x2VOL Helps Spur Community Service for Texas High School

Saving time in tracking & reporting

At Justin Wakeland High School in Frisco, Texas, the number of students taking part in community service is on the rise—and Wakeland guidance counselor Kristy Phipps attributes this increase, in part, to software that makes it easy for students to track and report their service hours.

Located some 30 miles north of Dallas, the Frisco Independent School District encourages community service by honoring high school students who have completed 100 hours of service for a nonprofit organization with a special cord and recognition when they graduate.

At Wakeland, Phipps estimates that more than half of the school's nearly 1,900 students take part in some community service during their high school years—and she has seen that number grow since Wakeland began using x2VOL, an award-winning software platform from the Texas-based firm intelliVOL, to simplify the tracking and reporting of students' service hours.

"I think we've seen a growth in community service because we've made it a little more convenient for them," she says. Growing participation is always on the administration's list of goals and x2VOL has really helped, in more ways than one.

Students profoundly changed

Wakeland High School students work with a number of local nonprofit organizations to earn their service hours, all of which offer a unique opportunity for personal growth.

"In our community, we have a local food bank called Frisco Family Services," Phipps says. "Lots of our kids will go down there and help stock the pantry, clean the pantry, and pass out food." Students also volunteer at the city library, the local science center, or at other schools within the district.

Phipps has seen many students profoundly changed by their community service experience. They have become more appreciative of what they have, more attentive to others' needs, and more invested in their community and how they can help others succeed. And that, in turn, has led to more personal success as well.

"The kids who I find are the most affected are the ones who work with people who aren't as blessed as they are," she says. "We're a fairly affluent community. We tend to live in this bubble sometimes, and it's good for them because that bubble needs to pop, so they can see what life is like for others. Not everybody is given what they want. Some people aren't even given what they need."

KEY POINTS

Justin Wakeland High School in Frisco, Texas has seen **more students** participate in a voluntary community service program since it adopted x2VOL to simplify reporting.

Students who volunteer at least 100 hours for a nonprofit organization receive special **recognition** when they graduate.

Before x2VOL, reporting community service hours required a "tedious paper trail."

With x2VOL, students now have an easy way to report their service hours and **find volunteering opportunities**—while administrators also save time in tracking their hours and verifying their participation.

"It used to be just the overachievers who did community service," says guidance counselor Kristy Phipps. "Now, more kids are getting involved because it is so **accessible**."

Phipps estimates x2VOL has **cut** the amount of time she spends on processing community service data by as much as 40%.

x2VOL

powered by ● intelliVOL

Read more success stories at intelliVOL.com

866.906.6400 or support@intelliVOL.com

While some students initially might be motivated by their parents or by the recognition that comes from the district when they graduate, "in the end, I find that most of our kids really want to give back to their community," Phipps says.

And she's glad that her school now has a system that makes doing so easier than ever.

No more 'tedious paper trail'

Before Wakeland began using x2VOL, tracking and reporting students' community service hours was a very cumbersome process.

"We had a form that the students had to fill out, and they could print it off of our website," says Phipps. The students would describe their activities and how many hours they worked, and they would include the contact information for someone at the nonprofit organization who could verify their participation.

> "I can go into x2VOL and post the opportunity... That's one of the features I like the best."

School officials would collect these forms and keep them in folders organized alphabetically by grade level. "It was a tedious paper trail," Phipps says. And, Wakeland is not alone. Many schools report that paperwork for community service threatened to bury them before they discovered x2VOL.

Wakeland started using x2VOL four years ago, and the software has simplified the process tremendously for both students and staff. There is less paperwork for students and administrators, approvals and verifications are performed digitally and reports can be generated at the press of a button.

With x2VOL, students log into the platform and record their community service activities using a secure online form. The system keeps a running tally of their service hours, and it sends an automated message to the appropriate nonprofit contact, requesting verification that they volunteered.

Students can log into the system through any internet-connected computer or through a mobile app that is available for both Android and iOS devices. This fits with students digital, on-the-go lifestyle.

Students "love the app and use it a lot," Phipps says, noting that it has made their reporting of service hours much more convenient and accurate.

Another way x2VOL has made community service easier for students is by helping them find more opportunities to volunteer. Phipps and her colleagues can post information about new community service opportunities directly within the system, giving students a central repository for this information. "People will send out emails saying, 'We have this event that's going on, and we need some volunteers, and I can go into x2VOL and post the opportunity," she says. "That's one of the features I like the best."

The system also saves time for administrators. Phipps estimates that she spends 40% less time processing students' community service information since Wakeland started using x2VOL.

"It used to be just the overachievers who did community service," Phipps concludes. "Now, more kids are getting involved, because it is so accessible."

If x2VOL is the catalyst for this change, "then I am OK with that," she says, "because it opens their eyes." And, x2VOL helps students help the community.