CONGRATS** on making it this far! The journey to defeating the boss (completing the opportunity) may not be an easy one, but it is definitely worth your time and effort. However, the adventure is not over.

To fully maximise your experience, you should have a final evaluation and reflection on the lessons learnt. Below are some guiding questions to ask yourself:

### Evaluating the Experience

- Are you proud of your final deliverables (products, results, outcomes etc)?
  - If yes, what's so good about them?
  - If no, what's wrong with them?
- How did you respond to challenges? Would you do anything different next time?
- Which of your methods or processes worked particularly well?
- Which of your methods or processes were difficult or frustrating to use?

### Reflecting on Lessons Learnt

- What was your most interesting insight?
- How did your involvement and participation fit into your broader goals of developing yourself?
- What would you want to improve on?
- What did you realise about yourself?
  - Did this give you a new perspective,
  - challenge your point of view,
  - Introduce you to new techniques, skills, processes?

### Additional Questions (for SLIs and Leadership Positions)

- How accurate were our original estimates of the size and effort of our project? What did we over or underestimate?
- What can be improved on?
- Did you have the right people assigned to all project roles?
- Were roles and responsibilities of team/stakeholder clearly delineated and communicated?
  - If no, how could things be improved?
- If given a chance to do it again, what would you have done differently