

Inviting Generation Y to LIVE UNITED Research Brief: Campus & Young Adult Engagement

Engaging young adults on college and university campuses is an important step for United Way. Generation Y, those born between roughly 1980 and 2000 and also known as the Millennial generation, is a powerful cohort whose influence will only increase with time. By 2010, Gen Y will outnumber the Baby Boom generation. On campus, Generation Y 18-24 year olds are accomplished volunteers, advocates, and fundraisers. Yet they and their host colleges and universities strive for greater connection to the community and impact-focused activity. Working together, United Way, young adults, and college campuses can advance the common good, help students grow as leaders, and build lasting relationships between Generation Y, United Way, and the broader community. By investing in this age group now, United Way can help them make a difference in communities now and into the future.

Students & Service – Why Work with Gen Y on Campuses

- In 2005 there were 10.416 million undergraduate students between the ages of 15-24 years oldⁱ. By 2015 there are projected to be approximately 17.172 million undergraduate students in Americaⁱⁱ. These students are educated at over 4,000 two and four year colleges and universitiesⁱⁱⁱ.
- Campus volunteerism is on the rise, with 2.7 million students serving in 2002 and 3.3 million dedicating their time in 2005^{iv}. In 2005 college and university students' volunteer time was worth roughly \$2,381,280,000, valued at \$18.04 per hour^{v,vi}.
- University and college students do not only participate in hands-on volunteerism, they are also active fundraisers. In 2007 Penn State University raised \$5,240,385.17 for Dance Marathon; UCLA raised \$330,245.70 for Dance Marathon; and in 2008 University of Iowa raised over \$1,000,000.
- American Cancer Society launched its campus chapter program in 2003. In 2007, 360 "Campuses Against Cancer" chapters raised \$22 million for American Cancer Society efforts and meaningfully engaged thousands of young people.

Generation Y & United Way

- Young adults ages 18-34 are less aware of United Way than older age groups. The young adult population is also less aware of United Way than of other large non-profit organizations such as Red Cross and Salvation Army^{vii}.
- Young adults who are aware of United Way's work display more agreement with United Way's key messages than older age groups^{viii}.
- It is important to connect with young adults as Generation Y (the Millennials) are the community's and United Way's future leaders. The Millennials will outnumber the Baby Boomers by 2010^{ix}.
- Companies and United Way partners recognize the changing talent and consumer dynamics associated with Generation Y and are seeking new and authentic ways to reach them.

United Way Can Positively Impact Students

- The community impact model offered by United Way is a unique approach that offers significant learning opportunities for student participants.
- Students who volunteer in high school and/or college are more likely to participate in volunteer work after graduating from college^x.
- College and university volunteerism is associated long term with: continuing education including earning higher degrees, donating to one's alma mater, inter-racial/ethnic socialization and promotion, aiding those in trouble, participation in community action and environmental clean-up programs, and developing a meaningful life philosophy^{xi}.
- Research has found that in comparison to non-volunteering youth, youth who volunteer are more likely to give to charities later in life^{xii}.

Reaching Gen Y as Students and in the Workforce

- Approaches should be student centered. Research has found peer to peer learning and engagement is the greatest source of influence on other students during college^{xiii}.
- Nearly two-thirds of Generation Y talent prefer to work for companies that give them opportunities to contribute their talent to nonprofit organizations^{xiv}.
- In the workplace Generation Y expects to be treated with respect and have relevant, engaging, and productive work. These and similar expectations exist in volunteer situations as well^{xv}.
- Technology should be used as a tool to aid volunteerism and engagement among students. Specifically, the internet is the younger generation's main media source for getting information on social causes and volunteering^{xvi}.

Campuses as Environments for Change

- Campus life provides students with a variety of unique resources. This may include flexible schedules, accessible professor populations, an emphasis on practical experiences, administrative support, and cultural diversity and support^{xvii}.
- On campus, students can sustain their own efforts with the proper advising from United Way. Along with educational and emotional resources provided by colleges and universities, campus funding opportunities also exist to support students' leadership and service efforts. Many schools dedicate significant budget towards funding student groups.

Other Non-profits & Campus Affiliates

- Of the twenty-three Leadership 18 non-profits, five organizations (American Cancer Society, National Council of La Raza, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, American Red Cross, and YWCA of the USA) have campus programs. In addition, Habitat for Humanity, American Cancer Society, Amnesty International, and Rotary International all have campus affiliates.

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- ⁱ US Census Bureau, www.census.gov, 2007.
- ⁱⁱ National Center for Education Statistics, nces.ed.gov, 2007.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Peterson's/EducationUSA, www.petersons.com/educationusa.
- ^{iv} Corporation for National and Community Service, "College Students Helping America," pg. 2, October 2006.
- ^v Corporation for National and Community Service, "College Students Helping America," October 2006.
- ^{vi} Independent Sector, Value of Volunteer Time, independentsector.org, 2007.
- ^{vii} United Way of America, "Generation X & Y and the United Way: Building Relationships with Current and Future Donors," pg. 9, August 2002.
- ^{viii} United Way of America, "Generation X & Y and the United Way: Building Relationships with Current and Future Donors," pg. 8, August 2002.
- ^{ix} Fast Company, "Cover Story," pg. 87, April 2008.
- ^x Astin, Sax, and Avalos, "Long-term effects of volunteerism during the undergraduate years," 1999.
- ^{xi} Astin, Sax, and Avalos, "Long-term effects of volunteerism during the undergraduate years," 1999.
- ^{xii} Independent Sector, Giving and Volunteering in the United States, independentsector.org, 2007.
- ^{xiii} Miller and Spence, "As Indiana goes, so should the rest of the nation," Lumina Foundation Lessons, pg. 43, Spring 2007.
- ^{xiv} Volunteer IMPACT survey by Deloitte & Touche USA LLP, 2007.
- ^{xv} United Way of America, "Generation X & Y and the United Way: Building Relationships with Current and Future Donors," pg. 6, August 2002.
- ^{xvi} MTV, "Just Cause," pg.6, 2006.
- ^{xvii} Corporation for National and Community Service, "College Students Helping America," pg. 4, October 2006.

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