I was only 10 years old when I had my first experience of volunteering.

During my fourth year at primary school my teacher suggested me to help an association called 'Telefono Azzurro'. This is an important association in Italy that helps children without family or that have a very difficult family situation.

We were all so enthusiastic.

During the morning at school we spent two or three hours doing volunteer work, while in the afternoon we spent about three hours going on with the work. In the morning I sold some flowers called hydrangea while in the afternoon I went to some of the biggest supermarkets of my city with my classmates. I picked up alimentary articles from people who wanted to give them to children.

As a volunteer in my primary school, I preserve a memory that it still makes me reflect. After having explained our project of volunteering to a mother with a child, her daughter decided to use some of her savings from her piggy bank to buy some food.

My main task was to explain to people what we were doing and what the purpose was, I was very proud of my role, it made me feel important and of help for people in need. We reached a very high amount of money, about 1.000 euros in food.

At the end of this project I think to have grown up a little more and to have widened my horizons and my way to look at things. Besides I have learned to make team and to direct a group of people.

As Albert Einstein said:” Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile”

I think the personal time spent in volunteering to a cause or for other people, is one of the most beautiful things that you can ever do, for other people but even for you. You can become a better person. Voluntary service helps you to grow up, learn to share with others and can also open your mind to new experiences and learn to be less selfish.

Throughout history, volunteering has evolved into a cultural connection; a common characteristic of humans on a local, national, and global level is the desire to help one another. Although this statement is not necessarily true for every individual, most people feel an urgency to assist friends, family members, coworkers, and/or strangers in need or in crisis. Why should we volunteer? Many people donate their time for different reasons whether it’s fundraising for disaster relief or collecting, preparing, and serving food for a food bank. Volunteers tend to find the imperfections in the world and work towards improving these flaws through acts of kindness, dedication, and selflessness . Helping others without receiving anything in return aids community members, benefits your mind and soul, and, most importantly, “...brings fulfillment and fun to your life".
Volunteering is described as the “...glue that keeps the community together". How can one act of kindness keep a town together? A community needs assistance by a multitude of people: young or old, male or female, Jewish or Muslim… a call for help in the community is for everybody and anyone who feels a desire to contribute to society.

**Maria Antonietta Giancane**