

Live Longer, Healthier

People who help others are healthier and live longer. That was one of the conclusions of a team headed by Stephen G. Post, professor of bioethics at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, which evaluated 50 scientific studies of volunteers.



One of the studies, from Cornell University, spent 30 years following 427 women who were married and had children. Researchers found that only 36 percent of women who regularly volunteered had experienced a major illness, while 52 percent of those who never volunteered had a major illness.

Other studies indicated that those who volunteered their time lived longer than those who didn't. Frequent volunteers had a 44 percent reduction in early death when compared to non-volunteers.

Scientists also identified precise areas of the brain that are highly active during empathetic and compassionate emotions. "These brain studies show this profound state of joy and delight that comes from giving to others," Post said. "It doesn't come from any dry action – where the act is out of duty in the narrowest sense, like writing a check for a good cause. It comes from working to cultivate a generous quality – from interacting with people. There is the smile, the tone in the voice, the touch on the shoulder. We're talking about altruistic love."

Results of these studies validate what we in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home have learned in practice.

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12).

– Beecher Hunter