

Name: _____

Date: _____

Strengthen Your Community

Part 1: Examples of Community Service



"Community service" combines: "community" (a group of people with a common interest, background, or purpose) and "service" (work that benefits others). Community service strengthens communities and brings people together to achieve something that may not be possible for one person to do alone.

People of all ages, including young people, take part in community service. In class, you've been identifying and discussing different needs and problems in your local community. Below are examples of what young people have done to address needs and problems in their communities. After you read them, think about what you can do in your local community.



All photos courtesy NFL Photos.

- In Massachusetts a 12-year-old started a petition and testified with friends at a town meeting to protect a wooded area from being destroyed by a condominium development project. The woods are still there.¹
- Fourth-grade students in Maine held a canned-food drive at their school and donated the food to the local food pantry. Representatives from the classes helped prepare the food for distribution to the clients of the food pantry.²
- A Georgia middle school student organized Kids' Kitchen and enlisted volunteers aged eight to twelve to serve lunches to needy people, who were mostly children, during summer vacation.³
- California teenagers organized a relay race in their hometown to raise awareness about the conditions in local rivers that endanger salmon and other fish.⁴
- Virginia students, aged eight to eleven, visited residents at a senior home, made cards for local men and women serving overseas, coordinated a school-wide recycling program, and participated in book drives and reading to preschoolers.⁵

WHAT YOU CAN DO—Below are some more ideas for community service projects you can get involved in. Check out other ideas at the Kids Care Web site, www.kidscare.org/index.jsp, and Action Without Borders Web site, www.idealists.org/kt/index.html.

- Organize and lead workshops on bike safety.
- Research the problem of local air pollution, and start a "Share-a-Ride" campaign.
- Help local food pantries stock shelves.
- Participate in a community-wide cleanup day.
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen.
- Tutor elementary students after school.
- Plant a community garden.
- Visit the elderly at a senior center.

List your ideas for community service projects that would be helpful in your community.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

1. www.kidscanmakeadifference.org/cando.htm 2. www.kidscanmakeadifference.org/cando.htm 3. <http://users.safeaccess.com/olsen/service.html>
 4. www.charityfocus.org/blog/cf/arch/local_events/000911.html 5. www.kidscare.org/FCF/cotmDetail.jsp?itemID=38

Part 2: Reaching Consensus

A consensus is an agreement reached by a group of people. Members of the group must listen carefully to others' opinions and must be open to other ideas. The goal of each group member is not to convince others to accept a particular idea. The goal is to make a decision that most can agree on and which everyone will support.

When your class has agreed on a need or problem in your community, follow the steps below to reach an agreement on a community service project acceptable to the whole class that you could be involved in.

1. Focus

Following your teacher's directions, work in a small group to come up with a list of three possible community service projects. Write a brief name and description of each project on a 3" x 5" index card.

Share the information on your cards with the class. Listen carefully to the project ideas of others. Be willing to change your mind about your ideas.

2. Evaluate

Through discussion, narrow the class list to three community service projects. Rank them in the spaces below, with "A" being your first choice. Include reasons for your choices and be ready to discuss them with the class.

Project A:

Because:

Project B:

Because:

Project C:

Because:

3. Reach Consensus

A group of people who listen carefully to each other's ideas and who are willing to change their minds will reach a consensus, an agreement acceptable to everyone. What was the consensus of your class?
