

Six Inspiring Benefits of Volunteering

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Want to live longer? Be happier? If you answered “yes” to both of these questions, you may want to consider finding a place to volunteer. That’s right, a growing body of research suggests volunteering promotes health benefits in addition to social benefits. Those who volunteer tend to live longer with higher functional abilities and lower rates of depression. In other words, the process of giving back not only helps others but includes a host of health benefits for the person who volunteers. Here are six inspiring reasons to volunteer:

Build bonds and create friendships – For those that are lonely or want to develop connections with others, volunteering increases social interaction and can help create friendships with other volunteers, those in the organization you volunteer for, and the people you help.

Improve mental health – Along with the desire and commitment to help others, the time spent volunteering can stimulate dopamine, a feel-good neurotransmitter in the body that gives the “warm glow” feeling which can help decrease stress and improve mood and outlook on life, which helps reduce depression and anxiety.

Increase self-esteem and confidence – Doing something worthwhile and valuable for others can produce a sense of purpose which can increase energy and feelings of fulfillment, boosting self-esteem and confidence.

Promote overall health – Completing mental and/or physical tasks in a volunteer setting is good for the brain and body. Research indicates volunteering at least 100 hours a year (an average of 2 hours a week) is linked with improved brain function, lower blood pressure, increased functional capacity, and overall better quality of life.

Build skills and work experience – If you’re still in the work force or in between jobs, volunteering can help build skill sets and experience in a variety of settings, which can be added to a resume. Meeting others may also help you find mentors and build a professional social network.

Add fun to your life – Getting out of the house and volunteering can turn on the fun factor. Working toward a common goal and giving back to your community can increase creativity and motivation, and this can spread to your personal and professional life.

If you’re ready to move to the next step, there are a wide variety of volunteer opportunities in the Pee Dee. Explore opportunities with local nonprofits, cultural organizations, service organizations, schools, faith-based communities, hospitals,

and clinics for potential options.

You can even join the volunteer program at HopeHealth! HopeHealth is a federally qualified health center serving over 60,000 patients in five counties, with volunteer opportunities currently in Florence and the Pee Dee area. Cindy Averitt, director of volunteer services says, "We're currently working on expanding our volunteer program and have plenty of opportunities for people interested in volunteering."

Opportunities include:

Lobby Greeter | Be the first person to provide a friendly face and cordial welcome with prompt assistance to the guests of HopeHealth.

Suite Guest Guide | Help guests of HopeHealth find their way - directing, assisting, and supporting at visits as well as supporting staff within the provider suites.

New Patient Welcome Center | Help orient and familiarize patients to their new medical home.

Care Navigation Support Guide | Help the special populations of HopeHealth, such as seniors, veterans, and patients with certain medical conditions, find their way - directing, assisting, and supporting guests at visits and after as well as supporting the care navigator.

Hope "Buddy" | Send cards and make calls to help support people who may be isolated or without family close by.

Event Volunteer | Help with social events such as the monthly "Seniors with Hope" or Veterans education and support programs, or perform administrative and in-person support for special projects and events.

"We'll train and support each volunteer every step of the way," Averitt assures, "we want each person who volunteers to enjoy all the benefits from their time helping our patients."

If you're interested in exploring any of these volunteer opportunities, please call Cindy Averitt at **843-687-4172** or email **volunteer@hope-health.org**.

HopeHealth Volunteers



Meet our Manager of Volunteer Programs

Cindy A. Averitt, manager of volunteer programs, wants you to be a part of HopeHealth Volunteers.

Averitt came to HopeHealth after a 30-year career with the Florence Family YMCA, where she facilitated recreational programming, marketing, and PR work, and worked directly with volunteers for several special events.

A native of Indiana, Averitt moved to Florence after high school when her father was transferred with ESAB. She is a graduate of Francis Marion University, where she earned a BS in psychology. She has been married for nearly 25 years and has two children, Margo (23) and Bradford (22). When she is not at work, she is reading, scrapbooking, and doing genealogy research.

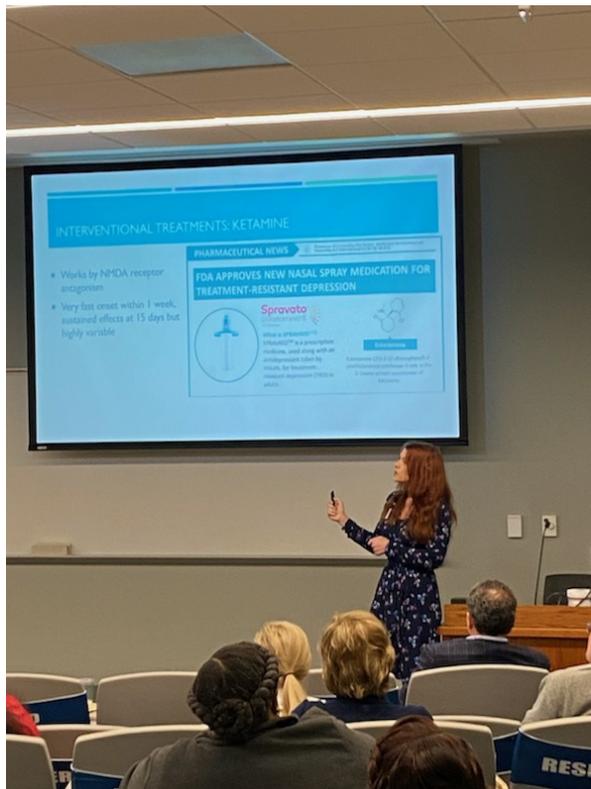


When asked about her favorite part of her role, Averitt said she is excited about what HopeHealth is doing with other area nonprofits to make everyone's lives as healthy as possible.

When discussing the importance of volunteering and the passion volunteers bring, Averitt emphasized the role of participants with active ties to care navigation lines. If you have a heart for one of the special populations that HopeHealth serves, such as patients with cancer or diabetes, Veteran patients, senior patients, or other groups, consider volunteering with HopeHealth.

For more information, email volunteer@hope-health.org, call (843) 687-4172, or [visit our website](#).

Primary Care Symposium



On Friday, March 18, several HopeHealth providers attended the **11th Annual Afternoon Symposium for Primary Care Physicians and Providers** at the

Carter Center for Health Services. The program was designed to update attendees on current approaches and innovations in several medical and surgical subspecialties. The symposium featured regional experts who shed light on current topics and emphasized their practical impacts for primary care.

Of the eight physicians who presented at the primary care symposium, three were HopeHealth physicians - Veronica Ridpath, DO; Ramesh Bharadwaj, MD; and J. Harrell Docherty Jr., MD. This important honor demonstrates that HopeHealth physicians are regionally recognized as subject matter experts.

Exercise of the Month



This month, **Kayla Thompson** discusses flexibility training in her Exercise of the Month article, a must for people of all ages!

[Check out the full article here.](#)

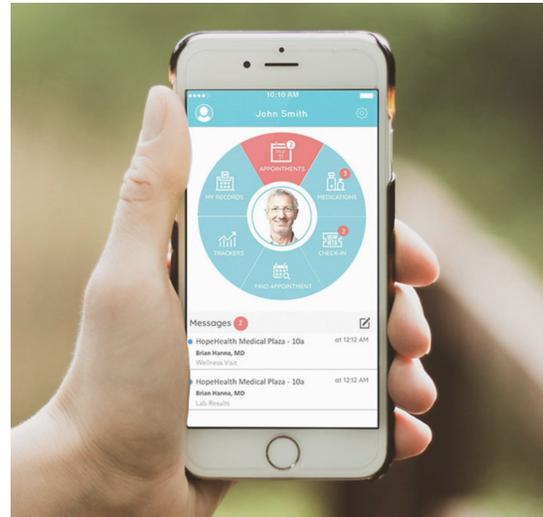
Kayla Thompson is a diabetes care navigator at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence and is a certified exercise physiologist through the American College of Sports Medicine. She has a Master of Science in clinical exercise science.

Telehealth - Virtual Provider Visits

HopeHealth offers a variety of secure telehealth solutions for our patients. Do you have a smartphone or computer with a camera? We can see you from the comfort of your own home for most follow-up visits with your primary care provider and mental health provider and even some specialist appointments.

Travel and transportation can be a challenge for many of our patients. We are expanding our ability to see patients from office to office to alleviate these barriers and currently offer the following services.

- HH Greelyville, Hemingway and Bethea: tele-behavioral health counseling
- HH Kingstree and Manning Peds: tele-psych with MUSC
- HH Kingstree: tele-substance use disorder counseling
- All locations offer tele-nutrition counseling
- All locations and providers offer tele-primary care



If you are having trouble getting to your visits and would like to see your provider via Telehealth please send a message through the Patient Portal/Healow app or contact us today by phone at (843) 667-9414.

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