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Federal report shows Kansas has highest rate of teenage volunteers in country

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Volunteers in state provide \$1.7 billion worth of services each year

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By salus

By Celia Llopis-Jepsen

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Twice a week, 16-year-old Danielle Welborn helps her parents, Laura and Todd Welborn, coach club volleyball for a group of girls ages 14 and under.

The family does it for free, so their commitment benefits not only Danielle's younger sister, Jessica, who plays on the team, but the rest of the participants, as well. Having volunteer coaches helps keep down the cost of activities like these.

"I chuckle that it's a family commitment," Laura said of it.

Volunteering, has a value or at least quantified. But according to a new federal report, volunteers provide billions of dollars worth of services and resources to the nation each year, and upwards of \$1.7 billion in Kansas.

Moreover, Kansas leads the nation in teenage volunteering, with 41 percent of teens giving their time.

"It makes me less judgmental," Danielle Welborn said Monday, when asked what she appreciates about volunteering.

Her own experiences range from helping her parents coach to handling animals at the Humane Society,

THAD ALLTON/THE CAPITAL JOURNAL
Danielle Welborn, 16, volunteers dozens of hours each month, putting in time at a local animal shelter. She sorts bells for the Salvation Army, sorting food for needy children and helping her parents coach volleyball.

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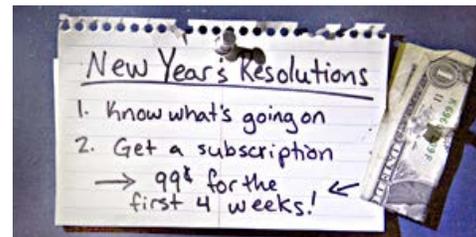
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ringing bells for the Salvation Army and packing backpacks full of [food](#) for needy children. It is that latter experience she said has given her insight into the lives of other families, and understanding for those experiencing economic hardship.

“I feel [more](#) sympathy” for their situation, she said.

On average, she and her mother estimate, Danielle spends about 40 hours a month volunteering, despite her busy schedule of school work and extracurricular activities as a sophomore at Seaman High School.

The annual Volunteering and Civic [Life](#) in America report is based on U.S. Census Bureau statistics and released by the Corporation for National and Community Service — the federal agency in charge of AmeriCorps — and the congressionally chartered National Conference on Citizenship, which aims to strengthen civic life.

This year’s report, published this month, said Kansans volunteered about 82.2 million hours of their time last year.

[Nationwide](#), about a quarter of adults volunteered through organizations, and their efforts were worth about \$173 billion. Volunteering is most common for people between the ages of 35 and 44, and popular volunteer activities include fundraising, serving food, providing transportation and teaching youth.

In Kansas, about 36 percent of residents volunteer — the fourth-highest rate in the country — and 28 percent of Topekans do so.

The Corporation for National and Community Service said volunteers provide “critical support” to nonprofit organizations and their work. Last year it also released the results of a study indicating a link between volunteering and finding [employment](#).

Unemployed individuals had a better chance of finding [jobs](#) if they volunteered, a correlation that was more pronounced in rural areas or among volunteers without a high school diploma.

Danielle and Jessica’s parents, now in their sixth year as volleyball coaches, hope to instill in their daughters the value of volunteering. Increasingly, they have found their daughters taking the initiative to look for opportunities.

“I’ve always encouraged them to do that, but now they ask to do it,” Laura Welborn said. “Hopefully, as they become adults, they’ll be able to pass that on.”

KANSAS VOLUNTEERING IN 2013:

- 82.2 million Volunteer hours
- \$1.7 billion Value of volunteering to Kansas communities
- 36.1 Percent of residents that volunteer
- 39.1 Volunteer hours per capita

COMPARING VOLUNTEER RATES TO OTHER STATES, KANSAS IS:

- No. 1 in teen volunteering
- No. 4 in overall volunteer rates
- No. 13 in volunteer retention
- No. 16 in college student volunteering

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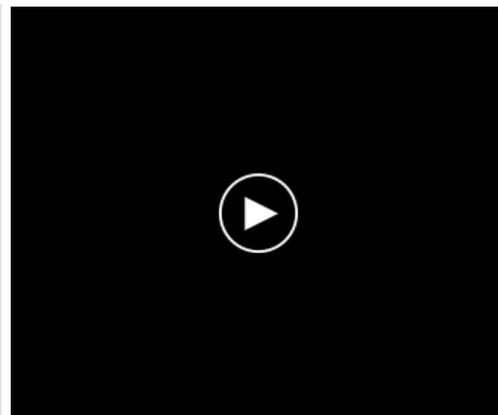
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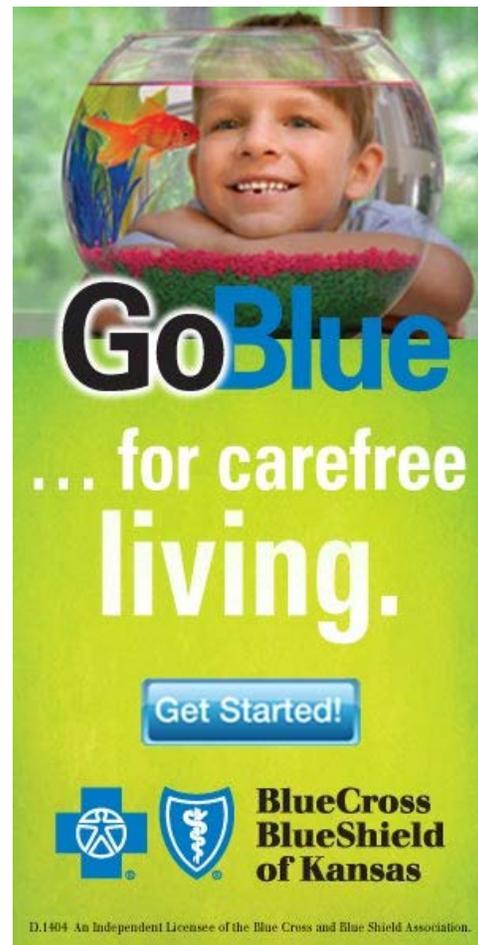
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12/30/14 - 12:42 pm

Federal report shows Kansas has highest rate of teenage volunteer

In this article By Celia Llopis-Jepsen
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I can sense the difficulty for one adolescent to continue being bold and sincere in order to show up as a volunteer when they are declared to be Number One for two reasons : a) I have been among such Number One when I was an adolescent (I defraud each and every person that beleived in me then) , b) In my heart I still see me as one adolescent , c) My father was among the Number One through all his adolescence d) I can follow the example of these Kansans today and my father during his adolescence if I beleive that volunteering is a must and I do .

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