

# Samaritan Scout's AI-Powered Search Engine Marks One Year Anniversary

*Volunteer tech gets an upgrade:  
Nonprofit-run AI platform uncovers  
hyperlocal service activities across 9  
states including NY, NJ, MN, UT, WI, and  
DC.*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, July 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Samaritan Scout](https://www.samaritanscout.org/), a volunteer-run nonprofit operating on a shoestring budget, launched the nation's first AI-powered search engine dedicated exclusively to in-person volunteer opportunities one year ago today. By leveraging cutting-edge technology to analyze nonprofit websites, the platform offers the most comprehensive view of local volunteering activity available online. Since its launch, it has expanded to serve New Jersey, New York, Utah, Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, North Dakota, the DMV (Washington DC, Virginia, Maryland) and Seattle, Washington.



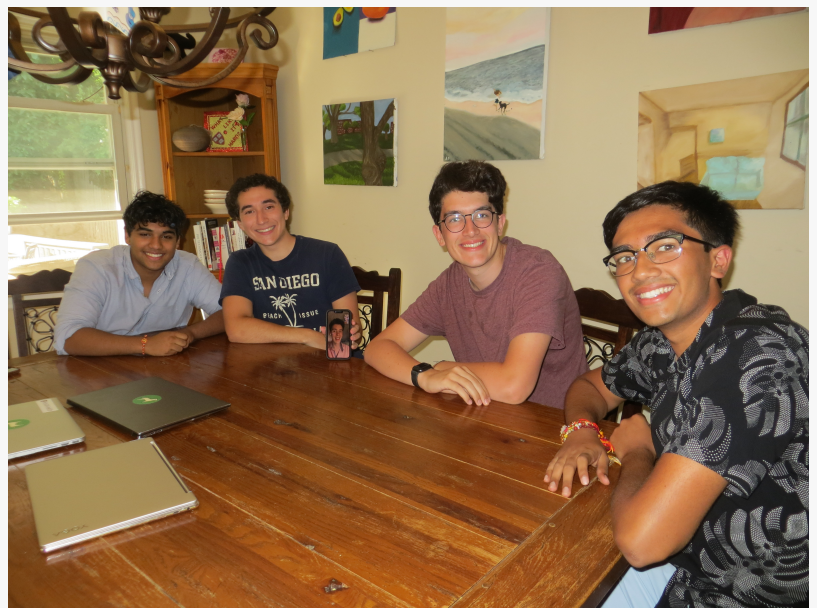
Samaritan Scout

Prior to the launch of Samaritan Scout, the online infrastructure for discovering volunteer opportunities had remained largely unchanged for two decades. It consisted of a patchwork of directory websites—often funded by AmeriCorps or the Points of Light Foundation—such as VolunteerMatch/Idealist and state-based portals like [state-name]Cares.org. These directories rely on nonprofits to manually submit listings and, therefore, reflect a small fraction of what's truly available in local communities.

General search engines also fall short. They frequently overlook the simple websites maintained by the majority of the country's one million+ small nonprofits. Comparative tests show that for every 50 relevant opportunities surfaced by Samaritan Scout, Google surfaces just one using the same keywords and location.

## Sample Comparisons:

- Summit, New Jersey: Scout identifies more than 100 local volunteer activities within five miles; comparable directories list fewer than five.
- In Madison, Wisconsin: Scout displays over 200 opportunities; directory websites list just 61, 30% of which promote out-of-state advertisements.
- Sioux Falls, South Dakota: Scout finds 80+ local opportunities; directory websites present only ten.



Scout's dev team: Pradhi Pakkerakari, Will Rosenthal, Wyatt Sell (on phone), Jack Greenwald, Akash Dubey

Samaritan Scout was co-founded in 2023 by Dvora Inwood and Will Rosenthal. Inwood previously served as the founding educator of multiple award-winning charter schools in Los Angeles—including Larchmont Charter and Valley Charter—before transitioning to edtech product leadership roles in New York City. After a Stage

“

Our 20 year-old volunteering infrastructure fails to support small nonprofits or today's volunteers. Scout brings visibility and data, providing civic connection at scale-at a fraction of the cost.”

*Will Rosenthal*

IV colon cancer diagnosis sidelined her full-time career, Inwood joined forces with Rosenthal, then a high school senior and now a Cornell University computer science student, to build a more modern civic infrastructure for volunteering.

Rosenthal designed the entire backend architecture and assembled a team of fellow Cornell engineers—including full-stack developer Wyatt Sell and data engineer Pradhi Pakkerakari. The group built a functioning AI-powered backend system in under three months. With the help of UX designer Kavita Mahabaleshwarkar, Inwood led the

frontend team of [student volunteers](#) to bring the user-facing platform to life.

“We knew we didn’t need millions of dollars to solve this problem,” said Rosenthal. “We needed focus, technical rigor, and the right team.”

Following the platform’s initial launch in New York and New Jersey, Rosenthal scaled the platform to incorporate 10 states. Wyatt Sell assumed tech lead responsibilities, refining the automated data pipeline, improving performance, and adapting Scout’s core methodology to support international use in countries like [Israel](#). “We’ve made something that’s flexible, scalable, and

more inclusive of real volunteer needs than anything that's out there," said Sell.

With additional volunteers and student interns joining the team this summer, the nonprofit is preparing for nationwide rollout.

With volunteer participation in the U.S. at its lowest level since tracking began, Scout's data-driven approach arrives at a critical moment. Decreased funding for civic institutions creates an opening for communities to step up—and for public and private funders to rethink how volunteer infrastructure is resourced.



Scout's team volunteers in local parks

"Until now, the federal government and major funders have poured money into a 20-year-old infrastructure that hasn't adapted to the needs of small nonprofits or modern volunteers," said Rosenthal. "With better visibility and better data, Scout is ready to support civic connection at scale—and at a fraction of the cost."

Research from institutions like More in Common and the Aspen Institute confirms that cross-class and cross-ideological relationships are key to civic health. Volunteering builds these relationships—not just by serving others, but by uniting those who serve.

"As civic trust breaks down, platforms like Scout make it easier to rebuild it from the ground up," Inwood added. "Now's a good time for all of us to get out in our communities, stand shoulder to shoulder and work together to build a better tomorrow."

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