



generationOn™

Learning to Give

April *Moments of Service* Toolkit



April <i>Moments of Service</i> Overview	Page 2
Tips for Teachers “Blue Sky” Activity	Page 3
Ideas for Service Projects	Page 6
Service Stories from Schools	Page 8
Role of Volunteers	Page 10
Quotations	Page 11
Reproducible Forms	Page 12

APRIL MOMENTS OF SERVICE OVERVIEW

Signature Event: National Volunteer Week

April 15–21

A time to celebrate people doing extraordinary things through service. Focus student attention on the importance of volunteers and end the week with volunteering for Earth Day.

Global Youth Services Day

April 20–22

Join the largest service event in the world, celebrated in over 100 countries, that mobilizes millions of youth to improve their communities through service.

<http://gysd.org/>

Earth Day

April 22

Encourage environmental stewardship (preserving, conserving, repairing, and enhancing the environment) through awareness, problem identification, problem solving, and team building, focused around an environmental service project.

<http://www.earthday.org/>

Moments of Service lessons (<http://www.learningtogive.org/lessons/genOn/April>) introduce the topic, develop awareness, stimulate investigation, and promote problem solving, team building, and action. Project-based lessons prepare students for Earth Day and Arbor Day by enhancing awareness and knowledge of environmental issues and stewardship. Teachers prepare students for Global Youth Service Day by teaching them about the role and responsibility of being a community member, including the importance of service and volunteerism. As learners prepare for World Malaria Awareness Day, they learn about community and global health. The grade-specific lessons include "Learning Links" that reinforce the lesson concepts using 10 five-minute mini-lessons, and a selection of "Post Service Reflection Activities" to facilitate student reflection on the personal and community impact of their service event.

My experience planting was fun. Sure, I had to work hard but it was okay. It helps the environment, and I enjoy doing my part. It wasn't what I expected. It was even better. I wasn't even bored at all. All I can say is that I had a great time and enjoyed helping.

—Jesus, New York City Public Schools



TIPS FOR TEACHERS

- Start with an April Moments of Service Environmental lesson <http://learningtogive.org/lessons/genon/April/> (left side, under the picture) to introduce students to the importance of taking action for the environment and to help students begin to determine areas of interest, investigate needs, and brainstorm projects.
- Determine student interests and giving passions and community needs through the “Blue Sky” activity (included in this toolkit).
- Student voice is essential when planning service projects. Help the students choose projects that are meaningful to them with outcomes that have perceivable value to the Earth. To guide students in determining how they will plan their service, ask questions such as the following: *How would you do that? What kind of tools and materials would you need to do that? Who could we ask to help us? How much do you think it would cost?*
- Organizing more than one project will give students the opportunity to choose the service that best fits their interests and abilities, and will also involve more organizations and adult volunteers to monitor each project.
- In addition to providing a service, such as volunteering, advocating, performing acts of kindness, collecting and donating needed items, students may choose to raise funds by collecting pledges for their service. Some forms are provided at the end of this toolkit for use with a fundraiser.
- K-5 projects may focus on the school itself, 6-8 projects may focus on the neighborhood, and 9-12 projects may include the larger community. To guide students on what they can do with the resources available, ask questions such as the following: *How would you do that? What kind of tools and materials would you need to do that? Who could we ask to help us? How much do you think it would cost?*
- Inspire student thinking by sharing some of the project ideas listed in this toolkit.
- If any projects involve local service agencies, the teacher, adult volunteers, or the students should contact those organizations regarding plans and needs.
- Remember to obtain permission for students to leave the school campus if the service project is held offsite.
- Use reflection tools at the beginning of the planning, during the process, and after the service project is complete in order to assess student growth in attitudes and learning.
- Incorporate Learning Links and Post Service Reflection Activities into your classroom lessons to reflect on environmental stewardship on an ongoing basis. See Moments of Service Lessons <http://learningtogive.org/lessons/genon/April/> (left side, under the picture).
- Access additional Learning to Give *Save the Earth Now* environmental stewardship resources www.learningtogive.org/savetheearth/ and *Paw Prints to Learning* animal welfare resources www.learningtogive.org/lessons/aspca/.



TIPS FOR TEACHERS (CONTINUED)

- For Earth Day and Arbor Day awareness, have the students take the Ecological Footprint Quiz on the Earth Day Network site (www.earthday.net/footprint/index.html).
- Use additional activities (www.learningtogive.org/youthworkers/02activities.asp) that motivate students, and teach the concepts of philanthropy, service, and good character for use in service project meetings.
- Celebrate student participation and success throughout the service project and call attention to outstanding student initiative and effort.
- Recognize student participation and effort. Ask several volunteers (students, family or community members) to collect data and take pictures of the projects for inclusion on a class web page or for submission to the media. Collect data and evidence, document activities through video and student writing, and monitor student progress throughout the service project.
- Invite parents and community members to a final celebration or awards ceremony during which students share a demonstration of what they did and how it impacted the environment and themselves.



BLUE SKY ENVISIONING ACTIVITY

Blue Sky is a visioning exercise that guides participants in imagining a better world and identifying issues that matter to them. Participants are asked to take a look at their group, neighborhood, community, state, nation, and/or the world. They reflect on the way it is and then imagine the way they would like it to be. This activity encourages empathy, compassion, and self-expression. It also helps participants learn to react to a negative situation with a positive action.

Materials:

- 8½ x 11 blue or white paper (one for each student)
- crayons/markers/colored pencils
- optional: old magazines, scissors, and glue/paste (if doing a collage)



Activity:

1. Discuss the meaning of the term *community* as it relates to the participants' experiences (home, school, friends, neighborhood, city, state, country, and world).
2. Ask participants to identify what is good about their "community" and what they would like to see improved or changed. Create a chart to fill in as the group discusses.

Good	Improve or Change

3. Give each person a piece of blue paper
4. Invite participants to portray their ideal world, or what they would like their world to look like in ten years—what the world/community could look like if everyone worked together. They may draw, color, paint, or create collages on their blue paper.
5. When the participants are finished, allow each person time to share their creation with the group.
6. Record their ideas on a display board, and ask them to identify and reflect on some of the recurring themes. This can be helpful in identifying the group's interests for planning service projects.
7. As a group, briefly brainstorm ideas on how to work toward the visions and discuss possible challenges in achieving "the ideal."
8. Combine the illustrations into a large collage or "quilt." The collage or quilt may remain on display for the entire school year, so it may be used for future service-learning planning or as a reference during a year-end celebration.

Evaluation and Review:

- Later in the year, ask participants to look at the ideas generated and assess how they are doing on the identified issues.
- Periodically check out which issues the group has addressed and which issues are still important and need to be addressed.

IDEAS FOR SERVICE PROJECTS

Ideas to present and discuss with the students:

ENVIRONMENT

- Plant a “rain garden” at the school or in the neighborhood. [.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/dsfm/shore/documents/rgmanual](http://dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/dsfm/shore/documents/rgmanual). See Learning to Give unit “Growing an Environmental Steward” (9-12) ([.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit387/](http://learningtogive.org/lessons/unit387/)). Or plant a garden to create a bird habitat. See [.kidsgardening.org/growingideas/projects/library](http://kidsgardening.org/growingideas/projects/library).
- Make “rain barrels” to conserve water and prevent run-off. Give them away as prizes during a student-led community information session on conserving water. See [.wmeac.org/media/files/programs/WMEAC_Rain_Barrels_July2009](http://wmeac.org/media/files/programs/WMEAC_Rain_Barrels_July2009). or [.montgomerycountymd.gov/Content/DEP/Rainscapes/barrels](http://montgomerycountymd.gov/Content/DEP/Rainscapes/barrels) for information and plans.
- Hold a local recycling drive. Invite the municipal employees/recycling representatives to co-host the event. Have students research facts, create flyers, and distribute information about recycling in the community. See Learning to Give units: “The Four Rs” (K-2) ([.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit368/](http://learningtogive.org/lessons/unit368/)), “Earth Connections” (3-5) ([.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit145/](http://learningtogive.org/lessons/unit145/)), “Earth: The Source of Resources” (6-8) ([.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit375/](http://learningtogive.org/lessons/unit375/)), “To Recycle or Not to Recycle” (9-12) ([.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit388/](http://learningtogive.org/lessons/unit388/)).
- Hold a “Catalogue Canceling” campaign. Learn how at [.parkschool.org/blogs/ted_wells/](http://parkschool.org/blogs/ted_wells/).
- Help the school become more environmentally sound by planning and implementing a recycling/sorting program for classroom materials, packaging, or food waste. Student volunteers keep the program running once established.
- Organize a park beautification by collecting trash and recyclables and/or planting flowers and trees. See Learning to Give unit “Growing Our Future” (K-2) ([.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit237/](http://learningtogive.org/lessons/unit237/))
- Work with a local retailer to obtain discount coupons for ceiling fans. Installing ceiling fans conserves energy by reducing the need for air conditioning in the summer and heating in the winter. Distribute a student-produced environmental fact sheet along with these coupons in your neighborhood.
- Create wildlife habitats by building birdhouses and/or feeders. Place on the school grounds and/or distribute to neighbors. Solicit contributions of bird food to give along with the feeders. See Learning to Give unit “Sharing Our World” (3-5) ([.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit147/](http://learningtogive.org/lessons/unit147/))



IDEAS FOR SERVICE PROJECTS (CONTINUED)

- Work with a local agency to clean up a nearby riverbank or shoreline. See Learning to Give unit “Philanthropy – A Day at the Beach” (.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit85/)
- Conduct a needs assessment for a local animal shelter; plan and implement a drive to collect specific needed items to donate to the shelter. See Learning to Give unit “Animal Shelters” (3-5) (www.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit427/)
- Create personalized emergency packs and donate to local pet shelters to be given out to families and individuals who adopt cats and dogs, or donate to senior centers to be given out to seniors that have pets. See Learning to give unit “Keeping Our Pets Safe in an Emergency” (www.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit428/)
- Research facts and educate others through flyers, posters, persuasive essays, or advertisements about saving energy at home or other environmental issues. Send advocacy letters to an organization, local or national governmental entity, news media, or other appropriate venue to promote environmental stewardship.
- Create a picture book with different illustrated ideas and activities to educate others about things they can do to protect the environment. See Save the Earth lessons at .learningtogive.org/savetheearth/binder.
- Investigate the potential of getting alternative energy sources installed at your school.
- Design, create, and sell reusable cloth bags to discourage use of plastic and paper bags at the grocery store.
- Design buttons related to an environmental issue. Sell buttons as a fundraiser and distribute information along with the buttons to raise awareness and promote personal action. Donate the revenue to an environmental organization of the student’s choosing.
- Additional ideas can be found on these Web sites:
 - Earth Day Network: .earthday.net/
 - Environmental Protection Agency: .epa.gov/epahome/students.



STORIES FROM SCHOOLS



Indianapolis, IN -- With the help of community volunteers and the staff of the Indiana Pacers basketball organization, middle school students at Creston Middle School created birdhouses to hang in their nature center. They also cleaned up around their school by raking and picking up trash. They plan to extend this project to add some beautification of the school grounds.

New York City -- Some of New York City's youngest fans "rooted" for their city as they celebrate Earth Day by planting trees and beautifying their school yards and neighborhoods. This effort, involving students from service-learning teams throughout New York City, is in support of the "MillionTreesNYC" initiative led by the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation and New York Restoration Project (NYRP). The students were joined by the crew members of JetBlue Airways and its partners New York Restoration Project and 106.7 Lite FM, in a day of tree planting in East Harlem. The schools worked with MillionTreesNYC partners such as the Urban Park Rangers and the Green Apple Corps who taught the children about environmental stewardship and the importance of doing their part to protect and preserve their city.



Newark, NJ – Student teams from 76 schools joined forces with community organizations, elected officials, and volunteers in implementing the "Beautiful Newark" program.



The event harnessed the power of thousands of student and adult volunteers who worked together to help beautify the city. The Newark Public Schools released all 42,000 students from regular classes for the afternoon to participate in the Beautiful Newark event. Simultaneously, they cleaned up neighborhoods, planted flowers, and seeded gardens to help make their community a better place.

STORIES FROM SCHOOLS (CONTINUED)

Danville, IN -- The high school and middle school students walked to a nearby park where they used mulch and flowers to build a Rain Garden designed to help prevent erosion.



Indianapolis, IN -- Public School No. 27's Kindergarten and Second Grade students spent Earth Day making bird feeders for their feathered friends.

Austin, TX -- Austin schools, supported by *A Legacy of Giving*, partnered with the local environmental nonprofit Keep Austin Beautiful to support student-organized activities that connect philanthropy and the environment. Students learned the importance of environmental responsibility and taking care of their surroundings through Learning to Give lessons and Keep Austin Beautiful supplied practical training in skills and some materials needed to implement the service project ideas the students generated. In partnering with Keep Austin Beautiful, students were able to embark on a variety of campus initiatives including cleanups, installation of native habitat, and campus recycling projects.



Fairland, IN -- Triton Central High School students raked debris from their school as they prepared to replace old plants with new ones that were donated by a local landscaper. With the landscaper's help (and donated blueprints), the students were able to beautify the entrance to their high school just in time for prom which was held at the school. One senior stated, "I will be so excited to walk up the front sidewalk with this beautiful landscaping. It will make my prom special."

ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS

Your community members can:

- ✓ Gather materials needed to teach the curriculum and deliver to teachers.
- ✓ Place posters around the school/community advertising the upcoming service project(s).
- ✓ Help students conduct investigations and needs assessments of the community.
- ✓ Gather or solicit supplies needed to complete the service project, such as rakes or cleaning supplies.
- ✓ Arrange transportation for students whose projects require it.
- ✓ Work alongside students as they serve in the community.
- ✓ Assist younger students with formatting and design of print materials.
- ✓ Act as chaperones on offsite visits.
- ✓ Assist younger students with reflection writing assignments.
- ✓ Teach groups of students about the volunteer's area of expertise related to environmental or health issues.
- ✓ Connect with media for press releases before, during, and after the service projects.
- ✓ Take pictures of the service projects for inclusion on a class web page or for submission to the media.
- ✓ Gather information from classrooms to tabulate the impact of the service project.
- ✓ Help plan a recognition ceremony.
- ✓ Secure funding to support the recognition ceremony.



QUOTATIONS

Use these quotes for reflection, as journal prompts, or as discussion starters before, during, or after a service project.

"The land is sacred. These words are at the core of your being. The land is our mother, the rivers our blood. Take our land away and we die. That is, the Indian in us dies."
Brave Bird, Mary Native American Author (1953-)

"As soils are depleted, human health, vitality and intelligence go with them."
Bromfield, Louis Writer (1896-1956)

"In every outthrust headland, in every curving beach, in every grain of sand there is the story of the earth."
Carson, Rachel Biologist (1907-1964)

"There is enough for all. The earth is a generous mother; she will provide in plentiful abundance food for all her children if they will but cultivate her soil in justice and in peace."
Coekran, Bourke

"The hungry world cannot be fed until and unless the growth of its resources and the growth of its population come into balance. Each man and woman—and each nation—must make decisions of conscience and policy in the face of this great problem."
Johnson, Lyndon Baines 36th President of the United States (1908–1973)

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world."
Muir, John Naturalist, Preservationist and Founder of the Sierra Club (1838-1914)

"The least movement is of importance to all nature. The entire ocean is affected by a pebble."
Pascal, Blaise French scientist and religious philosopher (1623-1662)

"Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our children."
Proverb-Ancient Native American

"We must protect the forests for our children, grandchildren and children yet to be born. We must protect the forests for those who can't speak for themselves such as the birds, animals, fish and trees."
Qwatsinas

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated... I hold that, the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man."
Gandhi, Mahatma Indian political and spiritual leader (1869-1948)

STUDENT SPONSOR SCRIPT

This is a sample script for students to use if fundraising by seeking pledges for their service project. Please feel free to adapt to your needs.

"Hi. My name is _____ (your name). I'm from _____ School. Our school is going to be involved in a community service project(s) on _____ (date). On that day, I will be volunteering for _____ hours in activities that will make our community a better place to live.

I am seeking supporters who believe in the importance of philanthropy and community service. Sponsors will help support my efforts to volunteer in the community by donating money for every hour I volunteer.

The money we raise will go toward supplies for service projects or will be donated to a local non-profit organization.

Would you be able to support my volunteer efforts in the community?"

(If no)

"Thanks so much for your time."

(If yes, fill in the "Sponsor Report Form")

"Thanks so much for your contribution. Your support will help make our community a better place to live!"

