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## ARTICLE

### DOING GOOD: THE ULTIMATE SERVICE

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#### ABSTRACT

The legal profession is a helping profession that can generate and inspire community leaders. That inspiration can hopefully be found in many forums, whether it be in the greater community, the office, or the classroom. We, as teachers in the legal profession, always try to inspire our students. This article addresses the many ways that law students can serve their respective communities while also benefitting themselves. In particular, this article notes how such engagement not only improves the image of our profession and schools, but also broadens our students' cultural competencies, enhances their overall health, and advances their careers. This article seeks to motivate students of *all* law schools and members of the bar to serve their communities, while benefitting their profession and themselves.

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## PREFATORY NOTE

*Several years ago, one of my sisters gave me an item she had picked up at a yard sale, which I since have placed on prominent display in my office. It is a multicolored clay statue of a determined-looking character, football in his firm grip and his cap pulled low over his forehead, with the word "VOLUNTEER" emblazoned upon the base. She presented this to me in recognition of my long-standing and deep commitment to community service. Being a sports fan, I realized immediately that the statue, given its coloring, was meant to be emblematic of a certain university. And it has served to remind me of the need and importance of community service. Keeping it in my office has led to my frequent exhortation to students to not only "do well" but, more importantly, to "do good." It is with that thought in mind that I have attempted to instill in the law school community what I hope will be a bedrock value.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The legal profession is a helping profession that must ensure that the phrase "equal justice under law" is more than just an empty promise. The reality is that many people are priced out of the legal system or lack access to legal aid.<sup>1</sup> The legal system only works well if it works for all. We

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1. Indigents in civil cases often are unable to obtain legal counsel at all, and even middle-class Americans cannot afford the cost of hiring high quality attorneys. Indigents in criminal cases often find themselves represented by overworked public defenders who have large caseloads that prohibit meaningful consultation. *See* GLENN GREENWALD, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR SOME: HOW THE LAW IS USED TO DESTROY EQUALITY AND PROTECT THE POWERFUL 249 (2011). Moreover, legal services programs, which are designed to provide services to low-income people "turn[] away numbers of people" because of the continuing decline in funding. *Id.* at 251. These unrepresented litigants face the bleak reality of America's unequal justice, with the result in their cases being "often less favorable than those for represented litigants." *Id.* at 250-51. This crisis also impacts the middle class. *See id.* at 252 (citing Laurence Tribe, Senior Counselor, Access to Justice, Keynote Address at the National Institute of Justice Conference: Indigent Defense and Access to Justice (June 14, 2010)). "An estimated four-fifths of the legal needs of the poor, and the needs of two to three fifths of middle-income individuals, remain unmet," all while "national spending on legal aid has been cut by a third, and increasing restrictions have been placed on the cases and clients that government-funded programs can accept." Deborah Rhode, *Equal Justice Under Law*, MARKKULA CTR. FOR APPLIED ETHICS (Jan. 1, 2000), <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/publications/submitted/rhode/equal-justice.html> [https://perma.cc/4BG7-BHED]. Unfortunately, the lack of current commitment to pro bono programs has perpetuated this vast gap in representation. *See id.*

should therefore strive for a system of justice where the merits of the parties' positions, not their economic status, determine the appropriate outcomes. Thus, it is incumbent upon us to use our legal skills and training as a positive force to help the less fortunate. While it may sound trite to say that we "should give something back," the reality is that we are fortunate to have our educations and the opportunities that they provide. Indeed, the rewards and satisfaction of assisting those individuals who would otherwise be without legal representation transcends compensation and praise.

My remarks here, however, are not about either pro bono or course credit work. Instead, my message is intended to direct students to the ways they can contribute for the sake of community service itself—not the effect of service upon their classroom learning or their progress toward graduation. I fondly recall times during my days as a law student when I volunteered as an aide at a day care center and a senior citizens center, along with the instances after law school when I read books to second graders, gleaned crops for the needy, taught adults to read, coached youth sports teams, and served on various nonprofit boards of directors. Through these activities, I have been able to serve as a positive force, a so-called difference maker. Since I have ventured into academia, that spirit has remained part of me, so much so that I have attempted to inculcate that same desire in my students by exhibiting the benefits and rewards of community service.

I am fortunate to teach at a school that has several student organizations dedicated to community service, including Phi Alpha Delta, the Community Relations Committee of the Student Bar Association, and Project STAFF (Students Taking Action for the Future). But while these groups exist on paper, students must be motivated to contribute. Some may feel compelled to be involved in service to their communities because of their own background or personal experience with a particular problem or cause. They will come to this activity easily and have difficulty saying "no" to those in need, while others may not realize the manifold benefits that result from volunteerism. Thus, faculty, as teachers, should not only model such conduct for students but also share our views regarding the merits of community service. As I prepared this article, I thought it best to reach out to all of our students at the Dickinson School of Law to solicit their views on the advantages and disadvantages of community service by distributing a questionnaire. I received many responses—those comments are reflected throughout this article.

## II. HELPING THE COMMUNITY

There is something to be said for the use of “people power” to build a stronger community. Law students are in school for (generally) three years, during which time they are still citizens of their communities. Therefore, they have a civic duty to maintain and care for their society—an act of responsibility not merely an act of generosity. While a law student’s primary purpose remains obtaining the necessary degree to further his career opportunities, there is much truth to the axiom that “[o]nly [a] life lived for others is the life worth while.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, community service is a fundamental step toward being an involved and contributing member of the community.

Much like students receive an education in the law, they can similarly receive an education in community service. Through community involvement, students can learn how to make a difference by addressing the needs of their communities. The essence of community service is recognizing the disparities among various groups and doing our best to address them. Law students can serve alongside other volunteers to break down perceived barriers and thereby foster a positive “town and gown” relationship toward the building of a “healthy” community.<sup>3</sup> Thus, community service can be viewed as an investment in the future and well-being of those around us.

Law students are certainly disciplined in what and how they study. Yet that is not enough—they must be more than just well-versed in the law. The legal profession is about relationships with people—a humanitarian

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2. As attributed to Albert Einstein in *Einstein Terse in Rule for Success*, N.Y. TIMES, June 20, 1932, at 29.

3. The community thrives from the “social capital” achieved when it has a “pool of human resources” engaged in projects to improve its neighborhoods. *Social Capital*, CTRS. FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION, <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/social.htm> [https://perma.cc/BL4W-2H4D]. The relationship between the “town” (including its officials and residents) and the “gown” (the educational institution, its own distinct attributes, officials, and demographics) can create a source of tension due to the perceived differences. Maureen Taylor, *The Town and Gown Phenomenon—Part I*, AZUSA PAC. U. (MAY 1, 2002), <http://www.apu.edu/articles/18134/> [https://perma.cc/TQ9V-4JUY]. Yet, such potential antagonism can be overcome through students’ commitment to community service. *Id.*; see also Lawrence L. Martin, Hayden Smith & Wende Phillips, *Bridging ‘Town & Gown’ Through Innovative University–Community Partnerships*, 10 THE INNOVATION J.: THE PUB. SECTOR INNOVATION J. (Sept. 6, 2005), art. 20, <https://www.innovation.cc/volumes-issues/martin-u-partner4final.pdf> [https://perma.cc/64BM-9JJT].

component of principled and moral significance. When we volunteer, we show others that we care and are interested in each other, and we develop a sense of responsibility toward each other. This positive impact of community service cannot help but improve the reputation of lawyers in general, especially given the sometimes cynical and disparaging view of our profession.<sup>4</sup> Thus, students through their contributions will cast a positive light upon our profession.

An example of a community service in which students at the Dickinson Law School have engaged involves the Carlisle Victory Circle (CVC), an organization whose mission is to “challenge young people to prepare for their future through education and character development” and “to have a better appreciation for academic achievement.”<sup>5</sup> The CVC makes a difference in the lives of low-income middle and high school students, many of whom come from marginalized backgrounds.<sup>6</sup> Students in this program participate in workshops during the school year, attend presentations on etiquette and self-esteem, frequent a kid-friendly clubhouse during summer months for recreation, enrichment activities, and educational field trips. The CVC’s goals have been furthered by law students who developed a mentoring program where each law student “buddied up” with a middle or high school student. The program includes sessions addressing post-high school education and careers, hands-on guidance involving searches for college and vocational programs, instruction on completing the necessary applications, tours of our school’s facilities to stimulate thoughts of future vocational possibilities, and ongoing follow-ups with each of the mentees over the course of several months throughout the academic year. Our law students have received considerable positive feedback from those they assisted while additionally

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4. The profession being held in low public esteem is not new. *See, e.g.*, Maura Dolan & Hector Tobar, *Call to End Lawyer-Bashing Inspires Even More Jokes*, L.A. TIMES (Jul. 8, 1993), [http://articles.latimes.com/print/1993-07-08/news/mn-11155\\_1\\_lawyer-joke](http://articles.latimes.com/print/1993-07-08/news/mn-11155_1_lawyer-joke) [<https://perma.cc/VE25-PGPZ>]. However, that perception is skewed due to the negative portrayals of attorneys in popular culture and the media, in addition to the public’s misunderstanding of the role lawyers serve in our judicial system, along with the association between attorneys and the resolution of life’s traumatic events. Michael Rappaport, *Nobody Likes a Lawyer Until They Need One*, MICHAEL RAPPAPORT BARRISTER & SOLICITOR, <http://www.mrlegal.ca/articles/article1/default.html> [<https://perma.cc/C9JK-D64F>].

5. From the brochure for the Carlisle Victory Circle (CVC), on file with the author. The author serves as a member of the CVC board of directors.

6. CARLISLE VICTORY CIRCLE, <http://www.carlislevictorycircle.org> [<https://perma.cc/2M67-S4FQ>].

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honing their own leadership skills, and they look forward to fostering these relationships and expanding the program.

### III. LEARNING

Higher education is a means to stretch one's mind. Law students may find their preconceived "truths" challenged as they gain new knowledge, ideas, and interests. A student's involvement in community service can expand his vision and open his eyes to those who are less fortunate. This provides a sense of integration between academics and the community, by enlightening and keeping the student in touch with what is most important in the real world. Students can learn that they are part of something bigger and more diverse than their law school environment. In essence, students learn how to relate to people of other ethnic, educational, economic, and social backgrounds.

We can also learn about ourselves, including our strengths, motivations, and interests, through providing for the needs of others. Our emotional intelligence, sometimes referred to as our "EQ" (emotional quotient), is concerned with understanding oneself and others, relating to people, and coping with our surroundings.<sup>7</sup> In effect, helping others can make us proud of our positive impact on someone's life, and we gain a greater understanding of our humanity, our fragility, and the desperation faced by those in need of aid. The result goes beyond mere passive sympathy, instead creating empathy for those in need. This fosters an intersection between our values and our service as we often reflect on our own lives, find our true selves, and discover how we fit into the bigger picture of the world outside the proverbial ivory tower.

Despite the toil of law school for students (or that of faculty meetings for their professors), this "reality check" will confirm that students (and their professors) are very fortunate in the opportunities they have compared to the many who are far more disadvantaged and greatly in need of assistance. Law students should assist others, even as they may struggle to understand concepts such as *res ipsa loquitur* and promissory estoppel. Indeed, no matter how one feels about the battle to conquer law school, there are always those who are in far worse situations. Community service allows the student to experience gratitude for all that he has, thereby

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7. Jeanne Segal, Melinda Smith & Jennifer Shubin, *Improving Emotional Intelligence (EQ)*, HELPGUIDE.ORG, <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/emotional-intelligence-eq.htm> [<https://perma.cc/EUE5-BYWN>].

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remaining grounded by recognizing the contrast between his own life and the lives of those whom he is assisting.

When a student reflects on his service activities, he discovers a source of self-worth outside the rankings of the curve or the superficial status symbols frequently desired by lawyers and law students. Community service helps a student realize that his worth is inherent and bolsters his confidence in his own values and needs, encouraging him to fulfill those higher needs. The change in perspective goes beyond mere platitudes and actually generates an understanding of the struggles, triumphs, and humanity of others. This deeper appreciation allows the student to integrate more fully into the legal community and the larger community which attorneys frequently lead.

One example of this learning experience is found in our community's food bank, Project SHARE (Survival Help and Recipient Education), an interfaith, nonprofit cooperative organization that serves the local indigent population of the greater Carlisle, Pennsylvania area through several programs.<sup>8</sup> These programs include gleaning produce, distributing food, providing clothing, and teaching nutrition, wellness, and life skills.<sup>9</sup> Our law students have consistently worked as volunteers at the monthly food distributions, assisting in the preparation of the site, managing a food distribution station, and joining in the subsequent breakdown and cleanup. During the several hours involved, our students have come in contact with some of the most down-and-out, marginalized members of the community. Some of the recipients have lived in perpetual poverty, while others have suffered from a temporary setback, with many visibly swallowing their pride to ask for what some may term a "handout."

The experience can be sobering, with students seeing firsthand the suffering and humiliation felt by many who are looking for a means to overcome their misfortunes. But the students are quick to share a smile, provide the warmth of a cheerful expression, and offer well-wishes to the recipients. They listen and engage the recipients, hearing their concerns and offering friendly words of comfort as they share the bounty collected for the distribution. The hours go by quickly, but the memories of caring and shared kindnesses remain. One of our student volunteers took an even greater interest in Project SHARE's mission and became involved in

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8. PROJECT SHARE, <https://projectsharepa.org/about> [<https://perma.cc/HL68-NUFG>].

9. *Id.* The author has previously served as both a member and president of Project SHARE's board of directors.

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writing a grant proposal to solicit funds from a local veterans' organization. He presented the proposal to the local veterans group both in writing and orally—and they decided to provide Project SHARE with a contribution of \$1,000 per month to fund its ongoing efforts! This was yet another way students have provided tangible benefits to the community in which they live, all while learning valuable life lessons.

#### IV. MENTAL HEALTH

I often suggest to my students the importance of “getting a life”—maintaining an appropriate balance so that, believe it or not, there can still be life while in (and after) law school. Students need to get away and take that occasional “sanity break” from the law school “bubble” to avoid feelings of staleness, boredom, or even resentment from the impact of law school on one’s used-to-be life.<sup>10</sup> Then there are those who have occasional time available and would like to do something different and immediately useful: performing a task to completion, in contrast with enduring a law school curriculum that they may perceive as endless and cyclical. The student will experience the joy of helping others, while striking a balance in his own life. Indeed, students who contribute to community service achieve the satisfaction of selflessly giving and making a difference in the lives of others, a sense far removed from the competitive realm of law school. Yes, students may leave their own comfort zone and the safe, insular “cocoon” of law school, but realizing the value in making a direct, tangible impact—accomplishing something genuinely needed—serves as its own reward, without any need for compensation or praise (or class credit). One may find inspiration and significance in giving, knowing that his contributions have made a difference and provided enduring worth.

Moreover, because many community projects are finite, with a concrete beginning and end, they provide students with the opportunity to see the results of their labors. The students can see that they made life better for those they have served, while possibly even fulfilling the need to be needed. Thus, students can take a refreshing break from whatever tensions they may be experiencing from their studies and law school

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10. Even worse can be the levels of depression experienced by students while going through law school. See Patrick J. Schiltz, *On Being a Happy, Healthy, and Ethical Member of an Unhappy, Unhealthy, and Unethical Profession*, 52 VAND. L. REV. 871, 875–76 (1999).



activities, with this breather serving to feed their souls while refreshing and re-energizing them. As a result, a student might even discover his life's true passion or learn about the fulfillment and inner strength derived from serving others, while being inspired to continue bettering society.

Additionally, dare I say it, community service can be *fun*, offering a fellowship that makes us feel good! One can explore new connections with those one already knows or, maybe better yet, enjoy socializing with people other than law students or professors while they relate to those of other ethnic, economic, and social backgrounds. The student volunteer becomes a productive force in the community by connecting to his surroundings and learning about the people, culture, and the society around him. Students can inspire their colleagues and be inspired by the strengths of others while building interpersonal ties, thus providing a buffer against the daily anxieties of life.

There is also a "healing power" from working alongside colleagues to help others, which is a reward not often considered in deciding whether to volunteer.<sup>11</sup> Studies have consistently demonstrated the significant positive relationship between volunteering and the volunteer's own mental and physical health.<sup>12</sup> Volunteerism has been known to reduce blood pressure,<sup>13</sup> enhance the immune system,<sup>14</sup> and increase the release of "feel-

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11. Edward V. Brown, *The Healing Power of Service*, SHARE INT'L, [http://shareintl.org/archives/health-healing/hh\\_ebservice.html](http://shareintl.org/archives/health-healing/hh_ebservice.html) [https://perma.cc/C2GY-Y836]; see also CORP. FOR NAT'L & CMTY SERV., OFFICE OF RESEARCH & POLICY DEV., *THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING: A REVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH* (2007), [https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/07\\_0506\\_hbr.pdf](https://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/07_0506_hbr.pdf) [https://perma.cc/9YUZ-4JVA]. It should be noted that some people are uncomfortable with the idea that the volunteer "benefits" from doing such work, since this is envisioned as a form of charity based on altruism. However, one's commitment to volunteerism can be strengthened when a person sees the benefits to *both* himself *and* the recipient, which makes service more of an "exchange" than "charity." Susan J. Ellis, *Why Volunteer?*, SERVICELEADER.ORG, <http://www.serviceleader.org/volunteers/why> [https://perma.cc/NVE6-T46V].

12. CORP. FOR NAT'L & CMTY SERV., *supra* note 11; *Doing Good is Good for You: 2013 Health and Volunteering Study*, UNITEDHEALTH GRP. & THE OPTUM INST., <http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/~media/UHG/PDF/2013/UNH-Health-Volunteering-Study.ashx?la=en> [https://perma.cc/38C9-CP4N].

13. Rodlescia S. Sneed & Sheldon Cohen, *A Prospective Study of Volunteerism and Hypertension Risk in Older Adults*, 28 PSYCHOL. & AGING 578 (2013).

14. Robert Ornstein & David Solbel, *PSYCHO-IMMUNITY*, WASH. POST (May 3, 1987), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1987/05/03/psycho-immunity/8455cd33-5e65-4ac9-949a-9b5210ff0aef/?utm\\_term=.6ce77b9450f0](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1987/05/03/psycho-immunity/8455cd33-5e65-4ac9-949a-9b5210ff0aef/?utm_term=.6ce77b9450f0) [https://perma.cc/UBU3-T7BS].

good” hormones, such as serotonin, oxytocin, and dopamine,<sup>15</sup> in addition to providing a buffer against stress and lowering the risk of disease.<sup>16</sup> This strong relationship between volunteering and health has revealed itself in lower mortality rates and incidences of heart disease, increased self-esteem, decreased symptoms of depression, and a greater sense of purpose.<sup>17</sup> Volunteers enjoy an improved quality of life, as evidenced by their “higher levels of happiness, life-satisfaction, self-esteem, a sense of control over life,”<sup>18</sup> and improved functional ability to perform normal activities.<sup>19</sup> Ultimately, the better you feel about yourself, the more likely you are to have a positive view of your life and future goals.<sup>20</sup> As Dr. Albert Schweitzer noted, “[T]he only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve.”<sup>21</sup>

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15. Eva Ritvo, *The Neuroscience of Giving*, PSYCHOL. TODAY (Apr. 24, 2014), <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/vitality/201404/the-neuroscience-giving> [<https://perma.cc/STN2-EMGU>].

16. CORP. FOR NAT’L & CMTY SERV., *supra* note 11. Volunteerism also leads to an increased life expectancy. *Id.* Some have referred to this as getting the so-called helper’s high. *Id.* Moreover, those who volunteer early in life are less likely to suffer poor health later in life, so one’s future health can be “protected” by volunteering. *Id.* Indeed, states that have high volunteer rates have lower rates of mortality and incidences of heart disease. *Id.* Approximately 76% of volunteers feel physically healthier, while 78% feel lower stress levels. UNITEDHEALTH GRP. & THE OPTUM INST., *supra* note 12. In addition, volunteers are better informed and more engaged in taking care of their own health. *Id.* While a negative mental attitude can threaten one’s health, by contrast a positive attitude will trigger bodily changes that promote health and healing. Ritvo, *supra* note 15.

17. UNITEDHEALTH GRP. & THE OPTUM INST., *supra* note 12; CORP. FOR NAT’L & CMTY SERV., *supra* note 11.

18. CORP. FOR NAT’L & CMTY SERV., *supra* note 11 at 16.

19. *Id.* Approximately 94% of people who volunteered in the last twelve months said volunteering improved their mood, while 96% reported that volunteering enriched their sense of purpose in life, and 80% stated that volunteering made them feel like they had control over their own health. UNITEDHEALTH GRP. & THE OPTUM INST., *supra* note 12.

20. HARVARD HEALTH PUBL’NS, HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL SPECIAL HEALTH REPORT: SIMPLE CHANGES, BIG REWARDS 37 (Edward M. Phillips et al. eds., 2010). The more a person volunteers, the happier he is. Compared to those who never volunteer, the odds of being “very happy” increased by 7% for those who volunteered monthly, 12% if done every two to four weeks, and 16% if performed weekly. *Id.*

21. DOUG LENNICK & FRED KIEL, MORAL INTELLIGENCE: ENHANCING BUSINESS PERFORMANCE AND LEADERSHIP SUCCESS 53 (Jim Boyd et al. eds., 2008). It has been suggested that the most important skills for a volunteer to possess “are compassion, an open mind, a willingness to do whatever is needed, and a positive attitude.” Jeanne Segal & Lawrence Robinson, *Volunteering and its Surprising Benefits*, HELPGUIDE.ORG, <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/work-career/volunteering-and-its-surprising-benefits.htm> [<https://perma.cc/24AZ-YHU9>].

The local Salvation Army Soup Kitchen is another setting where mental health is improved while students purchase, prepare, and serve much needed meals to the indigent population.<sup>22</sup> The students function as a team, cooperating and making friends, and using the time away from studying to enjoy showing compassion for those who are in desperate need. Each of the students has his or her own niche, from those who buy the ingredients for the meals, to those who do the setting up, the cooking, the distributing of the meals, and the cleaning up of the room. After experiencing the joy of helping others, the students then return to the classroom refreshed by their experiences. That renewal improves their mental health and as a result, their personal and professional lives.<sup>23</sup>

#### V. A VIEW TO THE FUTURE

While many people view community service as helping others, there is also the very real possibility that this activity will help yourself. It could enhance your resume by adding to the experiences and skills that could attract future employers.<sup>24</sup> The nature of community service allows you to explore career interests, such as through serving as a board member for an organization. Board membership allows a person to gain real world experience by participating in the governance of an organization and directing its operation of social service programs. One can develop core competencies by gaining practical knowledge in planning, collaboration, finances, goal-setting, time management, and decision-making through participating in administrative activities, including committee assignments, which determine how to effectively distribute resources. Moreover, this involvement presents the opportunity to enhance the student's analytical and people skills. In addition, "volunteering gives you the opportunity to practice important skills used in the workplace, such as teamwork, communication, problem solving, project planning, [and] task

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22. The author serves as the faculty advisor (and additional volunteer) to the students who volunteer at the soup kitchen.

23. By way of contrast, the only "disadvantage" noted by our students in their responses to the questionnaire was that the time spent in serving the community took away time from their studies. However, these same students went on to note that this allowed them to return to their studies refreshed, making more effective use of their time.

24. See Segal & Robinson, *supra* note 21; Katherine Reynolds Lewis, *Should You Include Volunteer Work on a Resume?*, FORTUNE (Oct. 20, 2011), <http://www.fortune.com/2011/10/20/should-you-include-volunteer-work-on-a-resume/> [https://perma.cc/XG7V-AF4U].

management,” while also developing and improving leadership and reflective listening skills.<sup>25</sup> These activities help in better understanding and motivating others, while also addressing and resolving difficult situations.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the law student receives meaningful training, which can enhance her qualifications and ultimately prepare her to serve as a community leader.

In addition, a student’s engagement within the organization enhances networking possibilities. Many of our students have volunteered alongside members of the bar and judiciary, fostering professional connections. Moreover, the services performed boost the student’s profile by adding to his credentials and providing a humanistic persona to his curriculum vitae. This could attract potential employers who believe that attorneys should use their skills to be engaged in the community and that such service is both laudable and desirable. The community volunteer will thus be seen as being multifaceted and set apart from the competition.<sup>27</sup> Still other potential employers may view that involvement as possibly enhancing the student’s marketability, which may develop as a result of the law student having impressed his fellow board members, who may then seek his services once he is gainfully employed.<sup>28</sup>

As an example, many of our students have been involved in governance activities through a student-generated program known as Leading Law Students, which provides the opportunity to serve on the boards of nonprofit organizations. Leading Law Students is a voluntary community service program that pairs second-year students with local

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25. Segal & Robinson, *supra* note 21. Moreover, the energy and sense of fulfillment that comes from volunteering can relieve tensions and carry over to one’s workplace. *See id.*

26. *Id.*

27. A recent survey indicated that “more than 85 percent of those involved in hiring decisions . . . believe resumes that include volunteer activities look more impressive.” Chad Brooks, *Need a Resume Boost? Add Volunteer Experience*, BUS. NEWS DAILY (June 13, 2016), <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/8572-volunteering-helps-career.html> [https://perma.cc/8V2L-AJV4] (citing *2016 Deloitte Impact Survey: Building Leadership Skills Through Volunteerism*, DELOITTE (June 2016), <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/citizenship-deloitte-volunteer-impact-research.html> [https://perma.cc/T863-WCRT]). In essence, volunteerism provides the potential employer with a more complete picture of the potential employee concerning his commitments, character, and skill set. *Id.*

28. An added benefit to the employer is that volunteers tend to be healthier and less stressed, thereby driving down health care costs while enhancing employee productivity. UNITEDHEALTH GRP. & THE OPTUM INST., *supra* note 12.

nonprofit organizations to serve as nonvoting members on their boards of directors for the entire academic year. The vision of this program is to train our future legal professionals to be community leaders by facilitating an inclusive community partnership between the law school, law students, alumni, and nonprofit community partners. In doing so, the program encompasses two core values of Dickinson Law: community and service. The students benefit from having the opportunity to learn about community partners and needs, and about nonprofit board governance while collaborating outside the law school with more than just their peers. This community involvement and service necessarily improves the behavioral competency skills necessary for networking and success in the job market. Comments provided by those organizations reveal that they appreciate the intellectual and analytical skills that law students bring to the proverbial table and welcome the perspective, insights, ideas, and thoughtful questions of our next generation of leaders.<sup>29</sup> As board members, the students fully participate in the organization's governing activities, such as attending meetings, serving on committees, drafting documents, researching pertinent issues, and engaging in public events. They learn the essence of board management, responsibilities, operations,

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29. The comments are found in evaluations submitted by both the organizations and the students, which are on file with author. These organizations commented they would continue to welcome students back on the board in subsequent years. Among the individual organization comments were the following:

- "We definitely benefitted"
- "Student was a valuable member"
- "I was thrilled" with student
- Student "interacted well with board"
- Student "offered insights and ideas"
- Student "contributed to discussions and informed decisions"
- "Great addition to our board"
- Student "added valid commentary"
- Student "asked thoughtful questions"
- Student was an "excellent addition"
- "Student did everything required and more"
- "Student was engaging, helpful, thoughtful, and professional"
- "Student was an asset to our board"
- "Student was exemplary"
- Student "provided valuable feedback"
- Student was "helpful in all kinds of ways"
- Student "provided perspective"
- Student "was engaged in our work and excited about our mission"
- "Solid program"
- "Great program"

finances, and business.

For example, one student serves as a representative to the Carlisle Borough Council, the governing body of our community. In that capacity, the student attends and participates at regular council and committee meetings, offers input and ideas, poses questions on behalf of various constituencies, and informs fellow students of various community issues.<sup>30</sup> Another student serves on the board of United Way, which is a leader in coordinating resources to meet the service needs of our community.<sup>31</sup> This student has been part of collaborative partnerships that effectively expand and employ resources to meet human needs identified within the community.<sup>32</sup> A third opportunity provides an opportunity for three students, one from each school year, to serve a term with the College Community Partners (CCP),<sup>33</sup> whose mission is to encourage interconnections between leaders of nonprofit and religious organizations to share information, build upon strengths, and seek and solidify partnerships to meet community needs.<sup>34</sup> The students in these various positions are empowered to encourage a wider communication network and greater collaboration in addressing various identified problems, ranging from homelessness to at risk youth to issues of health and substance abuse. In each of these positions, and in similar ones for the Chamber of Commerce, the YMCA, Area Economic Development Corporation, Employment Skills Center, Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, Equality Pennsylvania, Historical Society, LGBT Community, Domestic Violence Services, and the Bosler Memorial Library, the public library serving the greater Carlisle area, students have not only assisted the community and strengthened the school's ties to the community, but they

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30. The author worked to initiate this position as the natural progression of other service work he had performed within the community and based on the political and governmental contacts he had established.

31. The author previously served two terms on the United Way board of directors and worked to initiate this student board position.

32. Statement of purpose on file with author.

33. This organization has only recently transitioned into what is now called the Greater Carlisle Project. Its purpose is to provide a forum for members of the Greater Carlisle Area to voice ideas for the future of our region, increase the visibility of efforts and organizations that are making our communities more sustainable, collect and share information, help member organizations to locate, access and mobilize resources, champion initiatives and projects, and celebrate success. For more details, see GREATER CARLISLE PROJECT, <http://greatercarlisleproject.dickinson.edu/> [<https://perma.LL/4RWL-CUYU>].

34. Statement of purpose on file with author. The author also serves on the board of this organization.

also have benefitted themselves by adding to their marketable and practical skills.<sup>35</sup>

Community service does not end at commencement. The degrees that students have earned will allow them to pursue careers, as they take with them the experiences and knowledge they have gathered while serving others. And with those developing relationships come the possibilities of still greater personal satisfaction, networking, and professional opportunities.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Ultimately, we volunteer because we believe it is important that we do so. The benefits of engaging in such activities are manifold and truly speak to a person's character, whether he seeks to help his community, enhance his education, aid his psyche, advance his career, or all of the above. Community service can become both what one does and whom one is—not just something that we do but a part of who we are. This passion can become an important part of one's lifestyle, for an involved life can be a fulfilled and meaningful life. Our commitment to assist those less fortunate can bring out the best in us and inspire hope in one another. This increased sense of social responsibility and desire to “give back” ultimately benefits

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35. As provided in the student evaluations referenced in *supra* note 29. Among the student comments were the following:

“Helped me learn more about community”

“Lots of networking opportunities”

“Got a better understanding of how important such organizations are to our communities”

“I gained an appreciation for board governance and maintenance as well as sustaining knowledge and experience drafting documents”

“I was able to understand what board members do and their role within the organization”

“I gained a lot of vital business knowledge and made excellent connections”

“I gained leadership opportunities”

“I gained an experiential impression of the life and work of a legal nonprofit board”

“I learned more about the services and programs of this nonprofit”

“I learned about other volunteer opportunities I participated in”

“I learned about social issues impacting the community”

“I gained valuable perspective”

“I gained a basic understanding of how boards operate, . . . of the board's finances, . . . of how committees operate within the group and how they report to the board, how individual members contribute to the board”

“Serving on the board made me feel like I was helping to advance issues I cared about”

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both the provider and the recipient, while restoring and preserving human dignity.

Professors and other mentors should remind law students of the importance of serving those in need. Service initiates personal growth, giving students an opportunity for self-reflection and positive self-promotion. Service provides opportunities to improve skills, grow networks, and mature as leaders. Most importantly, service facilitates a student's transition from a passive learner to an active force for good in the community. If society is truly what we make of it, then it is incumbent on us to try to make it the best we can for all concerned. We do so not necessarily because of our legal expertise, but as a function of our own sense of service by being contributing and caring members of the community in which we live. Although the opportunities and benefits of such involvement are essentially universal, their value may not be apparent from the student's perspective and comparatively limited experience. Therefore, I urge fellow academics to foster a sense of community involvement among our students. Thus, I wish for all in our legal community to do well, but most importantly, I will continue to implore them to do good.



## APPENDIX A

Good morning, All:

I am reaching out to you for input on a current research project in which I am discussing the merits of community service work by law students. I am addressing non-legal, non-credit service activities, which I realize that many of you have contributed to during your time here, either as individuals or through groups (as examples, only) such as the Community Services Committee, Project STAFF, PAD, board membership, etc. If you would, I am asking that you spend a few minutes and provide me with information about the following:

- 1) Your specific experiences/activities;
- 2) The approximate number of hours per month you have participated in these activities;
- 3) The type of service you provided;
- 4) Why you did so;
- 5) The benefits received by the recipient *and* by you;
- 6) Any downside/disadvantage from your participation;
- 7) Your future plans to engage in community service;
- 8) Miscellaneous: any comments or thoughts, philosophical or otherwise, you wish to add.

It is my hope to compile and use this information (anonymously) in publishing an article to acknowledge and accredit your contributions and to motivate others. My premise will include detailing the purpose and worth of such service, both to the communities in which we live and to ourselves. You can provide this information by whatever means you choose (email, hand copy, anonymously, or just by stopping by my office to discuss). Thank you in advance for whatever information you can share...

MM