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Virtual Volunteering for Nonprofit Organizations

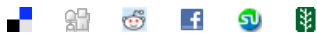
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Getting volunteers is often a struggle for nonprofit organizations. With busy work schedules and numerous responsibilities, it is often difficult for even a conscientious volunteer to add one more commitment. And yet, for many organizations, volunteers are the lifeblood that keeps them going.

Virtual volunteer programs may help. Through virtual volunteering, people can help organizations without having to be physically present. A number of websites such as CharityGuide.org and Volunteermatch.com help match interested volunteers with nonprofit organizations needing help. Organizations can register on these websites, describing their needs. Volunteers sign up on the websites, and search the available opportunities.

Searches can be done by causes such as children's or animal welfare, environment, disaster relief or seniors. Some sites, such as CharityGuide.org, also have opportunities divided by amount of time involved, 15 minutes, a few hours, or longer. Some opportunities are one time, while others may be continuous.

Here is a small sampling of some of the opportunities currently available:

- Online mentoring. Help an older foster child make the transition to independence through an online mentoring program. E-mail with the child on a weekly basis to provide guidance.
- Donate hair to Locks of Love, or drop off old eyeglass at an eye care facility to be given to people who can't afford glasses.
- Create a newsletter for the National Center for Missing Adults or send out e-mail blasts on behalf of the Humane Society.
- Interview potential pet foster home caregivers who want to take care of pets of deployed military personnel.
- Make blankets for Project Linus, which are given to seriously ill or traumatized children.
- Provide web content for the Sierra Club.

Your organizational needs may be somewhat different, but finding a virtual volunteer may be just the solution to enhance your volunteer base.

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Pamela DeLoatch is a freelance writer who traded the cold Chicago winters for the hot North Carolina summers, and hasn't looked back since. With a journalism and business background, she is having fun growing her commercial writing business.

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Scott Koegler is the editor of NPTechNews. His career includes 15 years as CIO and 14 years as a writer/editor for technology publications.