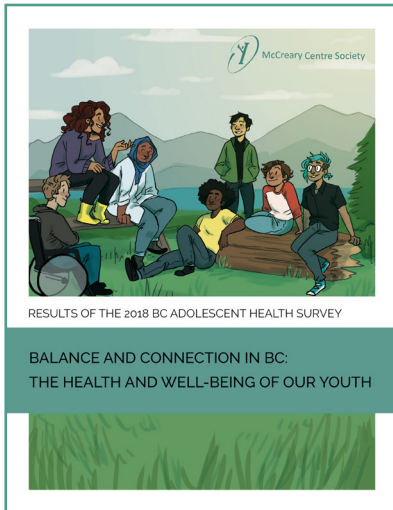


VOLUNTEERING AMONG BC YOUTH

A 2018 BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY FACT SHEET



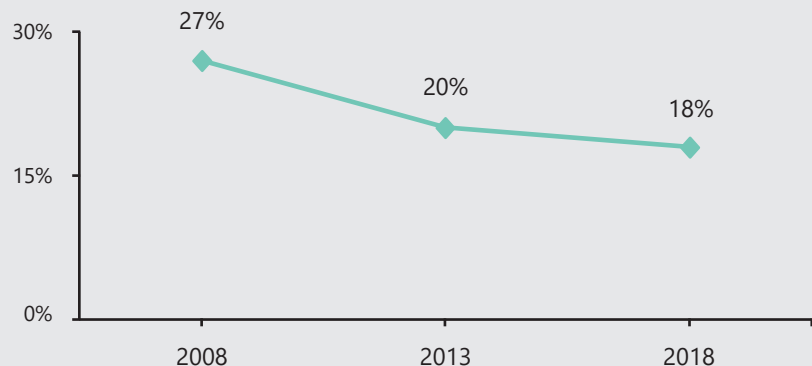
This fact sheet uses data from McCreary Centre Society's BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS). The most recent BC AHS was completed in 2018 by over 38,000 youth aged 12–19. To learn more about the survey and view other posters and reports, please visit www.mcs.bc.ca.

In British Columbia, high school students can receive credits when they complete 30 hours of volunteer or community service (BC Ministry of Education, 2020). In addition to high school credits, youth also volunteer for altruistic reasons, as well as to learn and develop skills, and establish social and employment connections (Henderson et al., 2013; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019). Benefits of volunteering can include enhanced feelings of satisfaction and competence; a reduced likelihood of engaging in potential health risk behaviours such as substance use; and

emotional and physical health benefits (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2019; Henderson et al., 2013; A. Smith et al., 2020; K. Smith et al., 2010; Schreier et al., 2013).

In 2018, 42% of youth in Grades 7–12 had volunteered at least once in the past year, including 15% who volunteered one to three times a week, and 3% who volunteered at least four times a week. The percentage of youth who volunteered in the past year decreased over time (42% vs. 45% in 2013 vs. 62% in 2008), as did the percentage who volunteered on at least a weekly basis.

YOUTH WHO VOLUNTEERED AT LEAST WEEKLY OVER THE PAST YEAR

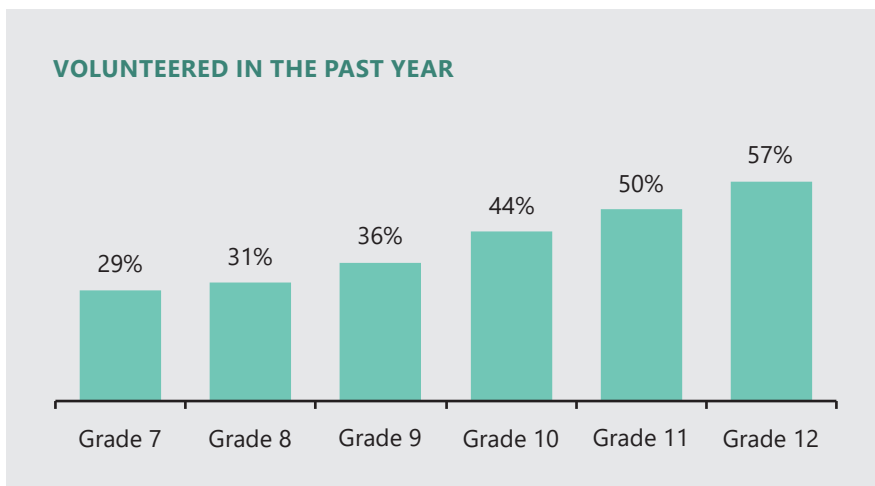


As in previous years, females were the most likely to volunteer and to volunteer regularly. For example, 22% of females volunteered at least weekly in the past year, compared to 14% of males. Also, older youth were more likely than younger ones to volunteer and to do so on a weekly basis.

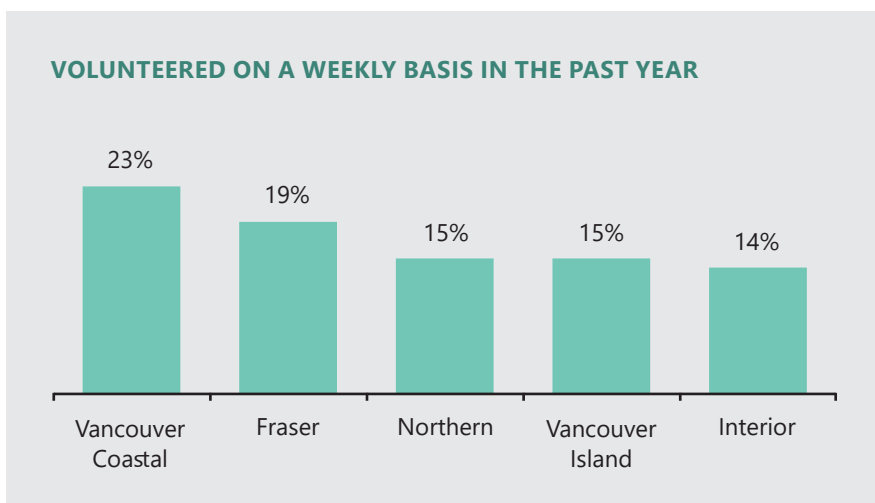
Compared to youth from other regions, youth in Vancouver Coastal were the most likely to have volunteered and to have done so regularly in the past year. Within Vancouver Coastal, youth in Richmond and Vancouver were more likely than youth in North Shore/Coast Garibaldi to have volunteered on a weekly basis (e.g., 27% of Richmond youth volunteered at least weekly vs. 18% in North Shore/Coast Garibaldi).

Youth born outside of Canada were more likely than those born in Canada to have volunteered in the past year (49% vs. 40%), and to have done so weekly (24% vs. 17%). Youth were also more likely to volunteer on a weekly basis when they:

- Planned to pursue post-secondary (20% vs. 9% of those who planned to complete their education at the high school level and not pursue post-secondary education).
- Played organized sports on a weekly basis in the past year (20% vs. 16% of those who did not play this regularly).
- Were in clubs or groups in the past year (35% vs. 15% of those who were not in a club/group).
- Felt spirituality was important in their life (e.g., 25% of those who felt it was very important vs. 14% of those who felt it was not important at all).
- Felt connected to the land/nature (e.g., 20% of those who often or always felt connected vs. 13% of those who hardly ever or never felt connected).
- Were employed in the past year (21% vs. 16% of those who did not work).



Note: The difference between Grade 7 and Grade 8 was not statistically significant.



Note: The differences between the Northern, Vancouver Island, and Interior regions were not statistically significant.

Youth who volunteered regularly were less likely than their peers to feel like they got enough time on their own, with family, with friends, in nature, and for extra-curricular activities. For example, 27% of youth who volunteered at least weekly felt like they did not have enough time on their own, compared to 21% who did not volunteer this regularly. Also, those who volunteered most frequently (four or more times a week) were more likely to wish they had a different life compared to those who volunteered one to three times a week (21% vs. 17%).

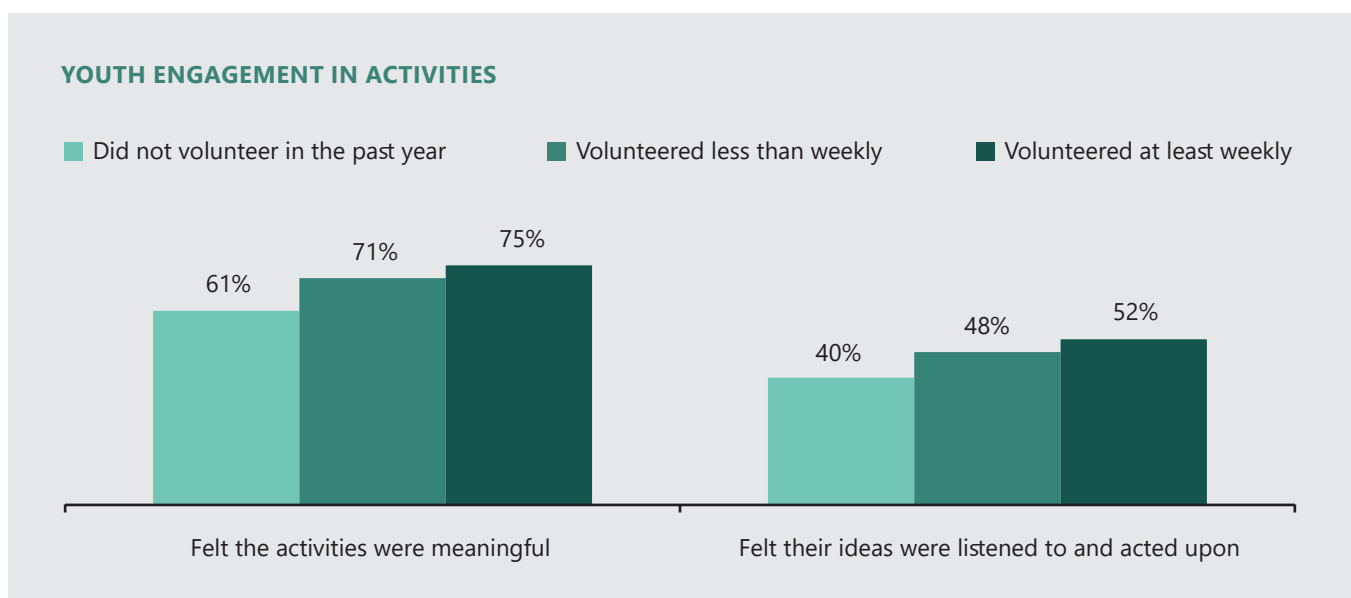
Benefits associated with regular volunteering

Despite the challenges, there were many benefits associated with volunteering on a regular basis. For example, youth who volunteered at least weekly in the past year were more likely to:

- Feel there was an adult outside of their school or family who really cared about them (68% vs. 64% of youth who did not volunteer on a regular basis).
- Feel they had an adult outside of their family that they could talk to if they were having a serious problem (35% vs. 26%).
- Have friends with pro-social attitudes (e.g., 86% had friends who would be upset if they dropped out of school vs. 82%).
- Feel like a part of their community (51% vs. 40%).

- Be able to name something they were good at (82% vs. 78%).
- Always persevere when things went wrong (52% vs. 42%; among those who had experienced setbacks).
- Feel their activities were meaningful.
- Feel like their ideas were listened to and acted upon in the activities they were involved in.

Youth who volunteered weekly were less likely to have vaped (23% vs. 28% of those who did not volunteer regularly), or to have smoked tobacco (38% vs. 45%; among youth who ever tried tobacco) in the month prior to completing the survey.



RESOURCES

Young people who are interested in volunteering in their community can connect with local services directly or check out postings at www.govolunteer.ca. (Some opportunities may only be open to youth aged 16 and older.)

To access resources which can help youth identify the types of volunteering opportunities that are right for them visit: www.volunteer.ca/youth.

REFERENCES

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2020). *B.C. graduation program policy guide: Grades 10 to 12*. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/support/graduation/graduation-policy-guide.pdf>

Haski-Leventhal, D., Paull, M., Young, S., MacCallum, J., Holmes, K., Omari, M., Scott, R., & Alony, I. (2019). The multidimensional benefits of university student volunteering: Psychological contract, expectations, and outcomes. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 49(1), 113–133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764019863108>

Henderson, A., Pancer, S. M., & Brown, S. D. (2013). Creating effective civic engagement policy for adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 29(1), 120–154. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558413502532>

Schreier, H. M. C., Schonert-Reichl, K. A., & Chen, E. (2013). Effect of volunteering on risk factors for cardiovascular disease in adolescents: A randomized controlled trial. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 167(4), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2013.1100>

Smith, A., Peled, M., Poon, C., Jones, G., Mahdal, D., & McCreary Centre Society. (2020). *Understanding tobacco use and vaping among BC youth: Findings from the BC Adolescent Health Survey*. McCreary Centre Society

Smith, K., Holmes, K., Haski-Leventhal, D., Cnaan, R. A., Handy, F., & Brudney, J. L. (2010). Motivations and benefits of student volunteering: Comparing regular, occasional, and non-volunteers in five countries. *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research*, 1(1), 65–81. <https://doi.org/10.22230/cjnser.2010v1n1a2>

