

What's next



Life at Nuance

Two Nuance employees make the earth a little bit cleaner

Read a heartwarming story about a Nuance family that used their annual Volunteer Time Off to clean up a local park in honor of National Volunteer Month and Earth Day.

Meredith Mascolo

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April is [National Volunteer Month](#) and this week is [Earth Day](#), and what better way to honor them than picking up trash in a local park? My husband and I both work at Nuance, and we decided to take some of our [Nuance Cares program](#) Volunteer Time Off (“VTO”) together with our 11-year-old son on a gorgeous spring day.

Cleaning up litter reminded me of an Easter egg hunt – only instead of searching for pretty little eggs, we looked for ugly, gross garbage. Turns out kids love to find stuff, no matter how smelly (or gross) it is! As we collected old bottles, cigarette butts, and receipts, my son asked, “why don’t people throw trash in the garbage can, and recycle their bottles and cans?” I didn’t have an answer for him, and it’s a good question. Disposing of trash in the correct way seems like a simple act!

When you have time to concentrate on a repetitive task like picking up trash, you have time to clear your mind and think. The empty bottles, candy wrappers, bags, and other odds and ends were thrown away with no regard for our environment, and the more I picked up, the sadder and angrier I got. I thought of Earth Day, and how if we all just pitched in a little bit like my family did today, the world would be a better place. It motivated me to pick up even more garbage.



I also thought about the important Volunteer Time Off, and how grateful I was to have time away from my work to give my attention to something else that really matters. I’m also so glad we had the chance to volunteer together using our VTO as a family. With our busy lives, it might not have happened if we hadn’t planned it. Making our park more beautiful made a difference to the people in our town. A few of them even stopped us and thanked us! This gratitude made the three of us feel so good about our clean-up. And I loved the lesson it taught my son – that we should all do something good in the world, whether it’s cleaning up a park, sorting items at a food pantry, or tutoring a child. By the time we stuffed the last yucky candy wrapper into our bag, we were already talking about what type of volunteering we should do next!

In the spirit of Earth Day and National Volunteering Month, here are my tips:

1. **Take VTO with your kids.** Volunteering is an incredible teaching opportunity. Show them that volunteering is important and that we all should do it – then make it part of their normal lives. And ask them questions while volunteering to instigate further discussion. The more engaged and thoughtful they are, the better!


2. **Remember your volunteering.** Picking up trash stuck in my mind afterward and now I pay more attention to litter on the ground! And I notice when I see people missing the trash can and walking away, unaware. Your volunteering experiences will carry over beyond that day – keep them in the forefront of your mind! Socialize it with your friends and family.

3. **Find little ways to make the world better outside of VTO.** You don't have to take VTO to keep your neighborhoods free of garbage. Take a bag with you to the park and clean up once in a while! I leave them in my car. Weave small acts of doing good into your life, however you can.

At the end of the day, I asked my son, "What did you like best about our cleanup?" he answered, "it was fun and it was good for the earth." As a parent, I felt proud that he understood the value of volunteering after this cleanup – and I was grateful that my husband and I were able to take our VTO together. It was a win-win all around!

Tags: [Nuance Cares](#), [Volunteering](#), [VTO](#)

More Information

	<p>Learn about the Nuance Cares program and our impact on communities around the globe.</p> <p>Come join Team Nuance – you'll be able to spend 16 volunteer hours a year on a cause or non-profit organization that matters to you.</p> <p>Learn more</p>
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About Meredith Mascolo

Meredith joined Nuance in 2013 and is the Senior Manager, Communications. A perfect job for her, as she loves words, puns and idioms. She's also the community manager for our company intranet. Meredith earned a B.M. in music education from Oberlin Conservatory and a M.S. in Administrative Studies, Innovation and Technology from Boston University. She is a classically trained violinist who enjoys playing her 5-string electric at yoga classes and other musical projects. She loves reading, cooking and yoga.

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