



Make a difference at Lakeland Regional Health

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by Trevor Peters



AS THE SEMESTER IS COMING TO A CLOSE, STUDENTS WILL BEGIN TO SCRAMBLE TO GET THEIR SERVICE HOURS FOR THEIR ORGANIZATIONS. YLAKELAND WANTS TO HELP YOU GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY AND GET THOSE SERVICE HOURS THAT WILL MAKE A HUGE IMPACT ON MANY LIVES.

Lakeland Regional Health always gives back to the Lakeland community, so what better way to say thank you than giving a few hours of your time towards a great cause. If you have a passion for caring, they want you as a volunteer. Volunteering is a great way to get those necessary service hours, and at Lakeland Regional, it has added perks to make sure you feel like a real team member. As a volunteer you can receive 10% off at the cafeteria and gift shop, \$7 meal voucher for every shift you participate in, free valet, a free YMCA membership, and last but certainly not least...FREE STARBUCKS! It's hard to believe that you can have all of these great amenities as a volunteer, but Lakeland Regional wants you to know how valuable you are to them.

We spoke with John Joseph, an active volunteer in the pediatric unit of the hospital, to hear about a day in the life of a Lakeland Regional volunteer.

What does a shift of volunteering look like on an average day?

It all depends on the day and what the kids want to do. Most days I start with making sure the play area is clean and ready for the kids, then hang out with individual children and do whatever they want to do. A lot of the kids like to pick movies and watch them with you or play video games. It's not hard work at all and super enjoyable to see the kids having a great time. The hospital never takes a break, so being there to spend time with kids who can't go out like we can makes a huge difference for everyone in the hospital.

What inspired you to become a volunteer?

The hospital will take all the help they can get, and you don't have to be a student to volunteer, they accept everyone after they pass a background check. I felt that I had the skills to be a great friend to the kids in the hospital and I know how to set up TV's, gaming systems, and just be a friendly face for them to see. My mom was a nurse, so I know that the nurses don't really have time to work on small projects like setting up electronics, so I felt that I could give a few hours of my time so that they could focus on helping the children with their medical needs.

Best part of volunteering?

It's a challenge to get up and do something that you wouldn't normally do, like volunteering, but once you get started, it's amazing to see the impact you have on a child's life. They can't help the situation they are in, and we take for granted some of the things we have in our lives. To give back to these kids and seeing them enjoying your company just by spending genuine time with them is very moving. I would have to say seeing these kids smile is the best part.

What makes you stand out as a Lakeland Regional volunteer?

When you volunteer at Lakeland Regional, you aren't just helping the children during a hard time, you give the parents a break from their constant stress and you help the nurses ease their long and busy days. They all do so much for these children, so to be there for everyone and just give a few hours at a time means so much to them and makes you feel like you're really making a difference in Lakeland. This volunteering opportunity is more than just helping the children feel more comfortable during their difficult situations.

If you cannot volunteer your time, Lakeland Regional also needs some donations to keep the kids

entertained and enjoying their free time with the nurses and volunteers. Some requested items are iTunes & Amazon gift cards for the teenagers, toys & science kits for school-age children, LEGOs, Barbies, toddler toys & anything Paw Patrol and Shimmer & Shine. Coloring books and colored pencils are always a favorite as well! If you want to donate, contact Jillian.Haley@myLRH.org.

Hospitals are active all hours of the day, especially at Lakeland Regional where they are the [fifth largest hospital in Florida](#), so apply today and make a positive impact in your community!

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