



Newsletter N° 4, December 2016

The Smart Benefits of Volunteering

Inform Yourself!

“An apple a day – and an hour of volunteering – keep the doctor away.”

More studies are showing that volunteering can lower blood pressure, enhance immunity and cardiovascular health, increase energy, and even result in a longer life! Some doctors are even prescribing volunteer activities for their patients who suffer from depression, anxiety, and stress.



Founded on public health promotion, TeenSmart is proud to have a strong and vibrant volunteer program. **In 2016 alone, we trained almost 100 professional volunteers who contributed almost 9000 volunteer hours!** Our volunteers come from diverse backgrounds and help in many ways: online counseling, e-course facilitation, design, marketing, IT, and communications.

This past December 5 was International Volunteer Day and we want to say THANK YOU to all of the volunteers who make TeenSmart possible! We also want to thank our excellent Board of Directors who tirelessly volunteer their time and resources to advance the TeenSmart mission.

Spotlight on a Volunteer

Doña Zunia is a retired mother of two who volunteers with TeenSmart as an online counselor.

What is the most common struggle you see in today's youth?
Loneliness... not having anyone to listen to them. Young people



have a lot to say, but we live in a society that is too busy for them. They have no one to turn to that really listens to their heart...

What do you try to convey to the youth you counsel?

The importance of defining their goals for themselves. We [counselors] are not saying “do this and you’ll be successful.” Rather, we shine light on their options and the good possibilities they can choose from. We sow empowerment.

What impacts have you seen from your volunteering?

There are many occasions in which I have received a “thanks to you...” There was one young woman who had been subjected to lots of abuse and she told me that TeenSmart made her want to go on living. I affirmed to her that she has so much value as a human being. She is a beautiful person created by God with all of the love in the world. And now she has a life project.

What benefits has volunteering with TeenSmart brought you?

I feel self-actualized and fulfilled. What I would say to people, is that if they want to do something that keeps them alive every day, consider doing volunteer work with TeenSmart -we can volunteer from our home! And, as adults, we have lived through so much, so we already have experiences that help us work with these little ones... my virtual children. Now, thanks to TeenSmart, I have children in Argentina, Mexico, Nicaragua, Costa Rica! We cannot stop growing as human beings!

Take Action

Are you interested in the health benefits associated with volunteering? TeenSmart is constantly receiving virtual volunteers to help adolescents and young adults develop the knowledge, skills, and motivation to live healthy, effective and satisfying lives. Write our Volunteer Coordinator today to discuss how you could best serve: mramirez@teensmart.net.



Celebrate with us!



The end of the year is always an active time for us as we celebrate **TeenSmart graduations** and our **Annual Youth Leadership Summits**. These events bring together the TeenSmart family – youth, volunteers, teachers, facilitators, leadership teams, and staff – to honor achievements and to strengthen the youth’s capacities as health promoters in their communities.

TeenSmart's Annual Youth Leadership Summits attract and cultivate young leaders and health promoters. In 2016, the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican Summits had 278 attendees.

Please view photos from the events on our Facebook page by [clicking on this link!](#)

We are so grateful for everyone who



helped to make these events possible and especially to **Cinemas** in Nicaragua for their in-kind donation of 155 movie tickets for our youth leaders. We are always looking for in-kind donations such as t-shirts, bracelets, and goodies of all kinds, to add excitement to these events. If you know of a company that would be interested in supporting TeenSmart in 2017, please write our Fundraising Director: mcoffman@teensmart.net.

A record number of youth -- **1,072** -- graduated from TeenSmart's online health empowerment courses in 2016!

Be Inspired

This year has been full of gifts for TeenSmart. Gifts like you. YOU make TeenSmart possible through your support.

From our families to yours, we want to wish you a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!



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TeenSmart International | c/o Rosa Solorzano, 107 Applecart Way, Morrisville, NC 27560

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