

THE REPORTER

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COVID-19 ED/OP EDITORIAL FEATURED STORIES

Volunteering: a great alternative to partying

September 24, 2020 MSU Reporter 0 Comments

During this time of social distancing, online classes and working, it seems the easy thing for students to do would be to shut their doors and isolate.

This isolation can lead to an increased sense of loneliness. Students can begin to feel extremely confined to their dorm rooms without a way of filling their social buckets.

The world we live in right now is one that is ever in need of help. With many people in our own community facing food or housing insecurity, there is an abundance of need for assistance in our community.

So, these two issues seem to pair well together: A plethora of bored college students in need of meaning and engagement, and a community longing for help.

Students need to start volunteering more.

We, as students, are told that we most likely will not experience the most severe symptoms of COVID-19, simply because of our immune system being young and strong. Why aren't we using this to help people?

We have to stop using our resistance to the virus as an excuse to party and start using it as a superpower. What do superheroes do? They help people in need.

The Greater Mankato Area United way has an extensive list of volunteer opportunities that literally anyone can do, and which students are in the perfect position to perform.

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One example of volunteering that would be super beneficial for the community would be to help deliver Meals on Wheels two to three times a month. The routes for these only take up about 1 to 2 hours at a time.

Another opportunity would be to help the Partners for Affordable Housing to move furniture, dishes, bedding and other things for people moving out of a shelter and into their new apartment.

The YMCA Mentorship program is also always looking for people to join their "Big Brother/Big Sister" program. As a mentor in this program, you get assigned a child, and weekly you get together for about 2 to 3 hours.

And not only is this good for those in the community, but it is also great for our students. It is so common to feel stuck, alone and without purpose when locked up in Zoom meetings all day.

Volunteer work is a great way to get out of the house, meet new people and help the community — all while staying safe from the virus.

As the MNSU student body, we should strive to make our Mankato community better. During this pandemic we can, and should, prioritize helping those around us who are in need.

Header photo: MNSU student volunteers distribute food to community members during a COVID Food Assistance Program in the MNSU parking lots. (Maxwell Mayleben/MSU Reporter)

