Why Volunteer?

• Explore careers
• Develop skills
• Gain diverse experiences
• Develop your network/connections
• Discover yourself
• Develop your sense of purpose
• Improve your health (social, mental, physical, spiritual)
• Identify new opportunities (for personal life & career)
• Have positive impact on a community
Identifying Your Cause(s)

Ask yourself:

• What do I like to do? What are my hobbies?  
  – Ex: sports, music, work with kids, etc.

• What causes(s) am I interested in?  
  – Ex: education, the arts, cancer, autism, nutrition, etc.

• What population(s)/group(s) am I interested in working with?  
  – Ex: children, seniors, individuals with disabilities, animals

• What skills do I wish to obtain/develop?  
  – Ex: communication skills, leadership, language, etc.

• What are my goals?  
  – Ex: learn more about a career, give back to a community, broaden experiences, gain new perspective
Finding Opportunities
(Key Resources)
• MIT Public Service Center
  – http://web.mit.edu/mitpsc/
• Volunteermatch
  – http://www.volunteermatch.org/
• Idealist
  – http://www.idealist.org/
• United Way
  – http://www.unitedway.org/
• Boston Cares
  – http://www.bostoncares.org/
• People Making a Difference
  – http://www.pmd.org/
International Opportunities

• Utilize MIT PSC Resources:

• Explore MIT Opportunities:
  • MISTI
  • MIT’s International Development Club
    • [http://internationaldevelopmentclub.weebly.com/](http://internationaldevelopmentclub.weebly.com/)
  • D-Lab
    • [http://d-lab.mit.edu/](http://d-lab.mit.edu/)

• Consider your finances!
  • You may have to pay fees to volunteer abroad.
  • You may be able to make a greater impact volunteering in your local community, and staying within your financial means.
Developing Your Own Proposal

- Think outside of the box
- Listen to needs of organization/community
- Create project that is mutually beneficial and sustainable
- Idealist Do-It-Yourself Resource:
  - [http://www.idealist.org/info/Volunteer/DOI](http://www.idealist.org/info/Volunteer/DOI)
Examples of MIT Volunteers

• Volunteer, MIT Best Buddies
• Volunteer, American Red Cross
• Volunteer, Local Hospice Care
• Co-Founder, MIT Camp Kesem
• High School Teacher in Italy, MISTI Global Teaching Lab
• Creator of solar-powered autoclave to reduce spread of infection in rural clinics in Nicaragua, D-Lab

With exponential growth, Camp Kesem at MIT prepares for its fifth session

In 2000, a group of Stanford University students founded the first chapter of Camp Kesem, dedicated to giving kids of cancer patients a chance to spend time, at no expense, with other children who also had a parent with cancer and who shared similar struggles and worries. Now, each year, for one week in the summer, a group of college students and young campers come together to have fun in the summer, while building the foundation for support and lasting friendships.

In 2006, working with two camp directors, 16 counselors and 13 campers, Rhodes Scholar Caroline Huang ’10 and Vivian Tang ’09 began the MIT chapter of Camp Kesem (CK-MIT). Now, nearly five years later, the CK-MIT family has grown to include more than 60 counselors and 75 campers.
Managing Your Time

• How much time do you have? Be realistic!
  – What days and times you are available to volunteer?
  – How will you balance volunteering with other activities?

• Don’t over-commit. Start small, and grow! Otherwise, it may be a disappointing experience for you and the organization.

• There is no magic number of hours. How much you time you dedicate will depend on your unique schedule and priorities!

• Complete Time Management exercises to assess your schedule.
Contacting Organizations to Get Started

- Do your research on the organization
  - Think of/suggest ways you can be helpful. Don’t create work for the organization to fit you into the picture.
- Follow instructions on org. website
  - Fill out volunteer form -OR-
  - Send email with “elevator pitch”
- Follow-up with a phone call
- Assess responsiveness of organization
- Consider timeframe
  - When do you want to get started?
  - How long it will take for the organization to have you up and running?
Maximize Your Experience (Personally & Professionally)

- **Volunteer** not just because you think you “should” or because it is merely self-serving, but because you have a sincere motivation to help others.
- Ensure that your efforts meet the community needs.
- Step outside of the MIT bubble if you can, and engage with the surrounding community.
- Create structure, meaning track what you accomplish and take initiative, just like you would in an internship or job.
- Take time to reflect on your experience. Consider what you learned about yourself and how it might influence your future direction.
  - Keep a journal; log 2-3 things you learn each time.
  - These examples will help with job/grad. school interviews.