

TIME BANK

WHAT IS A TIME BANK?



A time bank is both a system and a community that encourages us to use time and talent, rather than dollars and cents, as currency. Time banks are built upon the basic premise that we all have skills to offer, and skills for which we need to rely on others. By participating in a time bank, we are pledging to build community, break down barriers, and to simply help each other.

Time banking offers a way to connect unmet needs with untapped resources while promoting reciprocity rather than volunteerism. For every hour you spend helping someone, a Time Dollar is deposited into your account. A Time Dollar is withdrawn for every hour you receive help from someone else. Every hour is worth one Time Dollar, regardless of the services or skills exchanged.

Building a small surplus or a small debt of Time Dollars is okay, as time banking is intended to help its members in *real* ways, and sometimes in *real* life we need more than we can offer. Other times we can offer more because we need less.

WHAT ARE THE CORE VALUES OF TIME BANKING?

Time Banks USA (an international organization invested in mentoring, supporting, and connecting time banks across the world) works to promote five core values through time banking:

-Assets: We are all assets.

Every human being has something to contribute.

-Redefining Work: Some work is beyond price.

Work has to be redefined to value whatever it takes to raise healthy children, build strong families, revitalize neighborhoods, make democracy work, advance social justice, and make the planet sustainable. That kind of work needs to be honored, recorded, and rewarded.

-Reciprocity: Helping works better as a two-way street.

The question: “How can I help you?” needs to change so we ask: “How can we help each other build the world we both will live in?”

-Social Networks: We need each other.

Networks are stronger than individuals. People helping each other reweaves communities of support, strength, and trust. Community is built upon sinking roots, building trust, creating networks. Special relationships are built on commitment.

-Respect: Every human being matters.

Respect underlies freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and everything we value. Respect supplies the heart and soul of democracy. When respect is denied to anyone, we are all injured. We must respect where people are in the moment, not where we hope they will be at some future point.

RESOURCES

The Core Values of Time Banking and other information can be found on Time Bank USA's website: www.timebanks.org

Please visit the site if you are interested in learning more about starting or joining a time bank.

HOW DOES THE TIME BANK ACTUALLY WORK?



Each participant in the time bank is given access to the time bank website. Once on the website, you can post requests for services, offer your skills, or read the requests and offerings from other members.

You can then communicate with members through the website to discuss the details of a request or offer, make arrangements for the exchange, and, finally, log your hours to either deposit or withdraw time from your account.

Time Bank exchanges do not have to be reciprocal (though they certainly can be); you do not need to help someone who has just helped you. You can choose to use your Time Dollars towards transactions with any member of the Time Bank.

It is also possible to receive Time Dollars for helping non-time bank members and for participating in Time Bank community-building events.

WHAT SERVICES CAN BE OFFERED OR REQUESTED?

We are in the process of meeting with the necessary people and departments on campus as we work to create the Bryn Mawr College Time Bank guidelines. Once we finish this stage of planning, we will be able to provide participants with a comprehensive set of rules to govern time bank exchanges.

In community-based time banks, participants have shared a large range of talents and skills including:

- Childcare
- Cooking/baking
- Professions skills or advice
- Foreign languages
- Home improvement
- Transportation
- Computer skills
- Pet care
- Arts and crafts
- Fitness and exercise
- Car care
- Sports
- Book clubs
- Photography
- Literacy skills
- Garden and yard work
- Respite care
- Instruments
- Diet and nutrition
- Board games
- Odd jobs
- Errands
- Travel arrangements
- Yoga and meditation
- Carpentry
- ...and the list goes on.

HOW MUCH TIME DO I HAVE TO COMMIT TO THE TIME BANK?

That is your decision! While a time bank can only grow if all of its members are active participants, you are encouraged to determine the frequency and length of your exchanges based on your schedule. You are not required to commit a certain number of hours per week, month, or semester, but you are encouraged to seek help when you need it, and to help others when you can.

If you are interested in learning more about Time Banks USA, visit their website at www.timebanks.org. If you are interested in learning more about the plans for the Bryn Mawr College Time Bank, contact Jessica Hollinger Vinson at jholling@bmc. We are currently finalizing the program details and planning the initial Time Bank Pilot Program. A launch date for the official BMC Time Bank has not yet been determined.