

Learning to GIVE

November

Moments of Service

Toolkit



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November Moments of Service Overview

Veterans Day

November 11

<http://www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetdayhistory.asp>

Use this teachable moment to have students focus on the contributions of “real” heroes for the common good, and plan for a way they can become heroes in even a small way in their community through service and volunteerism.

National Philanthropy Day

November 15

<http://learningtogive.org/lessons/NPD/>

This day provides an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of giving – how it has enhanced our civic society, as well as what there still is to do.

Family Volunteer Day

November 20

<http://www.familycares.org/projects/familyVolunteerDay.cfm>

Demonstrate the power of families who volunteer together to serve the communities in which they live. Volunteering as a family provides quality time for busy families, strengthens communication and bonds, and positively impacts local communities across the nation.

Thanksgiving Day

November 24

In this season of giving, help your students reflect on what they are thankful for and how they can "pay it forward" to those who are less fortunate through a collection campaign for food, coats, or other needed items.

Moments of Service Lessons

<http://www.learningtogive.org/lessons/genOn/November>

enhance student awareness and knowledge of issues related to hunger, poverty, and homelessness. 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.



TIPS FOR TEACHERS

- Teach an Introduction to Philanthropy (www.learningtogive.org/genonly/, click on “September”) unit or a Learning to Give unit (www.learningtogive.org/teachers/) to introduce the concept of giving time, talent, and treasure and taking action for the common good.
- 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.
- If any projects from the student planning session involve local service agencies, the service leader should contact those organizations regarding plans and needs. Make sure that the items collected are truly needed – many food pantries receive large quantities of the same kinds of food and are in need of a variety of foods to meet the community’s needs.
- The students should determine a recipient organization if a drive to collect items is planned. If possible, arrange for a representative from the organization to visit the class or school to talk about real needs in the community. When the representative visits, discuss specific needs and items to be collected. Ask the organization to prepare for the following:
 - Send a representative and/or volunteer(s) from the organization to be present on the agreed-upon donation day(s).
 - Help with transportation/pick-up of donations from the school building to their facility.
- Work with the school administration to reserve an appropriate area to hold the collection items.
- Be sure to prepare students with information on safety issues related to any solicitation.
- Obtain permission for students to leave the grounds if the event is held offsite.
- Make time for reflection before, during, and after the project.



TIPS FOR TEACHERS (CONTINUED)

- Invite families and community to a service celebration.
- Choose from these “spirit raising” activities to motivate students and families to contribute to a collection drive:
 - Work with the school cafeteria to do “Rice Day,” a day on which the cafeteria serves only rice and water all day and passes out statistics on global and local hunger.
 - Have the director of a local homeless shelter give a presentation about homelessness in your city/town.
 - Have each classroom create a “collected-food sculpture.” Then have a volunteer from the receiving agency judge and give awards for the most creative, tallest, best theme, etc. Have an award or recognition for that classroom(s). (Check out www.canstruction.org to see some structures.)
 - Show the film “Oliver” (song – “Food, Glorious Food!”) after school (middle school level or older, content may be too intense for younger students). Admission is a canned food donation.
 - Have a school-wide BINGO game, using the actual items collected as the BINGO pieces.
 - Have students create a “menu” of the foods they are packing and design an inviting menu using their classroom/school as the “restaurant.” (Example: Mr. Carter’s Class Pasta Primavera)
 - Host a “Recipe Drive” to add to a food drive, and create a cookbook using ingredients from the food gathered. (Some of the food recipients might not have knowledge how to serve a food item they’ve received.)
- Utilize activities www.learningtogive.org/youthworkers/02activities.asp that motivate and teach the concepts of philanthropy, service, and good character for use in service project meetings.



“BLUE SKY” ACTIVITY

This activity focuses students on identifying and responding to community needs.

Blue Sky is a visioning exercise that guides students in imagining a better world. Students are asked to take a look at their class, school 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. Service leaders are encouraged to use this strategy at the beginning of the service experience and to revisit it before planning each service project with the students.

Blue Sky serves as a launch pad for the school year of service. The service leader may refer to the students’ Blue Sky thoughts throughout the year as a form of evaluation (How are we doing on the issues we identified?) and review (What issues are still important to us that need to be addressed?).

This activity encourages empathy, compassion, and self expression. It also helps students learn to react to a negative situation with a positive action.

The activity can be on a small or large scale. On a smaller scale, Blue Sky serves as a classroom activity. A service coach may lead a personalized visioning activity with one class or group, facilitating brainstorming of real issues that students have passion for, and then guiding the students to use those results as a focus for their future service projects.

On a large scale, the activity may be conducted as a Community Blue Sky Event with the whole school and include family and community members. Hold a breakfast or town hall meeting. Organize the group into smaller groups for brainstorming, and have each small group share their main ideas for improving the community.

Encourage students to organize much of the Community Blue Sky Event because they will be setting the tone for the year’s service goals. They may create the invitation list, organize the breakfast and activity, and select topics for discussion.



"BLUE SKY" ACTIVITY (CONTINUED)

Materials:

8½ x 11 paper (blue if possible), enough for each participant
Crayons/markers/colored pencils

Activity:

1. Discuss the meaning of community as it relates to the student's experience: home, school, friends, neighborhood, city, state, country, and world.
2. Ask students 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 students discuss:

Good	Improve or Change

3. Give each student a piece of blue paper.
4. Invite students to portray their ideal world or what they would like their world to look like in 10 years--what the world/community could look like if everyone worked together. Students can draw, color, paint, or create collages on their blue paper.
5. When the students are finished, allow each student time to share their creation with the class.
6. Record students' thoughts and ideas on a display board, and identify and reflect on some of the recurring themes. This can be helpful in identifying student interests for planning of service projects.
7. As a class, briefly brainstorm ideas on how to achieve the ideals and what challenges they might face in achieving "the ideal."
8. Create a "permanent display" of the students' illustrations. It is recommended that these illustrations remain available for display for the school year as a reference to for future reflection, planning, and for the Awards Celebration. The student papers can be combined into a collage, quilt, or bulletin board display. A paper "quilt" may be rolled up and stored and brought out for appropriate discussions.

SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS

- Students color paper grocery bags to distribute to local grocery stores. Make a sign asking local residents to donate grocery items by filling one of those decorated sacks. Collect the filled sacks near the end of the food drive to add to the school/classroom's collection. (Display the bags in the stores' windows and carts so people can make a contribution before and after they shop.)
- Host a hat, mitten, or coat drive.
- Weigh your staff (or other group) and challenge your school to match that weight in donated items.
- Collect baby items for a women and children's shelter.
- Challenge the students to fill the principal's office with donated items.
- Bring in an industrial scale and have each classroom weigh their food items on the last day of the collection.
- Assign each grade or classroom a specific food item (vegetable, potato, canned meat, jello/pudding, juice, pasta, pasta sauce, etc.) so the entire school's donation creates complete meals. See the Learning to Give Units: Soupservice Kids (K-2) www.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit103/, or Food for Thought (9-12) www.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit172/.
- Collect copy paper boxes or file boxes, paint or decorate them, and then have a school "box-packing" day, creating whole meals in the boxes.
- Bob for apples. Students pay \$1.00 per try. Donate the proceeds to a local soup kitchen along with several bags of apples.
- Host a pasta dinner at your school to raise money for a local cause. Give a free dessert for every food contribution.
- Volunteer to stock the shelves at the local food pantry.
- Create a "Knock over the Cans" carnival game. Participants throw a bean bag to try to knock over a can. They may donate a can or pay \$1 to play. You may award a sticker to anyone who knocks over a can. Donate proceeds to a food pantry or shelter, and use the funds to purchase food items specified as needed by the relief organization.



SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS (CONTINUED)

- Choose a different theme for different days during a food drive. Here are some ideas:
 - A Taste of Italy Day – collect canned spaghetti sauce, pasta, and tomato products
 - Vegetarian Day – collect foods that do not include meat products
 - Back to School Day – collect favorite lunch box items such as peanut butter and jelly
 - Meat Me for Dinner Day – collect canned tuna and other canned meat items
 - Do You Know the Muffin Man Day – collect breakfast items, such as muffin mix, boxed cereal, pancake or baking mix, syrup, and canned fruit
 - Multicultural Day – collect pasta, spaghetti, sauce, rice, beans, falafel, and hummus
 - Souper Bowl Day – collect dry soup, canned soup, crackers, and canned meals
 - Cinco de Mayo Day – collect foods celebrating the Mexican culture such as rice, beans, and tomato products
 - Healthy Snack Day – collect healthy after school snacks such as juices, granola bars, fruit cups, and applesauce
 - Turkey in a Bag Day – each classroom could pool pennies or dollars and get enough to buy one frozen turkey for a family (or canned turkey), then deliver it in a grocery bag.



SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS (CONTINUED)

- Make or collect blankets to donate to a local homeless shelter, senior center, nursing home, or hospital. See the Learning to Give Unit: *Time, Talent, Treasure, and Economics* (3-5) (www.learningtogive.org/lessons/unit120/).
- Have a “personal products drive,” collecting shampoo, soap, and deodorant for a homeless shelter.
- Find out if there is a children’s “school room” at the homeless shelter. Include needed school items for children in the collection. Create cards of support for the children.
- Collect books or games for a shelter, WIC office, or other social service agency that would have children in a waiting room.
- Curriculum ideas for teaching kids (of various ages) about homelessness http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/ages_5_8/paperhouse.aspx

SERVICE STORIES FROM SCHOOLS

Concord, MI: With the help of Service Leader Kendra Bonjerno, the Concord Middle School students celebrated their first annual "THANKS-IN-GIVING DAY." This special day was born out of the desire to do more than simply share a meal in celebration of Thanksgiving at the school. The children used the money that had been set aside for the traditional meal to fund a series of mini-service projects. One class used their funds to make 100 ham sandwiches and decorate cookies for a homeless shelter. Another class made goodie bags and wrote letters to U.S. troops overseas. Yet another made fleece blankets for homebound senior citizens. Middle School Students mentored the elementary students, decorated the school for the holidays and sorted all the food and clothing donations gathered during the collection drives. All in all, 213 students participated, volunteering up to three hours each of their time for service.

Whiteland, IN: For students at Break-O-Day Elementary and Clark Pleasant Intermediate School – and extra incentive was added to make their food collections successful. Both schools are part of The Clark Pleasant School Community school district. The principals of the two neighboring schools decided to develop a friendly challenge to determine which school could collect the most food. The principal of the school that collected the most food would host the other school's principal to a lunch on the school roof, in full costume! In just 21 days time, the schools' 856 students collected a combined total of \$81,758 worth of food. The school totals were so close that the principals took turns hosting each other for lunch on their roof, as the students looked on.



Austin, TX: In the Austin Independent School District, the service leader arranged for empty storage "pods" to be delivered to schools participating in the coat and food collection drive. The "pods" were positioned on each school campus and the teachers had each class enter the pod, having the students experience the "pod's" emptiness. They asked students to compare that empty space to the empty stomachs of the area's residents who were hungry and homeless. The students were challenged to "Pack the Pod" with donated food. The students collected the food and then formed a "bucket brigade" to move the donated food from the school building to the "pod" in the parking lot of their campus.

SERVICE STORIES FROM SCHOOLS (CONTINUED)

Romulus, MI: Thanksgiving will be brighter for many in the greater Detroit area due to the graceful giving by motivated elementary school students. The many small hands at Romulus Elementary collectively gathered well over 1000 food items in a drive to provide Thanksgiving fare for those in need. The children all pitched in, and when their drive was over, Romulus students had carried in a 989 pound gift for Gleaner's Community Food Bank in Detroit.

The overwhelming generosity shown by Romulus students may come as a surprise to some. The school has been labeled one of "high poverty," with 67 percent of the school's 400 students receiving free lunch. These children, however, continue to inspire and impress as their time and talent touch the lives of those in need.



ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS

Community members can help with the following:

- ✓ 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 needs assessments of the community.
- ✓ Gather supplies needed to complete the service project.
- ✓ Deliver donations to the donor organization following completion of the collection service project.
- ✓ Connect with media for press releases before, during, and after the project.
- ✓ Take pictures and collect data of the service projects for inclusion on a class web page or for submission to the media.
- ✓ Donate or solicit donation of supplies needed to complete the service project.
- ✓ 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.

HUNGER

"Hungry people cannot be good at learning or producing anything, except perhaps violence."

Bailey, Pearl Entertainer (1918-1990)

"A hungry man can't see right or wrong. He just sees food."

Buck, Pearl S. Author (1892-1973)

"There will never cease to be ferment in the world unless people are sure of their food."

Buck, Pearl S. Author (1892-1973)

"An empty stomach is not a good political advisor."

Einstein, Albert American theoretical physicist (1879–1955)

"No man can be wise on an empty stomach."

Eliot, George English novelist (1819–1880)

"A hungry man is an angry one."

Emecheta, Buchi Nigerian novelist (1944-)

"The freedom of man, I contend, is the freedom to eat."

Roosevelt, Eleanor Author (1884-1962)

"Hunger does not breed reform; it breeds madness, and all the ugly distempers that make an ordered life impossible."

Wilson, Woodrow 28th President of the United States (1856-1924)

POVERTY

"Poverty is the step-mother of genius."

Billings, Josh American humorist (1818–1885)

"Anger and humor are like the left and right arm. They complement each other. Anger empowers the poor to declare their uncompromising opposition to oppression, and humor prevents them from being consumed by their fury."

Cone, James Theologian (1938-)

"In a country well governed, poverty is something to be ashamed of. In a country badly governed, wealth is something to be ashamed of."

Confucius Chinese Philosopher (551-479 BC)

"The day someone quits school he is condemning himself to a future of poverty."

Escalante, Jaime Educator

QUOTATIONS (CONTINUED)

"Poverty often deprives a man of all spirit and virtue; it is hard for an empty bag to stand upright."

Franklin, Benjamin Printer, Author, Scientist, Diplomat and Promoter of Collective Voluntary Action (1706-1790)

"For every talent that poverty has stimulated it has blighted a hundred."

Gardner, John W. American writer (1933–1982)

"Poverty is the openmouthed relentless hell which yawns beneath civilized society. And it is hell enough."

George, Henry American economist (1839–1897)

HOPE

"When hope is taken away from a people, moral degeneration follows swiftly thereafter."

Buck, Pearl S. Author (1892-1973)

"The grand essentials of happiness are: something to do, something to love, and something to hope for."

Chalmers, Allan K.

"Poor people are allowed the same dreams as everyone else."

Gray, Kimi President of the Kenilworth-Parkside Resident Management Corporation and chair of the National Association of Resident Management Corporations

"Hope is itself a species of happiness, and, perhaps, the chief happiness which this world affords."

Johnson, Samuel English author (1709–1784)

"Everything that is done in the world is done by hope."

Luther, Martin German leader of the Protestant Reformation (1483-1546)

REPRODUCIBLE FORMS

Service Project Planning Agenda

Service Project: _____

Meeting Date: _____

Supplies:

Blue Sky Activity Creation (collage, quilt, or bulletin board display)

Agenda:

1. Clarify the focus of the upcoming service project.
2. Recall issues identified during *Blue Sky Activity* appropriate to the identified need or issue.
3. Brainstorm and discuss possible service projects and reach consensus on the service project(s) to be undertaken.
4. Create a service plan and agree on roles and responsibilities. Include:
 - Supplies or equipment needed
 - Timeline
 - Permissions needed
 - Community partnerships and resources
 - Plans for recruiting participation of peers, staff, family members and community
 - Task list and assignments

Post Service Project Reflection Agenda

Service Project: _____

Meeting Date: _____

Supplies:

Blue Sky Activity Creation (collage, quilt, or bulletin board display)
Completed Class Tally Form
Note cards or paper

Agenda:

- Evaluate service project and results. Discuss the following questions:
 1. What was the impact of the service (on the recipients of the service and student participants)?
 2. What went well?
 3. Is there some way in which we want to continue this service project (as a group or individually)?
 4. What could be done to improve the next service project or for this same project next year?
- Reflect on the impact of the service project. (See “Post Service Reflection Activities” in grade-specific lessons at www.learningtogive.org/genonltg for reflection activity ideas.)
- Write thank you notes to those who helped with the project.