

Volunteering Is Its Own Reward

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The story
of how I
started

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OUR VOLUNTEERS

volunteering began last year when I saw the events of the Boston Marathon unfold on television. After that day, I felt a strong need to help others, so I decided to volunteer at Food Bank For New York City.

My first project was on Coney Island, packing pantry bags at an elementary school for children to take home as part of Food Bank's ongoing Hurricane Sandy relief efforts. That was just the beginning. I've also helped out at Food Bank's Community Kitchen and Food Pantry in Harlem and I volunteer regularly at other charities within Food Bank's network. At Cathedral Community Cares I help clients get clothes from the Clothing Closet, and at Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger I help make compost and plant seeds in the vegetable gardens. I even appeared in Food Bank's public service announcement, which aired on the NASDAQ building in Times Square throughout the month of September.

When Food Bank issued its "30 For 30 Challenge" last year, challenging volunteers to complete 30 hours of service within the 30 days of September, I decided to take it on in honor of my grandfather,

who was in extremely poor health at the time. The first volunteer to reach 30 hours would win a Caribbean cruise--and I won! The cruise exceeded my expectations. There were so many fun activities on board, from Zumba to stage shows to late night dance parties. I had a wonderful time.

Winning a vacation because I volunteer is great, but simply being able to help other people is the real reward.

Jonathan Kong has been a Food Bank For New York City volunteer for nearly a year.