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www.nationalservice.gov/summerofservice
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Frequently Asked Questions about Summer of Service (SOS)

What is Summer of Service?

Summer of Service is a national coalition of major youth-serving organizations that are committed to engaging youth in service during the summer months and recognize the potential of youth to identify issues, develop projects, and provide lasting benefits to the communities in which they live through volunteer service. Any organization that deals with youth ages 5 to 21 is encouraged to become part of the initiative. Sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service in collaboration with USA Freedom Corps, Summer of Service is supported by AmeriCorps, SeniorCorps, Learn and Serve America, and National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) and hundreds of non-profit organizations nationally.

Why Summer of Service?

Without exposure to constructive activities, summer can be a difficult time for young people. The Summer of Service initiative recognizes the potential of all youth to contribute in meaningful ways to the communities in which they live through volunteer service. As we know from experience and research, youth who are involved in their communities through service do better in school, engage in fewer risky behaviors, have a better sense of themselves, and feel more empowered to make a difference in their own lives than do youth who do not participate in volunteer activities. In addition, a Summer of Service can be an excellent springboard for a year of service.

Who Can Participate in Summer of Service?

Any organization that deals with youth ages 5 to 21 during the summer months is encouraged to become part of the initiative; natural partners include schools, summer camps, and youth-

serving organizations. National youth-serving organizations that have affiliates throughout the country are invited to register as a Summer of Service National Affiliate. (Go to www.nationalservice.gov/summerofservice for more information on the benefits of becoming a Summer of Service National Affiliate.)

Individual youth can also participate in Summer of Service by independently helping to meet a need such as tutoring a child, helping an elderly neighbor, or by volunteering at a community-based organization. Youth can visit www.volunteer.gov to find a service opportunity in their area.



What Resources are Available?

The Corporation for National and Community Service has developed a Summer of Service web site at www.nationalservice.gov/summerofservice which includes a "how to" toolkit developed by Youth Service America and the Corporation. The web site also has links to "high quality service and service-learning projects" developed by Summer of Service National Affiliates. The 2007 toolkit targets summer program coordinators and staff and is intended for use with small groups of youth.

What Activities Are Encouraged?

Virtually all community-serving activities by youth are encouraged. That includes previously planned summer activities for youth, as well as new activities. Projects that engage youth in service linked to learning (i.e., service-learning) are particularly encouraged.

What is 'High-Quality Service-Learning'?

High quality service activities for youth typically incorporate one or more elements of high-quality service-learning, in which community service is combined with learning objectives, which may include the development of leadership or civic skills. High quality service-learning includes these elements: engaging youth in planning the service activity; having youth reflect, in an organized way on their service in the context of the skills or concepts learned; engaging youth directly with the recipients of service; and ensuring that youth serve at least 20 hours per semester in direct service activities.

How Can We Recognize Youth for Their Service?

National Affiliate organizations are encouraged to become certifying organizations for the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) and use it as the official recognition of the Summer of Service. Youth up to 14 years of age who dedicate a minimum of 50 hours to volunteer service, and youth 15 and older who perform a minimum of 100 volunteer hours, are eligible to receive a PVSA pin, a personalized certificate of achievement, a note of congratulations from the President of the United States, and a letter from the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. For more information, visit www.presidentialserviceawards.gov

Is There a Cost?

There is no cost for the downloadable Summer of Service Toolkit or to become

a certifying organization for the President's Volunteer Service Award. There is a nominal cost for the PVSA award pins and certificates.

What Else Does Summer of Service Include?

Summer of Service includes, but is not limited to, the following initiatives:

Summer of Service National Affiliate

Network: The Summer of Service National Affiliate Network is a network of national organizations that engage youth of all ages in activities during the summer months and, in so doing, recognize the potential of youth to identify issues, develop projects, and provide lasting benefits to the communities in which they live through volunteer service. Members of the network pledge to provide their affiliated organizations with a variety of materials prepared by the Corporation to help organizations plan and carry out volunteer activities, including toolkits, best practices, and sample projects.

Members are strongly encouraged to use the President's Volunteer Service Award as the official recognition of Summer of Service volunteer activity. National Affiliate Network members include the National Network of Youth Ministers, Youth Service America, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Campfire USA, the National Collaboration for Youth, and Girls, Inc.

NCCC Summer of Service:

The NCCC Summer of Service is a federally funded, intensive, residential service program for youth ages 14 to 17. Developed by AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC), the three-week program, which takes place July 8-28, is designed to introduce teenagers, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to national service and to foster in

them such values as teamwork, responsibility, and the ethic of serving one's community. In 2007, the program will be held in three cities -- Charleston, SC, Denver, CO and New Orleans, LA -- with projects ranging from education, to environmental awareness, to Hurricane Katrina recovery. All 300 participants in the program will receive free meals, lodging, and uniforms; a stipend of about \$100 per week; a certificate of completion; and a President's Volunteer Service Award.

Neighborhood Youth Service Clubs:

Neighborhood Youth Service Clubs is a collaborative effort by the Corporation, its grantees and local faith and educational institutions to establish youth clubs in neighborhoods where youth -- particularly those of middle-school age -- are not connected to any organized summer activities. These small groups of youth (led by AmeriCorps*VISTA Summer Associates, with support from RSVP and Foster Grandparent) will identify and carry out service projects that address the needs of their neighborhood. Youth will be recruited as members of the clubs through distribution of flyers in schools before summer recess begins.

In the summer of 2007, the Corporation's New Jersey State Office and the New Jersey State Service Commission will pilot the concept in three major cities, with the goal of establishing 15 Neighborhood Youth Service Clubs. The lessons learned will help to inform a larger roll-out of the concept in 2008.

For More Information:

For more information on Summer of Service, visit www.nationalservice.gov or contact Theresa Clower at tclower@cns.gov or 202-606-6755

The Corporation for National and Community Service improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Its main programs include Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America. Together with USA Freedom Corps, a White House initiative to promote volunteering, the Corporation is working to foster a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America.



Tips for an Effective Summer of Service (SOS)

Let youth lead.

SOS provides powerful opportunities for youth to be community leaders. The best projects are inspired and led by youth, starting from day one.

Start early and pay attention to planning and strategy.

Detailed and timely planning is necessary to build true partnerships and allow young people to lead the way.

Build broad based community support.

Summer of Service is an opportunity for the entire community to come together for a common cause. Bringing together schools, businesses, neighborhoods, religious and professional groups, clubs, and/or organizations will provide access to an unlimited amount of resources and create ongoing partnerships

Increase your community's capacity to support young people.

Summer of Service is intended to inspire and build upon the idea that youth are current assets of a community. As you plan, consider what relationships, events, and learning activities will increase the community's ability to support youth leadership throughout the year.

Seek out diverse community members to help.

Define diversity in your community – every community is different and definitions vary. Reach out to those who might not otherwise be asked to participate. Look for differences in

race, ethnicity, political affiliations, religious beliefs, gender, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, age, education, and physical ability.

Allow planning to build inter-generational relationships.

Use the planning process to build relationships between generations. Let old and young learn from each other and create an environment where communication is expected and respected.

Turn service into service-learning.

Schools and community groups are using service-learning as a powerful vehicle to improve student achievement and personal development. Build in learning opportunities through all the stages of the preparation, action, reflection, and celebration process.

Engage media and government officials.

The best way to build support for youth and service within these two critical groups is to let members of the media and government officials participate in or see great projects for themselves.

Link service to civic engagement

Quality service exposes volunteers to pressing community needs. After SOS project is complete, ask yourself and others, "What's next?" Help youth learn about and address the causes of community problems. Youth maximize their impact when they combine service and civic engagement.

How to Engage in a Summer of Service

Early and deliberate planning is the best way to ensure a successful Summer of Service.. Most of the work to plan a project takes place before you start your project. This section of the toolkit addresses the following topics:

Step 1: Create a Planning Committee

Step 2: Create a Common Vision and Purpose

Step 3: Set Goals

Step 4: Pick your Projects

Step 5: Set up a Planning Structure

Step 6: Create a Timeline

Step 7: Create a Realistic Budget and Start Fund raising

Step 8: Make it Last



Step 1: Create a Planning Committee

Summer of Service is an opportunity to ask the community to come together, to go beyond the usual networks and associations and to forge powerful new relationships. Let the SOS be an example of how the community can unite through a common commitment to young people and service.

Since SOS focuses on young people who are also students, include teachers and administrators on the planning committee. Many schools also have community service coordinators who help students fulfill their required volunteer hours.

Sometimes the most difficult part of community planning is recognizing who else should be involved. Most of us tend to rely on people and organizations we already know. That is a good starting point, but these projects can go beyond being “another event on the calendar” if it pulls together people and groups in new ways. When planning a project for SOS, think about answers to the following questions:

- ✓ How does your community traditionally organize itself? Where are its greatest assets?
- ✓ To whom do people look to for leadership?
- ✓ Who are the well-connected people? Where do people gather?

- ✓ Who values young people and community service in your community?
- ✓ Who is usually involved in these projects? Who is not? Why not?

Create a list of key stakeholders in the community. Determine how you can involve the following groups:

- Youth committees or councils
- Local businesses
- Elementary schools, high schools, and colleges
- Service clubs (Rotary, Lions, Elks, Kiwanis, etc)
- Athletic groups or associations
- Elected and appointed officials
- Corporations (especially those that involve their employees in community service)
- Nonprofit organizations
- Fraternal organizations
- Local government officials and agencies
- Neighborhood associations
- Media

Still looking for ideas? The local chapters of the SOS National Affiliates are a good place to start. National Affiliates are listed earlier in this Tool Kit and on the SOS website, with links to each affiliate's site. On many of these sites, you can search for the local affiliates in your area.

In addition to recognizing the year-round accomplishments of young people, Summer of Service should be a youth-led accomplishment in itself. Adults sometimes think it is easier to do things "for" youth. However, Summer of Service is about tapping into the skills and enthusiasm of young people.

This is an excellent opportunity for young people to plan a major community event so that Summer of Service can be both by and about young people.

STEP 2: Create a Common Vision and Purpose

After assembling the planning committee, discuss the vision for your community's SOS events. Young people play a critical role in this process, so incorporate opinions from youth outside the planning committee. For example:

"We envision a Summer of Service as an opportunity for every student in the city to participate in a meaningful community service event. Our participation in a Summer of Service will foster a sense of civic responsibility and pride among our youth."

STEP 3: Set Goals

Once you've assembled your planning committee, use your vision and purpose to set specific and measurable goals. Goals may include specific learning objectives. Although your group might be very ambitious, try to pick just three major goals. Here are some examples of major goals that others have used:

- To highlight the accomplishments of young people

- To forge new community partnerships
- To develop youth leadership in the community
- To advance the 5 goals of America's Promise (visit www.americaspromise.org)
- To recruit more people into existing service programs
- To improve the local schools through youth service
- To educate youth on community problems
- To address the problem of _____
- To learn more about _____



STEP 4: Pick Your Projects

Things to Keep in Mind

Summer of Service projects address a wide variety of issues, including hunger and homelessness, the environment, health and nutrition, public safety, tutoring and mentoring, and many other areas. When thinking about what kind of project you will do, look around your school, neighborhood, community, country, or world. Think about where the needs are, what you would like to

see improved, and how you can make a difference.

When considering your service project, also consider the issue(s) that you are passionate about. For example, if you enjoy spending time with animals, host a Pet Awareness Fair to teach the community about proper care of pets and encourage people to adopt animals from your local animal shelter. If you like to hike, adopt a section of a local trail and work with friends to keep it clean and well maintained.

You may also wish to select a project that will help you learn more about an issue or specific skills you want to develop.

Whatever your project, there are several things you can do to maximize its impact:

Make your project a service-learning project. Service-learning is a powerful teaching and learning strategy that enables young people to address important community needs by planning and executing service projects that are tied to curricula or a program's learning objectives.

Combine service with civic action to make a lasting impact. This includes voting; encouraging others to vote; educating peers, community members, and government officials about key issues; advocacy and more.

Invite others to serve with you, especially those who aren't typically asked to serve. The number one reason that people volunteer for the first time is that someone directly asks them to. Yet

many groups of young people are traditionally not invited to serve; for example: young children, youth with disabilities, youth of color, youth who are not performing well in school, youth in foster care, and youth who live in poor communities.

Make a special effort to reach out to these young people, and others who have not typically been asked to help others.

Types of Service Projects

Community-Wide Celebration

Follow the example of those who engage in Global Youth Service Day: organize a planning coalition, host opening/closing celebrations, coordinate local media outreach, involve government officials, and more. To access effective practices shared by Lead Agencies in Global Youth Service Day, visit www.YSA.org



Serve-a-thon Serve-a-thons allow you to combine community service and fundraising for local projects or organizations by taking pledges for hours of service. Create pledge sheets that volunteers can use to solicit contributions before the service day, and collect the funds raised when volunteers arrive for their service projects.

Community Service Map Organize a group of friends to visit nonprofits, places of worship, libraries, and other places that may need volunteers and educate these groups on how they can post their volunteer opportunities on www.volunteermatch.org or www.SERVE.net.org This will help increase the number of opportunities for everyone to serve throughout the year.

Single Service Project Be sure to work with the people and organizations you want to help when you are identifying your project. There is nothing worse than filling and delivering backpacks only to find out that the people you want to help already have them – and have no place to store extras.

Following are examples of service projects others have done. Use them to get the creative juices flowing!

Help for the Hungry/Homeless

- Help cook, serve a meal or distribute food at a homeless shelter or food bank
- Spend time with/tutor homeless children
- Gather clothing from your neighbors and donate it to a local shelter
- Make "I Care" kits with combs, toothbrushes, shampoo, etc. for homeless people
- If your community doesn't have a food bank, work with local officials to start one
- Develop a plan for reducing hunger/homelessness in your community. Share it with others, and implement it
- Organize a neighborhood group to plant, tend, and harvest a vegetable garden. Donate the produce to a food bank.

Homebound Citizens

- Rake leaves, shovel snow, clean gutters, or wash windows
- Write letters for or read to them
- Deliver meals to homebound individuals
- Offer to pick up groceries with/for a senior citizen
- Teach a senior friend how to use a computer or the internet
- Get a group together to sign, present a play, deliver small gifts, hold a dance, or play games with residents of a nursing home or rehabilitation center

- Interview community elders and write about his or her life. Get your story published in your school or community newsletter, local paper, etc.



Neighborhood Enhancement

- Create brochures and booklets about local history; house the finished products in local museums or libraries
- Clean up a vacant lot
- Organize a campaign to raise money to purchase and install new playground equipment in an area park
- Campaign for street lamps in poorly lit areas
- Paint a mural or clean up a local park
- Plant flowers in public areas that could use some color

People with Special Needs

- Volunteer to help at a Special Olympics event
- Set up a buddy system for kids with special needs at your school
- Raise money for Braille or large print books for the visually impaired

- Volunteer at an agency that works with emotionally disturbed children
- Read books or the newspaper on tape for visually impaired people
- Bring toys to children in the cancer ward of a hospital

Politics and Government

- Identify a local issue you are concerned about and contact someone in local government with your ideas on what to do about it
- Organize a public issues forum for your neighborhood
- Volunteer at a polling booth the day of an election
- Invite government officials to participate in your projects
- Write letters to your U.S. Members of Congress telling them about how you've addressed community needs

The Environment

- Plant a garden or tree where the whole neighborhood can enjoy it
- Set up a recycling system for your home and participate in your neighborhood curbside recycling pick-up
- Organize a carpooling campaign in your neighborhood to reduce air pollution
- Create a habitat for wildlife
- Create a campaign to encourage biking and walking
- Test the health of the water in your local lakes, rivers, or streams

Young Children

- Tutor a student that needs help learning English or another subject.
- Read to younger children or encourage them to read to you.
- Teach younger children about a subject you care about—drug/ alcohol awareness, leadership skills, conflict resolution, nutrition, etc.
- Invite younger children to volunteer with you!

Disaster Relief

- Needs change quickly during a disaster. Check with your local Red Cross to see what is needed before you begin.



STEP 5: Set up a Planning Structure

After you decide what projects to take on, determine what committee structures will best fulfill your needs. Create your structures based on the key questions: *Who? When? Where? How? Materials? Cost?*

It is very important to establish a structure that allows for youth voice. Consider the lines of communication, the process for decision-making, and the channels of accountability.

It is also important to have a clear idea of who is doing what and when they are doing it. Your committee set-up depends on the size of your project, the number of participants for the project, how elaborate your goals are, and what projects you choose.

The best structures have committees and multiple leadership positions so many talented people can work on a project at the same time. This also increases the capacity of the project to handle many volunteers.

The following is a sample list of possible committee chairs for SOS.

- Overall coordinator
- Fundraising chair
- Project logistics chair
- Photo/video coordinator
- Public relations chair
- Recruitment chair
- Service-learning coordinator
- Evaluation and record-keeping chair

STEP 6: Create a Timeline

Work from the project date backwards when setting dates and include a process for ongoing evaluation and accountability. You might, for example, check in with everyone at the beginning of each meeting: *Are we on target? Are there*

any challenges? Where are we on the timeline? If things are not on schedule, the group determines how to keep things on track and what additional support or resources might be needed.

Things to remember when writing a timeline: be realistic and remember that each deadline affects many others. Each committee should determine their own deadlines that are added to their own master list.



STEP 7: Create a Realistic Budget and Start Fundraising

Great things can be accomplished with very little money, but do not underestimate costs. Posters, banners, sound system rental, T-shirts, hats and tools all cost money. Make a careful list of what each committee needs and estimate costs -- then use fundraising to not only gain financial support, but also to

publicize your SOS project and the good work young people do.

Here are some strategies that others have successfully used:

Fundraising Events These events are designed to increase visibility for your organization and youth service while encouraging a large number of individuals to make small financial contributions. They can be a fun opportunity for young people to take an organizational lead in projects.

Consider holding a car wash, used book sale, raffle, rummage sale, bake sale, or small reception and tour of your facility. They are easy to plan and most young people have participated in at least one of these events in the past. In addition to the monetary support you receive, these events are great publicity for you and SOS.

Local Business Support Summer of Service is a great way to include local businesses and corporations in youth initiatives and programs. Involvement can mean more than just writing a check.

Refer to your list of materials and ask local businesses to make “in-kind” contributions, such as food, office supplies, balloons, film, etc. Ask them to purchase ad space in your event’s program or sponsor a paid public service announcement on TV or radio for your Summer of Service project.

Local businesses may be willing to volunteer their staff’s time and experience and may even pitch in on your event day! Let them know they

will benefit from the publicity and recognition in all of your materials.

Individual Support It is also a good idea to make your budget and event information available to the entire community so that everyone can understand how to help. Tell everyone that you seek \$100 or \$500 sponsors who could be recognized at an award ceremony as outstanding supporters of youth initiatives.

Keep the community informed about your fundraising progress. The “Dollar Thermometer” is a popular visual gauge of money yet to be earned and gives a sense of the importance to every dollar given toward the goal.

Take Care of Your Sponsors Write follow-up letters and invite sponsors to visit your program. Let them know how much you value their support. Send thank you letters from staff and volunteers. Give them as much publicity and recognition as you possibly can.

Your supporters often make terrific guest speakers. Remember, donors you reach through Summer of Service can be potential sponsors for future initiatives and you should solidify relationships as much as possible.



Step 8: Make it Last

Recognizing the positive contributions of youth to your community and connecting service to citizenship are two of many ways to make SOS last.

Recognition

Many communities celebrate SOS by recognizing the contributions youth make year-round. Recognition is a powerful motivator to encourage youth to continue their service throughout their lifetime. Sample activities include:

1. Awards Ceremonies

Present awards for service such as the President's Volunteer Service Award (www.presidentialserviceawards.org), to deserving volunteers. Host a dinner or reception for the ceremony and contact area restaurants to get donations of food or plan a pot-luck.

Invite community leaders, government officials, elected representatives, or area celebrities to speak and present awards.

2. Young Hero Awards

Set up new awards for outstanding young people in the community. Take nominations from area youth organizations and local schools, or simply have students nominate their peers. One award could be for the best SOS project.

3. Religious Services

A Mass, "Service Sabbath," inter-denominational or ecumenical service can be organized to recognize the spirit of service in all participants.

4. Free Concerts

Host a free concert featuring performing groups from local high schools, colleges and universities, or community music and theater groups. Have "service" be the theme. Young people who participate in service activities can read their favorite quotes about service or present their own ideas and words of wisdom.

5. Panel Discussions

Host a presentation or panel discussion by current volunteers, alumni, administrators, politicians, members of the media, and community leaders focusing on the value of community service. Presentations might include videos, slide shows, or journal readings. Be sure to make the panel as representative of participants as possible.

Consider inviting a speaker representing another country to learn about the nature of community service from an international perspective.

6. City-Wide Forums

Invite youth to convene local government officials to discuss major challenges facing the community and how young people can address these issues.

7. “Know Your Community” Projects

The SOS planning process is a great opportunity for youth to learn more about their community. Community asset mapping, historical facts, folklore, demographic patterns, and current community issues and social problems are all rich areas for exploration. Display or present projects on Summer of Service and ask the local paper to publish examples.

8. History of Young People

Youth can research outstanding young people and their contributions to society. Such projects can be fun and inspiring for young leaders and can be presented to the community as a whole.

9. Community Fair

Organize a fair with decorated tables, each with a spokesperson to share their group’s reflections on their contribution to the service project and their plans for ongoing service. Solicit area businesses for food, music, and awards.



10. Community Presentation

Hold a video or slide show presentation about your service project for members of the community. Present a play, skits, poems, or songs to teach others about the issue and inspire them to get involved. Contact service clubs such as Rotary, Lions, or Kiwanis and schedule a presentation of your achievements at one of their members’ meetings. Ask your favorite local radio or television station to let you talk about your project.

Civic Engagement

What good is today’s project, if the next generation of volunteers has to clean up the same dirty river or tutor in the same sub-standard school? Connecting your project to civic action will increase the impact of volunteer service in your community.

1. Invite local, state and federal officials and candidates to participate in your service activities.

Educate them about your perspective on the issue and ask for their support.

2. Create a website.

Educate your school or community about an issue.

3. Invite the local newspaper, television or radio station to cover your volunteer project.

If your project is highlighted, send a copy of the clip to your government officials. Include a thank you if they participated, or invite them to participate in your next project.

4. Organize a debate, town hall meeting, or youth forum.

Engage local leaders or candidates and young people in discussion about youth issues.

5. Map your community's problems and assets.

Share the results with local, state, and federal officials and candidates.

6. Launch a letter-writing campaign

Write to your Congressional Representative or Senators in



support of issues of importance to your community.

7. If you are 18 or older, REGISTER AND VOTE in the next local, state and national election.

If you are under 18, encourage your family to vote, or take someone who needs assistance to the polls.

Conclusion

Summer of Service is an opportunity to bring people together in your community to identify and address real community needs through episodic or ongoing youth service. It's about recognizing the skills and talents of our young people – and the enormous capacity they have for good.

Join us in making a Summer of Service a reality in your community!

After a Summer of Service

Strong follow-up is crucial to the success of any service project. It's not always the most glamorous work, but it's critical to ensuring a good experience for all involved, and for your ability to conduct future service projects.

Here are some important follow-up steps:

Project Completion

- Write thank you notes to sponsors, team leaders, site leaders, elected and/or agency officials, VIPs, and anyone else who helped you implement your project. People will really appreciate it, and be more apt to help again if you recognize their contribution.
- Send a final report to sponsors. In addition to a thank you note, sponsors will appreciate a summary of what you accomplished with their support. Be specific about project accomplishments, and how their support contributed to the project's success.
- Return equipment and anything else you borrowed in a timely manner.

Reflection And Evaluation

- Lead volunteers in reflection. This is best started during the project planning process, and continued periodically until the project is complete. Reflection is important to maximizing volunteers' learning from the experience. The simplest way is to ask volunteers some basic questions about their experience, such as, "What did you learn today?" "How did your experience differ from what you expected?" "What could your community/government/country do to address the issue(s) we dealt with today?" "What else can you do to affect this issue?"
- Collect evaluations and photographs from volunteers, team leaders, site leaders and VIP's. They will help you plan future service projects.
- Hold a Planning Committee evaluation session. The members of the Planning Committee who were intricately involved in the planning of your project will have lots of ideas about how to improve the planning process for future events. This a great time to hand out awards, delegate remaining tasks to be done, and celebrate your accomplishments together.



Continued Service

- Encourage youth to get funding and support to make their projects sustainable. Point them to www.genv.net where they can share their ideas and connect with youth across the globe doing the same types of projects. www.genv.net offers up to \$1,000.00 to fund ongoing projects and enables youth to interact with others working to improve their communities and their world.
- Encourage volunteers to become civically engaged. If volunteers had a good experience, they will likely be motivated to do more. Let them know that combining future service with civic involvement will maximize their impact. Give them information about how to contact influential government officials and government leaders in your community. For ideas on civic engagement, see pages
- Use partnerships you've formed to provide youth with ongoing service opportunities. People are always looking for ways to volunteer, but don't necessarily know how. Invite them to join your organization. Partner with other groups to plan future events, and publicize one another's ongoing service opportunities.

Recognition

- Award volunteers with the President's Volunteer Service Award. This White House Initiative recognizes youth who have performed between 50 and 100 hours of service in any 12-month period. For more information, www.presidentialserviceawards.gov



Appendix A:

Checklist for Project Planners

Set Specific Goals

- What do you want volunteers to get out of the project?
- What can you realistically accomplish during the time you have?

Determine Size and Scope of Your Project

- Will you serve a neighborhood or the entire community?
- How many projects can you successfully complete?
- How many volunteers can you effectively manage?

Manage Logistics and Expectations

- What equipment is needed to complete the project and who will acquire/provide it?
- Will agency staff be on hand to help with orientation and provide support on SOS?
- Does the agency have its own van or bus to help transport volunteers?
- Is the site on public transportation routes? Is parking available?
- Is there a place for volunteers to have lunch and to use washrooms?
- How far is the site from the morning kick-off site? Is the site wheelchair accessible?
- If the project is outdoors, what happens if it rains?

Arrange Transportation

Put a detail-oriented and responsible person in charge of transportation. Make sure drivers have detailed instructions and directions. Transportation arrangements will depend on your budget, volunteers' origin and destinations, and community resources. Think about contacting school bus companies, public transportation, places of worship, or non-profit organizations for borrowed vans. Carpools and chartered bus companies are also often used for service events.

Create Teams and Assign Leaders

A project with too many volunteers and not enough meaningful work can spell disaster. Most small projects (and sites) can accommodate a team of 10-15

volunteers, depending on the particular project. Regardless of how many sites you have, count on one team leader to every 10-15 volunteers. Teams with participants younger than 12 years old often need extra supervision, and youth and adult team co-captains are usually quite effective. If you are unsure about volunteer turnout, use a combination of large and small sites to prepare for a large number of volunteers. Your bigger, more public sites can accommodate larger-than-expected turnouts and allow your team leaders to assign meaningful work to all participants. An overall coordinator may oversee team leaders and be responsible for their training.

In Advance of the Project Start date

- Do a site assessment
- Communicate regularly with project site
- Make sure site expectations are met
- Participate in a team leader training
- Develop an ongoing relationship with site
- Help recruit volunteers for the site

On Project days

- Lead orientation sessions
- Coordinate/lead volunteers on site
- Act as liaison between agency and volunteers
- Ensure safety and well-being of volunteers
- Administer evaluation to volunteers
- Hold a reflection service for volunteers

After the Project is Complete

- Meet with other team leaders to reflect
- Complete site evaluation with agency
- Send thank you letters to the site
- Return equipment

Prepare team leaders

Detailed training for team leaders is crucial, as they will train their volunteers on the day of the project. Team leader training should take place at least a week in advance of the project to allow time to address last minute questions. Team leaders should meet the day before the project to run through the activities for the day. Team leader training should address:

1. How to Orient Volunteers

Volunteer orientation should be no longer than 30 minutes and address three major issues:

- **Introduction to Summer of Service**

Team leaders should set the stage by introducing the history and objectives of SOS on the national and community level (see chapter 1), and explain the importance of their particular project. Scripted outlines ensure that team leaders have this information and can communicate it to the volunteers.

- **Background information on the agency/site and related issues**

Team leaders may ask the agency contact to lead this part of the orientation. Give him/her a specific time limit and ask for background on the organization, as well as insights into the broader issues they deal with on a daily basis. Discuss the agency's ongoing volunteer needs to inspire SOS participants to make a long-term commitment to the agency.

- **The day's schedule and specific project instructions**

Team leaders should tell volunteers what time to break for lunch, who to contact if they have a question or concern, where to find restrooms and water, assign tasks, and give directions for the projects.

2. Liability and Safety Issues

Inform team leaders of emergency procedures and any relevant liability issues. They should know what to do in case of an accident: where to locate a first aid kit on site, who to contact, how to transport a volunteer to the nearest hospital.

3. Evaluation with Volunteers and the Site

Team leaders must understand the importance of evaluation. Walk through the questions from both volunteer and team leader evaluations and discuss why certain questions are asked and how the information will be used. (For example, see the SOS Evaluation in Chapter 9 of this Tool Kit). Make sure team leaders know whether or not pens or pencils will be provided, how and when to distribute and collect the evaluation forms, and where to drop them off at the end of the day. Be very specific about this process, and include a ballpark figure on how much time it will take to complete the forms on site. Evaluations with agencies should be done the week following the completion of the project. Set a time to meet in a relaxed environment to discuss how the day went and to complete any unresolved issues.

4. "On Site" Learning and Reflection

On site learning occurs through the experiences of the day. This can be done by asking volunteers one or more questions at the start of the event for them to consider during the day. These questions could be about the agency, the issue, clients, or personal ideas and attitudes.

The best way to facilitate reflection is to simply ask teams to sit down at the end of the day for a few minutes and share their thoughts about the day and what they learned from the experience. Reflection sessions should use a few simple

questions that help participants process their experience. Samples include “What surprised you most about the day?” “What did you learn from this experience?” “How can you use what you learned today in your everyday life?” “did your perception of (relevant issue) change as a result of this service project?”

The Kick-Off Event and Closing Celebration

The kick-off event sets the tone for the project and initiates the spirit of SOS. Hold your kick-off on the day before or the morning of your project, and use it as a central gathering place and pre-service pep rally. If volunteers will disperse to different sites, arrange for transportation from the kick-off, and transport volunteers to the after-party celebration at the end of the project. This gives people an opportunity to share experiences with volunteers who worked on other sites, relax, and have fun. This is also a great time to have government officials or other community leaders address volunteers.

Both the kick-off and the closing celebration are excellent opportunities for local media to interview volunteers and learn more about Summer of Service. Have media kits ready and available at a special check-in area for media. decorate with banners, balloons, and streamers. Invite elected and appointed officials, members of the media, and other personalities well in advance to draw more attention.

Programming for these events varies tremendously. The kick-off event should be short, no more than thirty minutes. It is important to get people to their sites promptly to meet the day’s expectations. Music (provided by a school band, radio DJ, etc.) always gets people excited and ready to work. Ask people to come a half-hour early to sign-in and eat breakfast (if applicable), so when the kick-off ends they will be ready to go. It is also useful to let people know what time transportation will leave the kick-off site. Here is a sample agenda for the morning:

7:15-7:59 People arrive, sign in, eat breakfast

8:00-8:05 Welcome and choir performance or skit

8:05-8:15 Motivational words by organizers and thanks from local celebrity or official

8:15-8:20 directions to sites and any announcements

8:20-8:30 Move to transportation

8:30 Transportation departs to sites

Closing celebrations provide a great way to thank volunteers, highlight accomplishments, give awards, and just have fun. Hold the closing event at a fun place for youth (a park, recreation center, beach, etc.)

Day of Event Activities

Good management and advanced planning are key to success during SOS. The more people that know what is going on, the more likely things will run smoothly. Make a list of who will manage registration, the kick-off presentations, transportation, and the media. Also, assign someone to act as a trouble-shooter throughout the day.

It is important to talk through everyone's roles on the day of the event. Organizers should wear special T-shirts or hats which make them easy to find in a crowd. If your event is very large and complex, you may want to consider renting or borrowing walkie-talkies for communication.

Checklists and written instructions are also a must for the day of the event. Make sure everyone is as prepped as possible for the day so there are few surprises. Get lots of rest so that you will be clearheaded and have a great time!



Appendix B:

Solutions to Common Problems

Volunteer Turnout is Higher or Lower than Expected

The Problem: It's difficult to accurately predict the number of volunteers who will turn out on your project day. Fewer volunteers than you expected means projects won't get done, which often disappoints the host site. More volunteers than you expected means there may not be sufficient work for everyone, which is damaging to volunteer morale.

Solutions: Many people do not feel committed to show up to an event unless they pre-register. Even when everyone pre-registers, assume you will have 85-90% of those numbers on the actual day. Make back-up plans. Set up several sites to accommodate extra people, and sites willing to participate only if you have overflow. Make sure they understand there is a chance they may not be utilized. determine ahead of time which sites should be cut if necessary.

Rain

The Problem: No one wants to work in the rain. Many people will stay home and parents will decide that their children should not participate in bad weather.

Solutions: If your kick-off is scheduled outside, have alternate indoor sites ready. Make sure presenters and team leaders are familiar with rain sites and procedures. Buy extra boxes of large trash bags to be used as rainwear, ground cover, etc. If sites have scheduled outdoor projects that cannot be completed in severe weather, have a secondary plan and rain date for volunteers. discuss these alternatives with the site in advance.

Incomplete Projects

The Problem: Unrealistic expectations from an agency or team, too few volunteers, unavailability of necessary equipment, insufficient team skills, late arrival, or other situations can result in an unfinished project at the end of the schedule. This can be a serious problem, since many local agencies do not have the resources to complete the work later.

Solutions: Set and communicate realistic expectations for the allotted time, and be sure that team/site leaders arrange for all necessary equipment ahead of

time. Perform a mid-day assessment if you see work that may not be completed on time, reassign volunteers or call in extra help. Most importantly, don't start a project that can't be finished in a timely manner. It's better not to start a project than to leave it half-done. In the case that you can't finish a project, discuss the issue with staff, and find a resolution that fits everyone's needs.

Teams Arrive Late

The Problem: A late start on the day can disrupt everything, from media coverage, to meal times, to relationships between volunteers and project sites. Agency staff, media, and VIPs schedule their day to accommodate the volunteer time. Tardiness disrupts the schedule, lessens the chances of finishing the project, and shows disrespect.

Solutions: Event organizers and team leaders must plan details thoroughly and stick to schedules. Registration must occur on schedule. Secure details for transportation, including public transit schedules and detailed maps for drivers. Have teams stand together during the kick-off so they do not waste time finding each other after the kick-off. Assign someone to be "time-keeper" for the day and make sure things run according to schedule.

Volunteers did not "Work With People"

The Problem: One-day service projects are often activities in which volunteers do not work directly with the clients of the agency. There are many good reasons for this. For example, the best way for a large group of volunteers to make a lasting impact may be to accomplish a physical project like painting or cleaning that the agency staff often cannot finish on their own. Agencies may want to provide their clients with as much consistency as possible; volunteers who might not return may build false expectation for clients. Many agencies also have strict screening and training processes for their regular volunteers to ensure the safety and well being of the clients.

Solutions: Let people know up front why they might not have much client contact and tell them how meaningful their assignment is for the agency. Schedule a lunch break or another specific time to give volunteers and clients a chance to interact. Give volunteers information about how to get involved with the organization on a long-term basis.

Team Assignments

The Problem: This is one of the trickiest aspects of organizing a large one-day service project. Some groups want to stay together and others may want to split up to meet new people.

Solutions: A simple way to make assignments is by age group or groups within your organization. Another method is to split age groups so that other students will be working with younger students. Team leaders can either be assigned to teams or be responsible for recruiting their own teams. Start with selecting sites

and team leaders, then discuss the breakdowns into teams with the teachers and administrators from participating schools and youth programs.

Appendix C

Advice for Young People Working with Adults

1. Schedule time thoroughly.

Scheduling is essential because adults often work on different timelines and schedules than young people do. Make sure you get commitments from adults on when they will do things. Also make commitments for when you will finish your tasks. Hold adults and young people equally responsible for their tasks!

2. Create structure.

Make sure you have the plan you need to get the job done. Do you feel you should have more say in what goes on? Are your ideas taken seriously? Let adults know when the committee meetings, decision-making, or instructions are not working for you.

3. Foster learning.

Let adults learn from the process as well. Most adults have never planned a project like this, so most of them will be learning, too. Listen to them when they talk. Learn from them and let them learn from you.

4. Keep the lines of communication open!

A common source of challenges in event planning occurs when people think they are on the same page, but they really aren't. Be as clear as possible about expectations, responsibilities, and deadlines, and continually check in with your team.

5. Engage volunteers with differing abilities.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s words, "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve" are still true today. Inclusion and diversity are the cornerstones of the service ethic. In this spirit, SOS encourages and challenges you to consider ways to involve participants with differing abilities in your project. It is important to view

youth and adults with disabilities as valuable individuals who can serve others, rather than people who only receive services.

The Effective Practices Guide to Creating Inclusive and Accessible Days of Service, written by City Cares, Points of Light Foundation, and Youth Service America with support from the Bubel/Aiken Foundation and the Corporation for National and Community Service, is available at www.YSA.org. This effective practices guide will help you address the most common challenges to engaging persons with Disabilities in volunteering, such as:

Assessing Organizational Readiness

Sometimes the most difficult obstacles to surmount involve attitudes such as prejudice and stereotyping. Get a sense of your group's sensitivity to and knowledge about persons with disabilities. Assessing organizational readiness will help your group engage in conversation about where you are and where you would like to be in this area of volunteer management.

Making Your Meetings Accessible

While it may seem difficult, small changes can make a big difference in allowing persons with disabilities to participate. Consider if your meeting spot is wheelchair accessible, if there is a need for a sign language interpreter, etc.

Interacting with Persons with Disabilities

The key to ensuring a successful service project experience for everyone is PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST. Volunteers with disabilities are no different. Like all volunteers, they want to give their time and energy to improve their community. An individual's disability should only be considered to determine what accommodations are necessary to allow that individual to participate fully.

Partnering with Organizations that Reach Persons with Disabilities

Although persons with disabilities can be found in the same places as persons without disabilities, many organizations exist specifically to help persons with disabilities integrate into everyday life. These groups can help you recruit persons with disabilities and involve them more effectively.

Creating Promotional Materials in Alternative Formats

You'll want to make sure that your message is accessible to persons with disabilities. Use alternative formats to make websites, print material, and spoken messages easier for people with disabilities to use.

Creating an Inclusive Event

The primary step in creating an inclusive event is to assess and understand what skills and tasks will be involved for each activity. Most activities can be adapted to make them accessible for all.



Appendix D: Advice for Adults Working With Youth

1. Schedule Time Thoughtfully

Plan ahead and start early (the first time you plan something it will take longer). Set generous timelines. Asking and answering questions take time. Remember, this is a day for the young people to shine, utilize all of their intellectual and physical capacities. Once invested in the project, they will likely become actively engaged. If young people work to capacity, the results will far surpass expectations.

When working with youth, ask them questions:

- What do they like?
- What do they know how to do and what do they like to do?
- How are they involved in the community?
- How do they want to be involved in the community?
- What do they want to learn to do or experience?
- What would they like to change or improve in their community?

Allow all people to talk freely. Be attentive to their interests and responsive to new ideas.

2. Create Structure

- Write out guidelines and instructions.
- Suggest ideas on where to go for help.
- Discuss what needs to be done.
- Discuss and visualize the results.
- Clearly define what decisions will be made by young people and what decisions will be made by adults.
- Give specific expectations and parameters of a project and follow through! do not say, “design it yourself,” if you might turn down the idea later. Say, “Here is an example to look at,” etc...

To create a structure that supports initiative and decision-making:

- Set up committees of young people.
- Put young people on adult committees.
- Be clear about expectations and limitations.
- Hold youth accountable — do not do the work because it is not getting done quickly enough or to your satisfaction. Express to them that people rely on them, etc.
- Continually review decisions and ideas to make sure everyone is on the same page.