Ideas for Creating Successful Community Stewardship Projects
Reflection Activities

Reflection activities play an important role in helping students to analyze, understand, and gain meaning from the service they are participating in. Most teachers/facilitators think reflection activities have to be writing intensive, but there are a variety of ways that students can reflect. The following list of reflection activities is divided into activities to be used pre-service, during service, post-service, and general activities that could be used throughout the process.

Pre-Service Activities

Pre-service activities should assist students in looking at their assumptions and biases, as well as expectations of what they hope to accomplish.

1. Have students write a letter to themselves describing their feelings, their expectations, and what they hope to gain from this process. The teacher/facilitator should keep the letters and return them at the end of the program during the final reflection stage.

2. Working individually or in groups, have students design and create a utopia envisioning what their community would be like if they could fix all the problems that they have discovered during the community inventory. They could present their utopia in a variety of ways - in a written format, as a poster, or as a play.

3. As a group, create a list of expectations and hoped for outcomes from the program. Write the list on chart paper and refer back to it at the end of the program during the final reflection phase.

During Service Activities

Reflection activities carried out during service should allow students to process their feelings and revisit their expectations in light of what they have done so far. Reflection is also useful at this point to help students look at the direction they are going, identify next steps, and make adjustments if needed.

1. Hold a mock debate where students defend various sides relating to the issue they are pursuing.

2. Have students write a letter to their family or friends explaining the project they are working on and what their goals are.

Suggestion: The teacher/facilitator may be more successful using writing based activities as this point, particularly if students are very involved with the issue they are working on.
Post Reflection Activities

Post-service reflection activities should assist students in evaluating and drawing conclusions from their experiences. They should also provide meaning and help students to understand what they found out about themselves during the service experience.

1. Have the students take photographs throughout the process. At the end, tell each student to select a group of photographs that most accurately portrays the experience they had. Have them create a poster using these photographs with captions explaining why they chose particular pictures.

2. Have the group save items throughout the process then use these to make a group scrapbook at the end. Items that could be included - letters, meeting agendas, surveys, phone transcripts, photographs, etc.

3. Ask students to choose one word that best describes their service experience. Have them make a poster based around this word. (This poster could be combined with the photo poster. Students could choose their word, then select photographs that represent it.)

4. Individually or in groups, have students create an artistic representation of their experience. It could be a collage, a drawing, a painting, or a mural.

5. To facilitate a final reflection discussion, create reflection stations by writing questions on chart paper, posting them around the room, and having students write answers to the questions on each chart. Questions could include 1. What was your most memorable experience? 2. What do you feel best about? 3. What disturbs or puzzles you about your experience? and 4. How has this experience changed the way you think? The teacher/facilitator could then use the responses to lead a class discussion.

6. Have students videotape the process throughout then create a documentary at the end. If discussion was the primary mode of reflection, students could record discussions on an audiotape then edit sections to create an audio documentary.

7. Have students create a resume listing the skills they developed or improved through their experience with the program.
Reflection Activities to be Used Throughout

1. As an alternative to a written journal, students could keep an **artistic journal** where they draw what they are feeling about their experiences. They could also cut out pictures or use computer graphics.

2. **Discussion**-based activities:
   - As a lead-in to reflective discussion, pose a question and have students do five minutes of silent reflection before the discussion begins.
   - Write a quote on the board and have students respond.
   - Use metaphors, (i.e. doing this project is like …)
   - Create a continuum representing various views of an issue. Have students stand at a point on the continuum and explain why they chose to stand there.
   - Pose a question then think, pair, share (have students pair off, discuss the question, then report back to the group).
   - Skittle game – pass out a skittle to each student. Have a list of reflection questions prepared and link each question to a color. Go around the room and have each student answer a question based on the color of the skittle they received.

3. **Writing** based activities:
   - Have students keep a journal throughout.
   - Have students write stories or poems to express their feelings or describe experiences.
   - Round Robin Poetry – Pose a reflection question or a theme and have each student write two lines of poetry relating to that question or theme. As the poem goes around the room, fold the paper so that each student can only see the lines written by the previous student. At the end, read the full poem to the group. Rewrite the poem onto a poster board.
   - Each day as students are preparing to leave, pose a question (i.e. what did you find out today that you did not know before?) and write the question on a piece of chart paper. Before each student leaves, have him/her write a one-sentence response to the question. The teacher/facilitator could also write the sentence for the student.
   - Instead of keeping individual journals, the group could create a group journal where students could jot down ideas and feelings throughout the program.

3. **Other kinds of activities that could be used for reflection:**
   - Writing plays / Writing songs / Creating dances / Doing role plays

4. **Critical Incident Activity.** Anytime students have a pivotal experience during the Earth Force program, the teacher/facilitator could use the critical incident activity to help students assess the impact of the experience. This activity could be done as a discussion or as a written activity. The activity has three steps: 1. Describe your role in the incident. 2. Analyze the incident- what is you understanding of it? How did you react? 3. What impact did the incident have on you?
Reflection Opportunities

Segment One

Your Earth Force group has just completed a walking tour in order to develop a community inventory. When you return to the classroom, the group develops a list of community strengths and weaknesses. The students are able to come up with a long list of weaknesses and a relatively short list of strengths. What reflection questions would be beneficial to pose at this point? What kinds of activities could you use to address these questions?

For facilitator - Possible reflection questions might include:
1. How do you view your community?
2. How does the list of weaknesses you developed make you feel about your community?
3. Were you surprised at the strengths you found in your community?
4. What did you learn about your community that you did not know?
5. What do you want your community to be like?
6. When looking at the list of weaknesses, which weakness concerns you the most?

Segment Two

Your group has finally selected the problem they wish to focus on. After cutting the list down to four problems, the group used their criteria to select their problem. The issue they plan to focus on is the pollution in their neighborhood lake. What reflection questions would be beneficial to pose at this point? What kinds of activities could you use to address these questions?

For facilitator - Possible reflection questions might include:
1. What do you hope to accomplish in relation to this problem?
2. When you determined your criteria, which of the criteria were most important to you and why?
3. What strengths in your community might help you solve this problem?
4. Did you feel your voice was heard in the process of selecting the problem?
Segment Three

Your group has chosen to focus on the issue of school waste and the lack of recycling. In order for your students to determine how the waste is being created and the opportunities provided for recycling, you set up a sleuthing activity. In this activity you divided the group into smaller groups and each one was given a sheet describing a possible waste contributor (i.e. a student, a janitor, the school secretary, a teacher, the principal). Each group of students sought out their potential contributor and asked a list of questions included with the description to help determine what waste the individual was creating and whether they were doing any recycling. After returning to the classroom, the groups debated who was the biggest contributor in creating waste and not recycling. What reflection questions would be beneficial to pose at this point? What kinds of activities could you use to address these questions?

For facilitator - Possible reflection questions might include:
1. What new knowledge have you gained about this issue?
2. How do you contribute to the problem?
3. Who contributes most to the problem?
4. Do you feel like your group will be able to have an influence on this problem?

Segment Four

Your group has chosen to pursue the issue of waste and recycling in their school. When choosing their action, group members have decided to try to get the school cafeteria to change from Styrofoam to paper or other kinds of trays, to provide a location for teachers, students, and the office to recycle paper, to provide recycling for aluminum cans, and to get all members of the school community to recycling printing cartridges. In order to prepare the students in your group for potential opposition, you set up an activity for them. In this activity you have two sets of students swinging two jump ropes a few feet from each other. On the other side of the jump rope you have three students staggered in a zigzag line. You tell the students in the group that in order to be successful they have to make it through the two ropes and past the three students. One rope represents the school principal, and the other is the cafeteria manager. The three students represent the students of the school, the teachers, and the school office workers. The students try making it through the obstacle course, but only few are successful. What reflection questions would be beneficial to pose at this point? What kinds of activities could you use to address these questions?

For facilitator - Possible reflection questions might include:
1. What are the obstacles that you will have to surmount in order to achieve your goal?
2. If your project is successful, what difference will it make for the people in your community?
3. How do you feel about the action you have chosen to take? Does your goal seem achievable?
Segment Five

Your group has just met with the cafeteria manager to request that the cafeteria start using something other than Styrofoam trays. The cafeteria manager tells your group that the other options are not cost effective and she cannot make the change at this time. What reflection questions would be beneficial to pose at this point? What kinds of activities could you use to address these questions?

For facilitator - Possible reflection questions might include:
1. Is your group heading in the right direction to achieve its goal?
2. Should the group revisit its expectations in light of what has happened so far?
3. What are the next steps that the group should take? What kind of adjustments should the group make?

Segment Six

Your group chose the issue of pollution in a neighborhood lake. The action they chose to take was to stencil warnings on surrounding storm drains asking community members not to use storm drains to dump waste since it will end up in the lake. The day after the group completed the stenciling, they sit down to reflect on the completion of the project. What reflection questions would be beneficial to pose at this point? What kinds of activities could you use to address these questions?

For facilitator - Possible reflection questions might include:
1. How well did your plan for action work?
2. What problems did you encounter in carrying out your plan?
3. How did you respond to these problems?
4. What were you not able to achieve?
5. What did you accomplish?
6. How do you feel about what you accomplished?
7. Do you feel like you made a difference in your community?
8. Was making a difference difficult or easy?
9. How has this experience changed you?
Creating an Action Plan

Team Names


Action Plan Title


Final Goal


List a goal for each week spent on this project. (How will you *plan your work and work your plan*?)


List 5 or more actions steps that you plan to take to help accomplish your goals.


What are some possible problems that you think could make it difficult for you to accomplish your project goals?
What actions will help you overcome these obstacles?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

List the community partner/s that will work with your team.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What role will each team member be responsible for? List the person’s name and job title.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Answer the following questions with your team. Be prepared to share your responses with the larger group.

What went well and what needs improvement?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

How did the experience affect you?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What impact will it have on your future actions?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

This Action Plan Template was developed by Terri Hallesy, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant Program.
Community Partnerships – Meeting Community Needs

Service-Learning Guidelines

- The most important service you and your students can provide to the community is to **meet a community need**. *Make sure your community wants jellybeans before you show up with a hundred jellybean baskets!*

- The best way to discover a community need is to **ask questions** of community members.

- Some **ways to ask effective questions** to determine community need include:
  - Invite a representative from that community or organization to speak to your students about their needs. *Example:* Invite a social worker from a local homeless shelter to visit your class and identify volunteer projects to benefit the shelter.
  - Create a survey for community members that will help identify needs. *Example:* Students create a survey for their parents to discover literacy needs in the home. Students create “book bags” that parents can check out and read to their children.
  - Take a field trip into the community you wish to serve such as, your school, neighborhood, or entire town. What issues do you observe as a class that you could address through service? *Example:* While touring the school, students notice that a wall is crumbling and dirty. You decide as a group to paint a mural on that wall.
  - Read local newspapers and identify social issues in your community. *Example:* While following local news stories, your class records a high amount of fires in the area. They put together a fire safety program to present at other area schools.
  - Educate yourself about a community need by interacting with members of that community. *Example:* While visiting the local hospital, your students discover that many patients wish they had magazines to read. Your students run a magazine drive to donate to the hospital.

- Remember to **think locally and globally** – a community can be your classroom, your school, your neighborhood, your town or city, the United States, or the global community!
Effective partnerships between agencies, schools, colleges or universities, businesses, government, and residents for the benefit of the community are a vital part of youth service in America. Service learning collaborations provide students with an increased confidence in their ability and show the community that young people can make valuable contributions. (PA Service-Learning Resource and Evaluation Network) By working together, we can reach a larger population, avoid duplication of efforts, make better use of resources and deal more effectively and thoroughly with the myriad of problems faced by our young people. Whether it is schools partnering with Volunteer Centers, community based organizations partnering with business, or youth corps partnering with nursing homes, the potential for and productivity of effective partnerships are limitless. However, there are a number of issues related to creating effective partnerships and this Resource Packet provides some resources that will get you thinking about how to develop and sustain them.

Like a piece of art, true collaboration is a long-term process, often going through many revisions as our environment and relationships change. However, there are a few techniques that will ensure the final masterpiece is ready for the gallery. Here are a few simple guidelines, or techniques, to guide you as you form collaborations for service learning:

- Make sure everyone shares a commitment to a common vision, since some problems will surely arise.
- Put agendas and needs (personal and organizational) out in the open, agendas or needs do not need to be identical, but should be compatible.
- Be sensitive to the needs, styles, and limitations of other collaborators.
- Involve more people at all levels; by involving more people at your organization and those with whom you collaborate you will improve the sustainability of the collaboration.
- Maintain frequent and open communication.
- Be sure everyone understands expectations especially concerning tasks and accountability.

“Full collaboration, includes not only the exchange of information, altering activities and sharing resources, but also enhancing the capacity of other partners for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose.” (Working Together for Youth) It is important to realize that DiVinci did not paint the Mona Lisa the first time he picked up a paintbrush. Since full collaboration is the most complex form of partnership, it may not be the best way to start partnerships among organizations that are unfamiliar with each other. For example, a school that has never worked with a community based organization may want to start a partnership by networking or coordination, which are simpler forms of partnership. Networking is simply sharing information for the benefit of both parties, while coordination includes a willingness to alter activities to achieve a common purpose. So our school may choose to work with a community organization by sharing relevant information about its curriculum; that is networking. If the school (or teachers at the school) decided to teach a unit at a different time during the school year because it fits in with a service opportunity, that would be coordination.

**Benefits of Service-Learning Partnership**

- Accomplish work together that would be difficult or impossible to accomplish alone.
- Build a shared sense of commitment and responsibility throughout the community.
- Ensure that everyone who is touched by the service is represented in the leadership, planning and implementation.
- Avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts among agencies.
- Offer opportunities for people to learn from each other and share resources.
- Contribute to rebuilding healthy, caring communities.
Ideas for Stewardship Projects

A slightly more ambitious form of partnership is cooperation. It builds on coordination by involving shared resources. In our example, the community organization might provide brochures and background information for students and teachers. Establishing these partnerships and personal relationships can prepare people and organizations to enter into strong true collaborations for service learning. Remember success is the best way to encourage continued partnership, so be sure to set goals that are concrete and obtainable, especially at the early stages of a partnership.

The remainder of this resource packet will include on-line resources, information on organizations and more tips. Supplementary materials have been created to help agencies work with colleges, universities and schools, as well as for colleges, universities and schools work with community organizations. If you did not receive the appropriate supplement to this packet please contact Youth Outreach at the Points of Light Foundation.

### Sorting Out Agency/School Partnerships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Networking | Sharing information                   | • Open  
• Low commitment, low risk  
• Separate                  | Volunteer Center puts a teacher on a mailing of youth volunteer opportunities |
| Coordination | Sharing information and altering activities for mutual benefit | • Open  
• Low commitment, low risk  
• May be joint, may be separate | Two agencies planning schedule for service projects so they build off of one another and are not competing for volunteers. May schedule joint activities |
| Cooperation | Sharing resources, as well as information and altering activities for mutual benefit | • Open  
• Higher commitment  
• Work together          | No one school can hire a Service Learning Coordinator, so two schools hire a service learning coordinator to find service opportunities for students at both schools |
| Collaboration | Sharing resources, information and altering activities to enhance the capacity of other partners for mutual benefit | • Open  
• Very high commitment  
• Work hand-in-hand  
• Seek joint funding | School and multiple agencies form a collaboration to engage young people as leaders. The new collaboration gets a grant to fund youth-led projects with sponsoring agencies |

### Discussion Starter Questions

The following questions can help you start conversations about partnering with schools, agencies or campus. Remember it will also be important that you provide answers to these questions to potential partners.

- What experiences have you had in community service or volunteering? What impact has that had on you?
- What experiences has your agency had working with students?
- What experiences have you had working with students?
- Why are you interested in this partnership?
- What do you think is the most important reason for involving students in service-learning?
- What is one thing you hope students would learn about the community or society?
- What are the major challenges to providing services to community?
- One dream you have for those served through your agency.
- What do you hope service-learning will accomplish at your organization?
1. Know your objectives. Before contact, build a solid base.

2. Be able to articulate your goals, your service objectives and your learning expectations.

3. Know your volunteers. What types, their range of interests, their limitations, their talents.

4. Know your resources. Can you provide PR, transportation, duplication? Remember, simple details loom large to agencies.

5. Know agencies and their programs. Understand their structure, their mission, and their activities at least well enough to ask informed questions.

6. Make a strong effort to involve others in approaching agencies and to use them in an ongoing way for program implementation.

A Checklist for Successful Partnership is:

Identify Potential Partners
- Schools
- Youth Service Organizations
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Businesses
- Recipients of Services
- Individuals

Identify Needs Which Are of Mutual Concern
- Do a needs assessment of the community with students and agency representatives.

Determine Individuals Who Will Serve as Primary Liaisons in the Planning and Implementation Process
- Assign student coordinators.
- Visit agencies ahead of time.

Set Up a Local Advisory Board

Negotiate and Agree Upon Desired Outcomes for:
- Recipient of Volunteer Services
- Student/Youth Volunteer
- Nonprofit Organization
- Educational Institution
- Others

Negotiate and Agree Upon Expectations for the:
- Recipient of Volunteer Services
- Student/Youth Volunteer
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Educational Institution
- Others

Determine Best Method for On-Going Community and Evaluation

Periodically, Redesign Relationships Based on Changing Needs and Circumstances
Select Bibliography & On-Line Resources

Building Bridges: Across Schools and Communities; Across Streams of Funding
Cross-City Campaign for Urban School Reform (1998)
This report summarizes a 1997 conference that brought community activists, school reformers and community funders together to talk about how to organize for reform using local resources and strategies, and combining school and community efforts.

The New Community Collaboration Manual
National Collaboration for Youth (1997)
Provides philosophical background of the seven keys to successful collaboration (shared vision, skilled-leadership, process orientation, cultural diversity, member driven agenda, multiple sectors and accountability).

This manual has an excellent section on forming partnership and gaining support from the community and schools.

A Pocket Guide to Building Partnerships for Service Learning
National Education Association (1996)
This guide offers insight into starting partnerships between schools and agencies for strong Service Learning Programs.

Service Learning Educator
PA Service-Learning Resource and Evaluation Network Describes practices that promote collaboration and demonstrates the value of collaboration between schools and community.

Seven Tips to Building an Effective Partnerships
Here are some tips for building partnerships with schools, parents, community organizations, businesses and faith groups. This article was created by the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education to help strengthen communities and improve educational standards.

Thinking Collaboratively: Ten Questions and Answers to Help Policy Makers Improve Children's Services
Charles Bruner (Education and Human Services Consortium) (1991) http://www.cyfernet.org/research/thinkco.html Provides some questions to ask in the planning stages of partnerships and addresses some of the limitations of collaborative partnerships.

Working Together for Youth
RespecTeen (Lutheran Brotherhood) (1993)
Pages 54-55 and 58-60 explain the different levels of collaboration and the six factors that contribute to effective partnerships.

Working Together: From School-Based Collaborative Teams to School-Community-Higher Education Connections
Center for Mental Health in Schools (1997) http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/worktogether/intro.htm This is a packet of materials on forming effective partnerships, including information on working together effectively and examples of model school-community collaborations.

Younger Voices, Stronger Choices: Promise Project's Guide to Forming Youth/Adult Partnerships
by Michael McLamery, Loring Leifer (July 1, 1997)
It's also important to partner with young people! This book shows how to create true partnerships between adults and youth for real community change.
Ideas for Stewardship Projects-14
Ideas for Stewardship Projects-15
You have a key role in helping youth learn about service learning and themselves. Youth can’t do it without you! You can help young people get the most out of this project through your enthusiasm and ability to ask thought-provoking questions. You can help youth determine goals, identify resources, create presentations, think about their choices and evaluate their own progress.

Service Learning Project Activity Guides

This is the second in a series of two service learning project activity guides for youth. The Level 1 guide takes middle school aged youth through the process of researching, planning and carrying out a service learning project. Level 2 is designed for high school aged youth. Each guide has an achievement program to encourage youth to learn and develop life skills. Your assistance in completing the achievement programs is very important.

In each activity, you’ll find a description of the project and the life skill to be emphasized, questions to follow each activity, suggestions for additional activities and helpful information. The activities are designed for youth to learn by doing.

With your help, youth reflect on what they did and what it means to them.

Your challenge is to allow youth to explore the activity and learn from the experience, even if it doesn’t work the way he or she expects. In the “Debrief” sections for each activity, the best way for you to help a young person learn is to listen as they consider each question and draws their conclusions. You may also need to help youth find additional resources.

The Service Learning Project Helper’s Guide provides additional learning by doing activities that can be adapted to the family, 4-H project groups, clubs, classrooms or other groups. You’ll also find hints about life skill development, characteristics of youth at different ages and tips for activities in the youth guides.

Acknowledgments

Design Team: Ami Neiberger-Miller (Design Team Coordinator and Writer), Barbara Brown (SC), Harriet Edwards (NC), Rhea Galati (GA), Stanley Guy (UT), Cedric Humes (SC), Katharine Leigh (CO), Sue Lerner (WA), Mark Manno (DE), Cyndi Mark (MI), Bill Million (IL), Patrick Nestor (WV), Joanne Rouche (UT), Carol Weatherford (SC), David Weatherford (SC) and Linda Williams (WA).

Edited: Ami Neiberger-Miller, Steppingstone LLC; Tom Zurcher, 4-HCCS.

Design, Illustration and Production: Rick Miller, Steppingstone LLC.


Photography: Rick Miller, Steppingstone LLC.

Table of Contents

Introduction
Note to the Project Helper .... IFC
Having Fun with Service Learning .... 2
Planning Guide .... 4
Achievement Program .... 5

Chapter 1 — Preparation
Walk About .... 6
Tunnel Vision .... 8
All Ears .... 10

Chapter 2 — Action
The Real Deal .... 12
Speak Out .... 14
Bull's Eye .... 16
Avoiding a Can of Worms .... 18
Pedal to the Metal .... 20

Chapter 3 — Reflection
Mirror Mirror .... 22
Win-Win or Lose-Lose .... 24
Telling My Story .... 26

Chapter 4 — Celebration
Voice for Change .... 28
Hear Ye, Hear Ye .... 30
Now What? .... 32
Out in the World .... 34

Appendix
My Journal .... 36
Glossary & Mission Online .... IBC

Level 1 helps youth plan their own service learning project. Activities include: public speaking, newsletter design, journaling and recognition.

The Helper's Guide supports youth working through Levels 1 or 2. Interactive group activities teaching communication skills, group process and journaling.
HAVING FUN WITH SERVICE LEARNING

Are you ready to make a difference in the world around you? Then you’re ready for the service learning project!

You will find interesting and exciting activities in this guide. You’ll learn how to research a topic, create an action plan, carry out your plan and celebrate your success. Don’t be afraid to jump right in and don’t give up if the activity doesn’t work the first time.

Journaling after each activity is an important part of this project. Check out the Service Learning CD or Project Online website for tools to help you reflect after each activity. It is especially important that you journal while conducting your service learning project on-site and take time to think about your experiences.

Achievement Program

While you are having fun doing the activities, you’ll also be completing Level 2 of the Service Learning Achievement Program shown on page 6. There are two levels in this program – one in each of the service learning project activity guides. This program will help you set goals, record your successes and be recognized for your work.

Your Project Helper

Your project helper is on your team, supporting you and making learning fun. This person may be a parent, project leader or advisor. The choice is yours. As you do the activities, you’ll discuss what you did and the questions in the “Debrief” section with your helper. Sometimes your helper will work with you to find people, groups, events, books, web sites and magazines to help complete an activity. After completing each activity, your helper will initial and date your achievement program chart on page 5.

Do your best to complete each activity and answer the questions. You may need additional resources for some activities. The internet, magazines, books, videos, DVDs and information from associations can help you. The public library, other service learning enthusiasts and your extension center will have more information.

You’ll learn a lot about service learning through this project, but you’ll also learn about yourself too. Many of the things you’ll learn are skills you can use in other areas of your life, like:

- Decision-making
- Planning and organizing
- Goal setting
- Critical thinking
- Communications

As you complete the activities, answer the questions and record your project highlights. Writing things down will help you realize how much you have learned.

Have fun!
Your Mission
In the first part of this guide, you will research a problem. After selecting a problem to focus on, you will design an action plan to address it. After accepting your mission assignment, you will go into the field as a special agent to do your service learning project. At the end of the project, you will celebrate contributions and your success.

About Service Learning
Service learning helps you apply your skills and knowledge to a real community problem. It means checking out a problem and preparing, rolling up your sleeves and doing, and figuring out what it all means. Progress often comes in small steps. Journaling can help you chart progress toward your goal. It can also remind you how your actions today impact a larger community problem or issue.

Your Journal
Journaling is very important in service learning. It helps you learn from what you did. More than just recording your activities for the day, journaling helps you think about what it all means. A journal should help you answer the question—“So What?”

When you want to make big improvements in the world around you, progress often comes in small steps. Journaling can help you chart progress toward your goal. It can also remind you how your actions today impact a larger community issue.

Write one journal page after completing each activity in this guide or after a session at your service learning project site.

If you want to write your journal by hand, make copies of page 36* and keep them in a folder. If you want to keep your journal electronically on a computer, use the Service Learning CD to open the journal page on your computer. Some people like to journal through pictures and sketches. You may want to add pages to your written or electronic journal to hold photos.

Service Learning 2
Project Guidelines
- Do a minimum of seven Level 2 activities each year.
- Complete Level 2 within three years.
- Keep the Planning Guide current by setting project goals and recording the project highlights you experience. Use extra paper if needed.
- Complete the online evaluation at www.n4hccs.org/servicelearning.

Types of Service Projects
- Direct Service - works directly with community members or those being served.
- Indirect Service - uses a “behind the scenes” approach to work on an issue or resolve a problem.
- Advocacy - advocates for a solution to a problem.

Journaling Tips
- Sit in a quiet place where you can concentrate.
- Think through your day and service learning activities.
- Use all of your senses as you recall how things looked, tasted, smelled, sounded and felt.
- Be honest. Write down your real feelings—not just the best-sounding answers.

* Copying of any other pages of a 4-HCCS Publication is a copyright infringement (see back cover). Such practices are prohibited without advanced, written permission directly from the National 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System, Inc. Requests may be made to: 4hcurriculum@n4hccs.org
Watershed or Groundwater Festival

By sponsoring a watershed or groundwater festival at your school or in your community, you can help raise awareness about the importance of clean water and the need for watershed protection. A watershed or groundwater festival celebrates the unique aspects of a given watershed through educational activities, exhibits, and entertainment. The water festival concept is an enormously successful way to educate both children and adults. Make your event something that will inspire and motivate people to protect their watershed!

Schools may want to partner with their local or state water quality agency or a local watershed organization for help in planning the festival. Activities should be as hands-on as possible. Some ideas might include the Enviroscape Model, a 3-dimensional representation of a watershed (see box). You may want to check with the education office in your state water quality agency or with the local Cooperative Extension Service office—they might have a model to loan out. Aquifer in a Cup is a simple hands-on demonstration of how pollution moves through an aquifer (See EPA's Web site at http://www.epa.gov/safewater/kids). A Household Hazardous Ring Toss where rings listing household products are tossed onto stands representing disposal options is another idea. Be creative!

Steps for Organizing a Festival

The first steps are to define the watershed and then set up a committee to begin organizing the event. You should begin this process well in advance of your planned festival. The committee should:

1. Decide the size of the event
2. Select the location and date
3. Identify and recruit activity presenters
4. Organize volunteers
5. Contact potential financial and in-kind donators
6. Provide information to the media about the event
7. Evaluate event afterwards

Enviroscape Models

EnviroScape interactive units dramatically demonstrate water pollution—and its prevention. Models cover Nonpoint Sources, Wetlands, Coastal, Hazardous Materials and Landfills, Riparian Areas, and Groundwater. Setup videos and curriculum are also available.

Schools may want to check first with the education office in their state water quality agency or with a Cooperative Extension Service—they often have models to loan out (look in the blue pages of your phone book). Or, schools can contact Enviroscape directly and ask for assistance in locating a model for loan. Call Erin Foster at 703-631-8810, ext. 12.

For more information, visit the Enviroscape Web site at http://www.enviroscales.com

E-mail: info@enviroscales.com

Ideas for Stewardship Projects-20
Through the Talk It Up series, Partnership members share tips with one another about advocating effectively for service-learning. To read earlier issues, go to http://www.service-learningpartnership.org/publications.

JOIN FORCES TO IMPROVE AMERICAN PUBLIC EDUCATION

By Vince Meldrum, President of Earth Force

Advocates for environmental education, service-learning, and civics have much in common. Environmental classes frequently include hands-on projects to help students understand the subject matter. Service-learning projects often focus on environmental issues, such as recycling, schools, and energy conservation. And, both approaches to education aim to strengthen students’ civic participation skills.

Yet, if we are candid, we must acknowledge that while environmental, service-learning, or civics teachers are all well-meaning, too often their curricula lacks the depth we would like to see. When programs are shortened to a single day, when educators aren’t able to relate the project to academic content, or when students aren’t asked to look for the root causes of problems, the quality of the programs suffers. As a result, students do not develop a lasting sense of environmental stewardship or the civic skills to address complex problems.

This situation is unlikely to improve unless advocates for environmental education, service-learning, and civics in American public schools join forces. We seek similar reforms in the education system—changes in the structure of the instructional day, in teacher preparation and ongoing professional development, and in support for out-of-classroom learning. We won’t secure these changes unless we work together.

Fortunately, the building blocks for collaboration are in place. All of these disciplines focus on helping students become good citizens. Education for citizenship is central to each discipline’s vision of school reform. We all promote similar strategies for improved teaching. And we all face the same types of challenges, including the current accountability system for American public schools, which does not embrace the civic purposes of schooling and thus neglects students’ civic competencies.

With a common agenda, we will be more effective in our education reform efforts. The centerpiece of our effort must be support for student involvement in community problem-solving. Teaching that encompasses community problem-solving focuses on real-world needs in the context of a curriculum aligned with the relevant standards, uses a service-learning framework, and expands students’ habits of civic participation.
To advance our common agenda, advocates must use the building blocks for collaboration, as follows.

1 Focus on our shared goal. We all aim to provide students with crucial civic skills and dispositions. Dr. William Stapp, from the University of Michigan, helped shape environmental education, noting that it is “aimed at producing a citizenry that is knowledgeable concerning the biophysical environment and its associated problems, aware of how to help solve those problems, and motivated to work toward their solution.” The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 cites civic responsibility in its definition of service learning. Former Senator John Glenn, chair of the National Commission on Service-Learning, calls service-learning “the single best way to educate young people for active citizenship in a democracy.” Finally, civic service-learning is one of the six model approaches to civic education recommended by the Carnegie Corporation’s Civic Mission of Schools report.

2 Acknowledge our similar challenges. We all seek to maintain quality while we expand practice. But in fact practice is uneven. For example, according to the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation, more environmental content is reaching students, but the lasting impact on them is minimal. This research shows that while students may know more about the environment, they are no more likely to change their habits or take other action as a result. The Foundation envisions improving environmental education through students’ ownership of projects focused on local problems. Service-learning and civics face similar challenges.

3 Promote teaching strategies that focus on problem-solving and projects. We all promote the value of interdisciplinary projects that engage students in community problem-solving to master core academic standards. The reaction to current education policy and budgets threaten our work. Let’s advocate at every level for teaching that involves community problem-solving, environmental projects, service-learning, and civics. Let’s ask state education departments to sponsor meetings of Learn and Serve staff with specialists in K-12 content areas, such as civics and environmental education, in order to identify or create rigorous, integrated units around local environmental issues. Let’s make education for citizenship as important as any other subject when it comes to classroom time, teacher training, materials, testing, and field trip support. Let’s advance a common research agenda. Let’s support others’ work that shares our purposes. Let’s work together to advance the initiatives already in place like the Civic Mission of Schools Campaign (www.civicmissionofschools.org), the Alliance for Representative Democracy’s state civic education campaigns http://www.representativedemocracy.org/CivicEd_StateSummaries.htm, and Service Learning United (www.servicelearningunited.org).

Vince Meldrum, President, Earth Force, Inc.

Vince Meldrum is the President of Earth Force, Inc., the national organization associated with Frontrange Earth Force. Vince is a member of the steering committees for the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, Service-Learning United, the General Motors Educational Advisory Council and the Ethos International Advisory Board, and the Michigan Task Force on Social Studies Assessment.

For more information about Earth Force e-mail earthforce@earthforce.org or visit http://www.earthforce.org.
Curriculum Development for K-12 Service-Learning
Source: RMC Research Corporation, Denver, CO, September 2005

High quality service-learning can contribute to student academic achievement and civic and social development. However, for these outcomes to occur, service-learning projects must be organized to maximize the meaningfulness of both service and learning.

Service-learning is considered a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. Constructivists (e.g., Brooks & Brooks, 1999) advocate allowing students to actively create knowledge by grappling with essential academic ideas in a personally and socially relevant context. Many constructivists also recommend that instruction be organized around a problem, and that students acquire knowledge and skills within the problem-solving experience. Service-learning shares this emphasis on active learning and problem solving. However, it is unique in that the problems that students encounter are real community needs, and the knowledge and skills gained, those needed for informed, engaged citizenship.

Although there are several useful models for organizing service-learning projects, in a constructivist framework, service-learning is viewed as a cyclical process with four interlocking phases: problem identification and preparation for service, the service activity itself, reflection, and celebration and future planning. The following figures explain these steps in more detail.
Regardless of the type of project, service-learning should incorporate standards for best practice. According to ASLER (the Alliance for Service Learning in Education Reform, 1995), effective service-learning:

- Strengthens both service and academic learning.
- Provides concrete opportunities for youth to learn new skills, to think critically, and to test new roles in an environment that encourages risk taking and rewards competence.
- Includes preparation and reflection
- Recognizes young people's efforts
- Involves youth in the planning, and
- Makes a meaningful contribution to the community.

References

Tell me more about Give Water A Hand!

FREE!! Download the Action Guide and Leader Guide

Descargue la Guía de Acción en español

Where to order printed copies

Our partners and how they can help you!

Contact Give Water A Hand

Other helpful water related web sites

The Environmental Resources Center website has moved to http://www.uwex.edu/erc.

MAKE A SPLASH! -- Do you know of a youth group or class that wants to take action to improve local water quality? With Give Water A Hand, young people team up with educators, natural resource experts and committed community members to study water issues and take ACTION!

To learn more about Give Water a Hand and how you can launch this successful program in your community, school or home, click here. Find out how YOU can Give Water A Hand!
What do you know about water quality in your community?

- Do the wild animals, birds, and fish have clean, healthy places to live?
- Do you care about the streams, lakes or wetlands in your neighborhood?
- Do you know where your drinking water comes from? Is it being polluted by storm runoff, industrial wastes, or other local sources of pollution?

Most important, what do young people know about these issues?

- Do the wild animals, birds, and fish have clean, healthy places to live?
- Do they have skills needed to protect local water resources?
- How can young people become active environmental stewards?

If these questions make you curious about local water quality and what you can do to help, click here to find out more about Give Water A Hand!

Give Water A Hand

*for young people taking action in their community*

What is Give Water A Hand?
Give Water A Hand is a national watershed education program designed to involve young people in local environmental service projects. Following steps in the Give Water A Hand Action Guide (download it for FREE!), your youth group or class plans and completes a community service project to protect and improve water resources.

Here's how it works... Give Water A Hand program activities are presented in two publications — the youth Action Guide and the Leader Guidebook (for youth leaders and teachers). These easy-to-follow, illustrated guides show how to organize and carry out effective action-oriented projects. To see the basic steps you'll follow to protect and improve your watershed resources, click here.

You can obtain the guides for FREE, by downloading them from this web site.

The Action Guide is also available in Spanish! CLICK HERE to download the Guía de Acción FOR FREE!

PULSE AQUI para bajar una copia gratis de la Guía de Acción!

For a printed version of the Guía de Acción, please contact our office.

The Action Guide is also available in Spanish!