

# **Service Learning in the K-12 Classroom**

**A Handbook for Teachers**



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# The Value of Service Learning in the Classroom

Students who participate in service learning are less likely to engage in "risky" behaviors.

Students who participated in service learning earned higher standardized test scores on Indiana's state assessment of math and English skills in third and eighth-grade than those who did not participate.

Students who engaged in high-quality service learning developed positive work attitudes and skills.

Educators and students in schools with strong service learning programs reported more positive school climate as a result of a feeling of greater connectedness to the school, as well as decreased teacher turnover and increased teacher collegiality.

Students who engaged in high-quality service learning showed an increase in awareness of community needs, believed that they could *make a difference*, and were committed to service now and later in life.

"I love helping the kindergarteners. My favorite thing is helping them learn how to count, and teaching them their colors. This reminds me of when I was in kindergarten. When I go to the kindergarten room I feel like I'm a teacher. I feel that they look up to me."  
– 6<sup>th</sup> grader, George Washington Community School

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# Introduction

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Across the country, partnerships between schools and communities are becoming important tools for educating today's youth. In an effort to help youth learn through service and experience, develop a sense of civic responsibility, and relate what they are learning in the classroom to the context of the real world, these partnerships allow for the larger community to become an extension of the classroom. A school-community partnership that deliberately and effectively links student learning to service in the community is called service learning. Service learning enhances the educational experience of students while communities benefit from the involvement of students in the community.

This handbook provides basic information about service learning to K-12 teachers so that they can successfully implement and integrate service learning into their classrooms. The handbook provides an introduction to service learning, its purpose, its benefits, and its many components. Also, it contains information on resources that can develop a teacher's knowledge of service learning and help teachers understand how it can be used in a K-12 setting.

Although there are specific elements that are necessary in any quality service learning project, no two service learning projects are alike. The creativity of teachers, students, and community partners is central to creating engaging service learning projects.

This handbook was created out of partnership between the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) Center for Service and Learning's Office of Neighborhood Partnerships, Indianapolis Public Schools, George Washington Community School, and the communities of the near Westside. The initial project was used to initiate the implementation of service learning in middle school classrooms at George Washington Community School. The project was funded through a grant from the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Community Partnerships that was designed to support the development of Community-Higher Education-Schools Partnerships that focus on community-based learning.

At Hawthorne, we learned a lot of things. One of the things that we learned is that the people from Hawthorne can tell us what to do to not get in trouble in the future. We learned that seniors like to play cards, bingo, and dice. It doesn't matter what age you are, you can have fun at any age. These are just some of the things that we learned.

-6<sup>th</sup> grade English as a New Language Class  
George Washington Community School

# What is Service Learning?

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Service learning has been defined by several organizations, experts, and governmental entities. Below, you can find definitions of service learning from a variety of perspectives.

Service learning is a “credit bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of the course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility and personal values. Unlike extracurricular voluntary service, service learning is a course-based experience that produces the best outcomes when meaningful service activities are related to course materials through reflection activities such as directed writings, small group discussions, and class presentations.” (Bringle, R. G. & Hatcher, J.A.; 1996, “Implementing service learning in higher education” *Journal of Higher Education*, 67, page 222)

The National Commission on Service Learning in a report titled *Learning in Deed: The Power of Service learning for American Schools* offers a definition of service learning that incorporated the most essential features common to service learning across the country. According to the Commission, service learning is different from volunteerism in that it is "a teaching *and* learning approach that integrates community service *with* academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.”

In 1990, the Corporation for National and Community Service noted that service learning:

- Promotes learning through active participation in service experiences
- Provides structured time for students to reflect by thinking, discussing and/or writing about their service experience
- Provides an opportunity for students to use skills and knowledge in real-life situations
- Extends learning beyond the classroom and into the community
- Fosters a sense of caring for others

*\*Adapted from the National and Community Service Act of 1990*

# Impact of Service Learning

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Research on service learning is beginning to provide support for what practitioners have long believed – service learning works. Below is a list of service learning benefits organized by area of impact.

## **Personal and social development**

- Service learning has a positive effect on the personal development of public school youth.
- Students who participate in service learning are less likely to engage in "risk" behaviors.
- Service learning has a positive effect on student's interpersonal development and their ability to relate to culturally diverse groups.

## **Civic responsibility**

- Students who participated in high-quality service learning showed an increase in awareness of community needs, believed that they could make a difference, and were committed to service now and later in life.

## **Academic learning**

- Students who participated in service learning earned higher standardized test scores on Indiana's state assessment in third and eighth-grade math and English than those who did not participate and developed positive work attitudes and skills.
- Elementary and middle school students who participated in service learning had improved problem-solving skills and increased interest in academics.
- Students who engaged in high-quality service learning showed an increase perception of their accomplishments and better homework completion.

## **Career exploration and aspirations**

- Students who participated in service learning reported gaining career and communication skills, along with increases in knowledge of career opportunities.
- Students who engaged in high-quality service learning developed positive work attitudes and skills.

## **Schools**

- Educators and students in schools with strong service learning programs reported more positive school climate as a result of a feeling of greater connectedness to the school, as well as decreased teacher turnover and increased teacher collegiality.
- Teachers and students in schools with high-quality service learning programs reported an increase in mutual respect.

\* Shelley Billig, "Research on K-12 School-Based Service learning: The Evidence Builds". View full article at [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org).

# The Service Learning Process

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The remainder of this handbook will take you through areas related to implementing your service learning project: assessing community need, identifying community partners, project planning, funding, reflection, celebration/recognition, and evaluation/assessment. Careful planning is essential to the success of your service learning project. Your best strategy will be to learn as much as you can about service learning and then to thoughtfully make decisions about how to design the experience. Use this guide as part of your learning process in addition to visiting the many web sites (listed on pages 19-25) dedicated to the practice of service learning.

## 1. **Assessing Community Need**

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To ensure that both students and the community benefit from their service, the service activities must meet two criteria. First, the service should meet a *real* community need that is identified by community residents or representatives. Second, students are involved in selecting the community issue/need and planning the service in a manner that enhances their experience. Students will have a much richer and more rewarding experience when they have the opportunity to solve problems that concern them, and to serve people they care about.

Finding a meaningful and useful project requires some research on the part of the teacher, the community, and possibly the students. Are there community groups that could use a helping hand? What are some areas in the community that need development? Brainstorm with students about possibilities. They may be aware of additional resources.

### **Consider the following:**

- What are the pressing issues in the community or school?
- Which unmet needs are students and teachers most concerned about?
- Which agencies in the community are addressing the pressing issues and how can they serve as resources or service sites for student research and action?
- Why does this problem exist? What are the root causes?
- What are some action steps we can take to address the problem?
- What are students learning in class that will help address the problem, or, how can we extend our classroom learning into the community to help or educate others about the problem?
- How can student learning either help make connections with other people in need, or help others grow, develop and learn?

### **Key partners**

The following persons may have needs or ideas about possible projects. They also could have resources available, including financial and technical assistance, sponsorship, or expertise.

- Business people
- Personal contacts (e.g., friends, family, co-workers)

- Community groups (e.g., neighborhood associations)
- Nonprofit organizations (e.g., community centers, Boys & Girls clubs)
- Public agencies (e.g., parks department, police department, library)
- Community leaders
- Parent advisory groups
- Universities or colleges

### **Ways to involve students in community assessment**

- Take a walking tour of the surrounding neighborhood and have students point out problems that they notice.
- Have students use maps of the neighborhood to identify significant resources and potential service sites (e.g., parks, churches, community centers, schools, libraries).
- Give students a short survey asking them to identify problems in their community.
- Read a book about a particular issue (e.g., pollution, diversity, health) and have a discussion about how the issue is present in their community.
- Have students look at web-based neighborhood demographic information (e.g., census data; data sets that include local parks, community centers, and other neighborhood assets; crime stats from police department). This type of information can often be accessed through a city or state government web-sites (e.g., Social Assets Vulnerability Inventory [www.SAVI.org](http://www.SAVI.org)).

### **Ideas for involving community members in an assessment**

- Invite a resident, government official, or community leader to speak to students about pressing issues or problems in the community.
- Visit a local community center to learn about the services they provide.
- Have students develop a survey for community residents about community issues.
- Invite high school seniors to the classroom to discuss how the local community has changed over the years, for better or worse.
- Invite students' families to the classroom for a discussion about the local community.

## ***2. Community Partnerships***

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Establishing effective partnerships among agencies, schools, universities, businesses, government, and residents within the community is a vital part of youth service in America. Service learning collaborations provide students with an increased confidence in their ability to show the community that young people can and will make valuable contributions.

By working together, communities can reach a larger population, avoid duplication of efforts, make better use of resources, and deal with issues faced by communities and their youth more effectively. Whether it is schools partnering with volunteer centers, community based organizations partnering with business, or youth groups partnering with nursing homes, the potential for productive and effective partnerships can be enhanced through service learning.

The initial step of identifying and getting to know a community partner can take time. However, once this relationship has been developed it will make future projects with the community partner much easier. It is important to take the time to meet face-to-face with potential community partners so that you can learn about their organization, community partners develop an understanding of the educational objectives of the students, and all parties develop a rapport that will allow each to comfortably address any issues or concerns that may arise during implementation of the project.

## **Steps to creating successful partnerships**

### *1. Identify potential partners*

- Schools
- Youth service organizations
- Nonprofit organizations
- Businesses
- Recipients of services
- Individuals

### *2. Identify issues which are of mutual interest and concern*

- Complete an asset map and/or needs assessment of the community with students and agency representatives

### *3. Determine individuals who will serve as primary liaisons in the planning and implementation process*

- Assign student coordinators
- Visit agencies ahead of time

### *4. Negotiate and agree upon desired outcomes for each stakeholder:*

- Recipients of volunteer services
- Student/youth volunteers
- Nonprofit organizations
- Educational institution
- Others

### *5. Negotiate and agree upon roles and responsibilities for:*

- Recipients of volunteer services
- Student/youth volunteers
- Nonprofit organizations
- Educational institution
- Others

### *6. Determine best method for on-going supervision, monitoring, and evaluation*

### *7. Periodically redesign relationships based on changing needs and circumstances*

\* To learn more read *Building Sustainable Partnerships* from National Society for Experiential Education, available at [www.nsee.org](http://www.nsee.org), and *Building Effective Partnerships for Service Learning* available at [www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org).

### 3. *Project Planning*

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Consider the following four areas as a general framework for your service learning project planning. It may be helpful to develop your own chart or checklist to include all of the essential elements of service learning. Appendix 1 provides a sample chart that can be used in planning a service learning project to ensure that all elements are included in its design.

**Preparation** includes planning service activities and providing students with the knowledge needed to participate in and benefit from the service activity. Prior to service, teachers should work with students to:

- Identify the community issues and needs they would like to address. It is a good idea to include the students and well as community representatives in this process.
- Select and plan the specific service activities so that they relate to specific learning outcomes. It is important to consider how the service learning project will relate to state educational standards. What will the students learn from participation in the project? Will they improve their writing skills by writing a paper about their project? Will they develop an understanding of the ecosystem by participating in a park clean up and learning how water run off from parks and streets feeds into local streams and rivers causing the pollution of local waterways? Will they learn about how a bill becomes a law by organizing a letter writing campaign to lobby local government officials to support a new homeless shelter? Will they learn new math skills by creating a budget for their project?
- Identify and enlist the assistance of service agencies. Having a strong relationship with community partners will help insure the success of your service learning project. Make sure you take time to develop these relationships.
- Receive content area instruction and specific training you will need to conduct the service activity. It is important to take time to prepare students before the actual service learning project begins. This preparation time can help them develop worthwhile skills and knowledge just as much as the actual project.

**Action** is the service itself. The project must:

- Be meaningful to both the students and the community. Consider what each will get out of their participation in the project. The more involved students and community partner are in identifying and planning the project, the more invested they will be in making it a success and the more meaningful the project will be to them.
- Have academic integrity. There must be a link between the service learning project and course learning objectives. Identify what state standards can be addressed through various aspects of the project. There should be structured activities that allow students to make reflective comparisons between knowledge gained in the classroom and knowledge gained from their service activities.
- Be developmentally appropriate for the student participants. Consider whether the project is too easy or too challenging for the student participants.
- Allow for student ownership. Students should be encouraged to ask questions and make observations about their service experience to bring a fresh knowledge

to classroom discussions and share perspectives that can relate to the curriculum.

- Have adequate supervision. Enlist the help of other teachers, staff, classroom assistants, parents, and community partner staff so there are enough adults to supervise the students while they are engaging in activities in the community.

**Reflection** is the structured opportunity for students to critically think about their service experience and apply their learning in a broader academic, social, and personal context. Reflection activities also provide additional opportunities to link academic work with service activities. There are many different types of reflection activities including: discussions, writing, readings, artistic expression, and presentations (see page 8).

**Celebration** recognizes the students' contributions. It also provides closure to the service activity. Celebrations may include: school assemblies, special media coverage, and joint celebrations with service partners, certificates, and parties.

\*Taken from *Pocket Guide to Service Learning*, National Dropout Prevention Center, Clemson University, and *Service Learning-Making a World of Difference for Students*, Georgia Department of Education, February, 1997.

## **4. Funding**

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The search for funding is a step-by-step process that requires significant planning and follow through. First, you must have a clear idea of the project or program you want to fund. Second, you must research potential funders. Third, you must contact the potential funder. And finally, you must formally apply for financial support and properly follow through with the project.

A number of resources are available for teachers and administrators seeking funding in education. The Foundation Center, a national clearinghouse for organizations that fund nonprofit and community service work, offers comprehensive information on foundations, corporate giving, and related subjects. Additionally, many public libraries keep grant seekers' resource materials at the reference desk. Check with the administrative offices of a school system; they sometimes have funding or know of funding resources to support special initiatives such as service learning.

Many grant seekers overlook private-sector funding sources and individual donors. Local businesses, community foundations, and private donors often support school or community programs. Corporations with offices in your community make a good starting point. Some businesses allocate donations to the community in their annual budgets.

Most philanthropic organizations and many corporations have structures in place to fairly distribute a portion of their assets. They have grant applications, deadlines, and guidelines describing what kinds of programs they are interested in funding. Do not waste your time and their time approaching foundations or corporations that do not include your needs in their guidelines. Funders rarely make exceptions to their grant policies.

## 5. Reflection

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Reflection is one of the most important elements of successful service learning, but it is often the element that teachers who are new to service learning struggle with the most. "Reflection is the use of creative and critical thinking skills to help prepare for, succeed in, and learn from service experience, and to examine the larger picture and context in which service occurs." - Jim and Pam Toole, Compass Institute

It is important that students are given an opportunity to reflect before, during and after a service learning project, so that they will be prepared to shape the course of their service learning project and handle questions and issues as they arise. Pre-reflection prior to the service experience is especially important if the students will be visiting an unfamiliar environment such as a nursing home where they will deal with a geriatric population, some of whom may be ill. Other environments that require pre-reflection activities are hospitals, hospices, animal shelters, homeless shelters, and soup kitchens. All of these places can bring students face-to-face with an aspect of life that may be new, and perhaps, frightening to them.

One way to ensure that students are properly prepared to enter a diverse community setting would be to invite a representative of the agency to the classroom prior to the project and introduce the students to some of the issues and circumstances of the population they will interact with during the project.

Personal journals are a common means of reflection during and after a service learning activity. Although there is nothing wrong with using journals for reflection, students tend to get bored with frequent exercises that only involve unstructured journal writing. To enhance journal writing, try one of these alternative journal activities:

### Classroom journal

In this exercise, students reflect upon their classmates' and teacher's journal entries. Prompt your students by writing the first entry. Then, each day, have different students take the journal home and write an entry that reflects upon the most recent contribution before their own.

### Community journal

A community journal is one that the students share with the community agency staff or community members during a service learning project. At the agency or work site, students ask community members to add an entry to the journal about their project experience or work at the agency. To get the ball rolling, you should prompt the community members with journaling ideas. Try to collect as many community entries as there are students in your class. After the service learning project is over, assign students different community entries upon which to reflect and respond.

### Key phrase journal

In this type of journal, students are asked to integrate terms and key phrases within their journal entries. The teacher can provide a list of terms for students to use. Students could also create their own list of key phrases to include. Journal entries are written within the framework of the curriculum and become an observation of how class information is evident in the service experience.

**Classroom discussions** can be one of the most stimulating forms of reflection for service learning. Discussing real-world issues and themes that are relevant to the service learning project provides students with an opportunity to explore critical thinking skills, communication skills, and current events with their peers. Here are a few suggestions for making your classroom discussions more exciting and productive:

- Invite a community representative to lead the discussion.
- Have each student take a turn at leading the discussion.
- Cut out articles from the newspaper that relate to the service learning project and have the students discuss the broader issues that are involved.
- Videotape each discussion and make a reflective video at the end of the project, so that students remember the issues discussed and the results of each discussion.
- Have students bring an object related to the service learning project (e.g., tool, photograph) to the discussion and share the relevance of the object to their service learning experience.

**Visual arts** are another way to introduce creative reflection into your classroom. Paint and paper or digital media can be very compelling mediums for both younger and older students to express their thoughts about their service learning experiences. Any of these ideas can help get you started:

#### Photographic Journal

Instead of having students simply write in journals, have them take photographs of the service learning project and write journal entries in response to their photographs.

#### Project Website

Many students have a great knack for website design. As your project progresses, creating a website can allow students to share their service learning project with parents, students, community members, and project partners.

#### Bulletin Boards

School bulletin boards that are in public areas of the school can be a great way for students to share their service learning project with the student body, teachers, and school administration. Have your class adopt one of the school's bulletin boards and keep everyone updated about what is going on with their service learning projects. Students can take pictures of the project and post them, as well as post other literature related to the project, such as thank-you letters from community members.

Whatever form of reflection you use in your service learning project, remember that it is just as important as the service itself. Reflection connects the service learning project to the curriculum and meets educational objectives and academic standards.

“Think out of the box” in terms of how you approach reflection and in no time you'll have your students reflecting before, during, and after every service learning project without even realizing it!

\* From the Pennsylvania Service Learning Alliance [www.psla.org](http://www.psla.org)

## **6. *Celebration/Recognition***

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Young people engaged in service often benefit from public recognition. Recognition makes youth feel good about what they have done; it also strengthens their self-esteem and can provide closure to projects. When youth feel good about their involvement they are motivated and likely to stay involved. In addition to the individual benefits described above, recognition can bring visibility to your program. This can lead to new volunteers, increased community support, or even new funding opportunities.

Effective recognition takes planning. Here are some tips for creating an effective recognition component:

- Involve youth in designing and implementing recognition activities
- Reward young leaders with opportunities to take on more responsibility
- Make it fun
- Avoid doing the same recognition over and over (unless it is always a big hit)
- Follow the interests of the youth involved in your program
- Honor individuality
- Make recognition sincere and personal

## **7. *Assessment/Evaluation***

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The assessment or evaluation of your service learning project can be formal or informal. You may use a simple survey or have a discussion with participants to reflect on what went well, or what could have been better. More formal evaluations may include rubrics (discussed here) or formal evaluation tools that have been developed by professionals.

### **Assessing students' learning**

There are several ways to evaluate the academic success of the program. Using rubrics allows you to clearly link outcomes to objectives. Students, teachers, and community partners can use these to evaluate the process as a whole, the project outcomes, or individuals (e.g., self-evaluation, teachers evaluating students). Students may also want to evaluate the community partner on willingness to work with them in positive ways.

An example of using rubrics for each participant is given below. Scoring occurs on a high-to-low scale. Scales can measure performance, satisfaction, or learning. Scales should be clearly stated at the top of each rubric. If you use rubrics, also include a section for written comments so that students and the community partner have a chance to express additional thoughts.

Sample:

Circle one for each objective.

5=Outstanding; 4=Very well; 3= Neutral 2=Satisfactory; 1=Needs Improvement

“Objective #1”                    5   4   3   2   1   Comments:

“Objective #2”                    5   4   3   2   1   Comments:

“Objective #3”                    5   4   3   2   1   Comments:

### **Assessing students’ service**

Design an instrument to collect information from your community partner. You may want to ask about:

- Perceptions of students’ willingness to participate
- The extent to which students met expectations
- Suggestions for improving the service learning project
- Ideas for future service learning projects

Share and discuss the information you receive with your students.

### **Assessing the experience for students**

Design an instrument to collect information on your students’ attitudes about the project.

You may ask them:

- What do they think they learned?
- What do they think they contributed to the community?
- What are their attitudes about service learning? Have they changed?
- Do they have any other ideas for projects?
- What is their perception of the community, community partner and their involvement?
- How likely are they to volunteer or to become involved in their community in some other way?

“Doing the service learning project makes me feel better when I see the little kindergarteners smile and laugh when they are having fun. It helps them learn something new. They actually teach me things that I can do with my brothers and sisters.”  
- 6<sup>th</sup> grader, George Washington Community School

# Service Learning Project Examples

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There are many websites that offer excellent collections of service learning project examples and lesson plans. Read through the “Web Resources” section to find websites that post service learning lesson plans.

Here are just a few general examples of service learning activities:

## **My City’s History**

McKinley Elementary, a K-5 school in San Leandro, resides on the east side of the San Francisco Bay. The school has approximately 500 students from diverse ethnic backgrounds; mostly Latino, Asian and African American; many coming from low-income families. The 3rd grade classes at the school looked into the quality, quantity, and accessibility of San Leandro’s history written for 3rd grade understanding. Their search took them to the San Leandro Community Library and to the San Leandro Historical Society. They found a significant lack of information for 3rd graders. They found both entities interested in working with youth, so they offered to develop an oral history of city seniors’ experiences as seen from the perspective of youth. They formed a partnership with the Bay Area Cesar Chavez Service learning Alliance (through the Alameda County Office of Education), and the Villa San Leandro (an assisted living community). They worked with the students to develop plans for an oral history book project. Students from the 3rd grade classes joined with students from the 4th and 5th grades to develop interview questions and practice interviewing seniors, including recording and summarizing information. The students then met with and interviewed seniors and developed a book incorporating the interview summary written by students, a timeline of historical events that ranged from early settlement times to the present, and a bibliography. The city mayor presented the book to the community in a ceremony at the San Leandro Community Library.

Describe how you could work with your students to create a similar project:

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## **Trash Mountain**

Searles Elementary School, a K-5 school with a student population of approximately 850, produces an average of 45-50 bags of trash daily during the lunch periods. After participating in a lunch waste audit, a core of four classrooms (two 3rd grade and two 5th grade) embarked on a mission to reduce the amount of daily trash produced at lunch. They labeled plastic and aluminum can bins for the lunch area, and replaced the Styrofoam trays with recyclable cardboard trays. Students from the four classes received lessons in the 4Rs and then developed presentations to share in classrooms throughout the school. Students counted the number of trash bags on a weekly basis to

monitor the success of the service learning project. While working on a project to help the school and the earth, teachers involved students in learning activities from the content areas of reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Describe how you could work with your students to create a similar project:

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### **Books by Kids for Kids**

The idea for Books by Kids for Kids came out of a classroom discussion on community and needs. The 3rd graders, 20 students (11 English only learners and 9 second language learners), felt that whenever they went to the dentist or doctor's office they didn't have any age-appropriate books to read. Being responsible citizens, they wanted to take on the challenge and fill this need. The students felt confident that they could write, illustrate and publish their own books with some guidance. They also wanted to personally deliver them to these offices.

Describe how you could work with your students to create a similar project:

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### **Photography Friends**

Students can explore the art of photography as they photograph events at the local senior citizen center. If the senior citizen center is having a dance or a picnic, students could be on hand to photograph the seniors with their family members and friends. Once the photos are developed, the students could make handcrafted frames and give the framed photographs to the seniors they have become friends with through the project.

Describe how you could work with your students to create a similar project:

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## Community Garden

A high school in Philadelphia has designed an entire curriculum around a community garden. A community garden requires students to plan and measure and understand scientific principles. Students also gain understanding of nutrition and the value of fresh produce. Students can strengthen their math skills by measuring the square footage of the garden plots, the space between plantings, the amount of rainfall during the growing season, or the amount of plant food to be diluted for feeding the garden. When the plants are ready for harvest, students can measure the yield of the crops that they have planted or sell produce to family and friends.

Describe how you could work with your students to create a similar project:

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“This has affected me in a big way. When I get up in the morning and I look at the clock, and then think about the kindergarteners, and I want to go to school. When I’m down there I feel like I’m in control and in charge of what I’m doing.”

- 6<sup>th</sup> grader, George Washington Community School

# Web Resources

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## **American Youth Policy Forum**

[www.aypf.org](http://www.aypf.org)

The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) is a non-profit, non-partisan, professional development organization providing learning opportunities for policymakers on youth policy issues at the national, state and local level.

*Service Learning Resources: Follow the “service” link to access summaries of AYFP forums related to service learning.*

## **America’s Promise: The Alliance for Youth**

[www.americaspromise.org](http://www.americaspromise.org)

America's Promise was founded after the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, April 27-28, 1997, in Philadelphia. Presidents Clinton, Bush, Carter, and Ford with First Lady Nancy Reagan representing her husband, challenged the nation to make youth a national priority. Their call to action included a commitment on the part of the nation to fulfill the Five Promises. Also attending were nearly 30 governors, 100 mayors, 145 community delegations, dozens of prominent business leaders and several thousand concerned citizens. The Summit was co-sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation, the Corporation for National Service and The United Way of America.

## **CalServe K-12 Service Learning Initiative**

[www.cde.ca.gov/calserve](http://www.cde.ca.gov/calserve)

Through the CalServe Initiative, the California Department of Education has been supporting a Statewide Regional Service learning Lead Infrastructure and 23 district-wide community-school partnerships that annually involve over 84,000 students and approximately 8,000 community volunteers in urban, rural and suburban communities throughout the state.

*Service Learning Resources: Service Learning fact sheet, lesson plan inventory.*

## **CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement)**

[www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)

CIRCLE promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. Although CIRCLE conducts and funds research, not practice, the projects that we support have practical implications for those who work to increase young people's engagement in politics and civic life. CIRCLE is also a clearinghouse for relevant information and scholarship. CIRCLE was founded in 2001 with a generous grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts and is based in the University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs.

*Service Learning Resources: Database of youth civic engagement organizations, research papers on service learning and community participations, funding available for research in civic engagement.*

## **Community Service Learning – Massachusetts Department of Education**

[www.doe.mass.edu/csl](http://www.doe.mass.edu/csl)

In 1992, the Community Service learning (CSL) program was initiated at the Massachusetts Department of Education (MDOE) with a grant from the federal Serve-America Program. From 1992-1997, funds from Learn and Serve America (known as Serve-America until 1994) supported service learning programs in sixteen school districts across the Commonwealth. In 1997, the Massachusetts Department of Education received funds from the state legislature that allowed the program to hire an additional coordinator and fund thirty-five additional programs.

*Service Learning Resources: “What Community Service Learning is...and is not” (Follow “about CSL” link on left of page), “Community Lessons: Promising curriculum practices” (excellent lesson plan examples, follow “current programs” link), service learning bibliography (follow “related info” link).*

## **Community Works Online Resource Center**

[www.vermontcommunityworks.org](http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org)

Community Works is a founding member of The National Service learning Partnership. Located in Vermont, their mission is to promote exemplary teaching strategies, practices, programs and models that support students becoming caring, responsible and active members of their communities.

*Service Learning Resources: The “Curriculum Exemplars” link provides access to K-12 lesson plans for service learning and community works projects. Follow the “Tools & Resources” link to access downloadable planning guides and other resources.*

## **Constitutional Rights Foundation**

[www.crf-usa.org](http://www.crf-usa.org)

Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) is a non-profit, non-partisan, community-based organization dedicated to educating America's young people about the importance of civic participation in a democratic society. Under the guidance of a Board of Directors chosen from the worlds of law, business, government, education, the media, and the community, CRF develops, produces, and distributes programs and materials to teachers, students, and public-minded citizens all across the nation.

*Service Learning Resources: Service Learning NETWORK newsletter, US and World History lesson plans, Robinson Mini-grants for service learning projects, service learning/civic education publications.*

## **Education Commission of the States**

[www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org) and [www.ecs.org/html/projectsPartners/nclc/nclc\\_main.htm](http://www.ecs.org/html/projectsPartners/nclc/nclc_main.htm)

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is an interstate compact created in 1965 to improve public education by facilitating the exchange of information, ideas and experiences among state policymakers and education leaders. As a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization involving key leaders from all levels of the education system, ECS creates unique opportunities to build partnerships, share information and promote the development of policy based on available research and strategies.

*Service Learning Resources: Service learning publications, snapshots of current education issues including service learning, states' progress on the No Child Left Behind initiative.*

### **Indiana Department of Education**

**www.doe.state.in.us** Service Learning Page: <http://doe.state.in.us/opd/srvlrm>

*Service Learning Resources: Links to service learning associations/organizations/other state programs, lists of collaborative service learning projects in Indiana, funding opportunities, listing of service learning leader schools in Indiana, service learning guide and facts.*

### **KIDS Consortium**

**www.kidsconsortium.org**

KIDS Consortium is a nationally recognized leader in the rapidly expanding service learning movement, which promotes learning through community involvement. KIDS Consortium works with local teachers, administrators and students to involve students in addressing real challenges that face their communities. Together they identify, research, and work to address local community needs. With guidance from KIDS, teachers match those projects to school curricula, providing a powerful "hands on" learning experience that improves the community and brings academics to life.

*Service Learning Resources: This site offers a "Kids as planners" guidebook as well as downloadable project ideas.*

### **Learning In Deed**

**www.learningindeed.org**

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation in 1998 launched Learning In Deed, a national initiative to engage more young people in service to others as part of their academic life. The concept at the heart of the initiative is service learning. The Foundation has supported service learning for decades because they believe it engages youth in a powerful way that can help ensure a bright future for our nation. Working with teachers, administrators, community leaders, parents, students, policymakers and national leaders, the Foundation is committing substantial resources to this effort. Learning In Deed, a \$13 million, four-year initiative, will encourage more school systems across the country to adopt service learning, making quality service learning opportunities available to youth in every classroom in grades K-12 throughout the country.

*Service Learning Resources: Follow the "policy" link for the "Service Learning Policy Toolkit" and other Federal, State and District policy resources. Follow the "National Service Learning Partnership" link to sign up to receive an e-newsletter regarding service learning advances and service learning advocacy information. Also from this site, access the "Learning in Deed: Making a Difference Through Service Learning" report and other issue papers.*

### **Learning to Give**

**www.learningtogive.org**

Learning to Give seeks to perpetuate a civil society by: educating children about the independent sector (knowledge), developing behavior and philanthropic experience (skills), and stimulating private voluntary citizen action for the common good (behavior).

The Council of Michigan Foundations and a Steering Committee of thirteen collaborating leaders in education, volunteerism, and nonprofit leadership have begun a unique effort to write, field test, implement and disseminate high quality K-12 curriculum lessons, units and materials on philanthropy. The long-term goal of the project is to develop and replicate curriculum lessons, units, and materials for perpetuating a civil society through the education of children about the independent sector, and to achieve their commitment to private citizen action for the common good. The lessons, units, and materials that are a part of the curriculum contain both academic content about philanthropy and skill development activities that involve students in giving and serving their communities.

*Service learning Resources: Follow the “resource room” or “teaching materials” link to access philanthropy/service learning lesson plans.*

### **National Service Learning Clearinghouse**

**[www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)**

The Learn and Serve America National Service learning Clearinghouse (NSLC) supports the service learning community in higher education, kindergarten through grade twelve, community-based initiatives and tribal programs, as well as all others interested in strengthening schools and communities using service learning techniques and methodologies. The Clearinghouse stands ready to assist with materials, references, referrals, and information. The Clearinghouse also maintains this website and an ever-growing library collection that is available to Learn and Serve America grantees.

### **National Society for Experiential Education**

**[www.nsee.org](http://www.nsee.org)**

The National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) is a nonprofit membership association of educators, businesses, and community leaders. Founded in 1971, NSEE also serves as a national resource center for the development and improvement of experiential education programs nationwide. NSEE supports the use of learning through experience for intellectual development, cross-cultural and global awareness, civic and social responsibility, ethical development, career exploration, and personal growth.

*Service Learning Resources: Follow the “Special Projects” link to access the article, “Taking Service Learning to the Next Level”*

### **National Youth Leadership Council**

**[www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org)**

The National Youth Leadership Council's mission is to build vital, just communities with young people through service learning. As one of America's most prominent advocates of service learning and national service, NYLC is at the forefront of efforts to reform education and guide youth-oriented public policy.

*Service Learning Resources: The NYLC hosts the National Service Learning Conference every spring, access conference information year round on their site. Also, access a variety of publications and links related to youth and service learning.*

## **Pennsylvania Service Learning Alliance**

[www.pitt.edu/~psla/](http://www.pitt.edu/~psla/)

The Pennsylvania Service learning Alliance is the training and technical assistance provider for the Department of Education's Learn and Serve program in Pennsylvania. The PSLA is committed to bringing the service learning methodology to urban, rural and suburban public schools throughout Pennsylvania and helps teachers in Pennsylvania acquire the skills they need to successfully develop, implement, evaluate and assess service learning projects in the classroom.

*Service Learning Resources: Follow the "Service Learning" link to access a variety of service learning tools, links and resources. Follow the "PSLA publications" link and sign up to receive a bi-weekly service learning e-newsletter. Some resources are specific to the Pennsylvania area but most are transferable.*

## **Points of Light Foundation**

[www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)

The Points of Light Foundation, founded in 1990 by former President George Bush, is a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that promotes volunteerism. The Foundation was created in an effort to tap the creative energy of the people and its organizations to connect communities and individuals. Based in Washington, D.C., the Foundation advocates community service through a partnership with the Volunteer Center National Network. Together, they help mobilize people and resources, which deliver solutions that address community problems.

*Service Learning Resources: Follow the "Awards" link for ways to recognize volunteers. Direct youth to "For volunteers/youth" link to read youth service stories, simple project planning directions and project ideas.*

## **Presidents Student Service Awards and Scholarships**

[www.student-service-awards.org](http://www.student-service-awards.org)

The President's Student Service Awards is a White House initiative that recognizes young Americans with awards for outstanding community service, while encouraging more young people to serve. Educators and community members can apply online to recognize students serving in the community. Students from kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade who complete 50-100 hours of service or high school and college students who complete 100 hours of service within a 12-month timeframe can be recognized.

## **Service Learning Home on the Web – UC Boulder**

<http://csf.colorado.edu/sl/index.html>

The purpose of this site is to serve as a virtual guide to, and library of, service learning. Its primary focus is service learning in higher education. The site was created in 1993 as a service to those in higher education interested in service learning. At the time they were created, and for quite some time afterwards, this site and the SL List were the only internet/web site and national discussion group on service learning.

*Service Learning Resources: Subscribe to the service learning listserv from the main page. This e-mail listserv is a valuable resource. You may also search archived discussions from the listserv using the navigation bar at the left of the page.*

## **Service learning Northwest**

[www.servicelearningnw.org](http://www.servicelearningnw.org)

Service learning Northwest, located at Educational Service District 112 in Vancouver, Washington, is a team of experienced service learning practitioners dedicated to developing high quality service learning programs, practices, and tools. Service learning Northwest also provides service learning opportunities for youth in the ESD 112 service area of Southwest Washington. Service learning Northwest was established to meet the training and resource needs of educators, students, and community-based organizations throughout the service learning community.

*Service Learning Resources: the service learning resource center link provides access to tools, resources and best practices. There are downloadable materials including planning sheets and reflection activities.*

## **Students in Service to America**

[www.studentsinservicetoamerica.org](http://www.studentsinservicetoamerica.org)

“President George W. Bush has called on all Americans to commit at least 4,000 hours—the equivalent of two years over the course of their lives—to the service of others. By serving something greater than themselves, young people will learn about their rich democratic traditions as Americans, help meet vital community needs, and become responsible and engaged citizens.” This site has access to the “Students in Service to America” Guidebook, an initiative of the Bush administration that provides very good introduction and resources for bring service learning to the classroom. The complete guidebook can be viewed or downloaded from this site.

## **USA Freedom Corps**

[www.usafreedomcorps.gov](http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov)

During his 2002 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush called upon every American to get involved in strengthening America's communities and sharing America's compassion around the world. He called on each of us to dedicate at least two years over the course of our lives to the service of others. He included all Americans because everyone can do something, and he created the USA Freedom Corps to help all Americans to answer his call.

*Service Learning Resources: Have student record their service experiences in the online “Record of Service”. Also, search for local volunteer opportunities in the volunteer database.*

## **Youth as Resources**

[www.yar.org](http://www.yar.org)

Youth as Resources (YAR) is a philosophy and a program that recognizes youth as valuable community resources and engages them as partners with adults in bringing about positive community change.

*Service Learning Resources: Funding for youth-initiated service learning projects is available from local YAR programs. YAR of Central Indiana is housed within the United Way of Central Indiana and can be accessed through their website at [www.uwci.org](http://www.uwci.org).*

## **Youth Service America**

**[www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org)**

YSA is a resource center and premier alliance of 300+ organizations committed to increasing the quantity and quality of opportunities for young Americans to serve locally, nationally, or globally. Founded in 1986, YSA's mission is to strengthen the effectiveness, sustainability, and scale of the youth service and service learning fields.

*Service Learning Resources: Grants and Awards are available to motivate and help youth plan and carry out National Youth Service Day projects and ongoing service throughout the year.*

## COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE LEARNING: AN OVERVIEW

<b><i>Essential Components</i></b> <sup>1</sup>	
<p><b><u>Preparation</u></b> <i>What should I prepare to be ready to start service learning initiative?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project description</li> <li>▪ Community partner</li> <li>▪ Timeline/important dates</li> <li>▪ Resources needed</li> <li>▪ Contacts</li> <li>▪ Student training and orientation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collaboration</b> <i>How will the school and community work together?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community need</li> </ul>
<p><b>Service</b> <i>Action for the common good</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Curriculum Integration</b> <i>What academic skills will the students be learning?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relationship to curriculum</li> <li>▪ Academic skills gained</li> <li>▪ Classroom lesson plan</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reflection</b> <i>What does this project mean for the students and me?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Structured reflection activity</li> <li>▪ Personal reflection activity</li> </ul>
<p><b>Celebration</b> <i>Recognition by the school or community</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognition activity</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evaluation</b> <i>Did the project accomplish what it was meant to?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluation process/activity</li> </ul>

Appendix 1

<b>Outcomes</b>	
<b>Student</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Social development</li><li>▪ Psychological development</li><li>▪ Academic learning/development</li></ul>
<b>School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Teacher satisfaction</li><li>▪ Enhanced atmosphere</li><li>▪ Improved relationship with the community</li></ul>
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Receive direct aid</li><li>▪ New enthusiasm</li><li>▪ New ideas</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup>Wade, R.C. *Community Service Learning: A Guide to Including Service in the Public School Curriculum*. State University of New York Press, 1997