

## EXAMPLES OF YOUTH SERVICE PROJECTS

The following list of service projects is provided by the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution and is reprinted with their permission. The purpose of sharing this information with you is to assist you in thinking about what you might do in order to meet your 25 hour community service requirement.

Here are 10 quick and easy GYSD [Global Youth Service Day] Project Ideas:

1. Host a Bake Sale for No Kid Hungry to help end childhood hunger, or host a lemonade stand to raise money for causes like curing childhood cancer.
2. Collect food to donate to your local food bank.
3. Plant trees. For low-cost trees, order from the Arbor Day Foundation or contact your local extension service office or environmental organizations to see if there are local free tree programs.
4. Pick up trash and clean up your neighborhood... organize a "Trash Mob" - a flash mob to pick up trash in a single location, like this one in Baltimore where 20 people cleaned up an empty lot in just 30 minutes.
5. Reduce, reuse, recycle... and keep trash out of our water and landfills. Reach out to a local business and ask them to Be Straw Free and reduce the use and waste of disposable plastic straws. Or, Stow It Don't Throw It! Assemble and distribute personal-sized fishing line recycling bins to anglers and boaters while educating the public on sustainable fishing practices.
6. Make blankets with Maddie's Blankets to donate - small blankets for animal shelters to use or large blankets for youth in foster care, shelters, or transitional housing.
7. Collect and donate DVDs, stuffed animals, or books to donate to local hospitals, shelters, or emergency responders. You can send DVDs to Kid Flicks so they can send a movie library of 100 DVDs to every Children's Hospital and Pediatric Department within the United States.
8. Make cards or write letters - for kids in hospitals, troops and veterans, or senior citizens in local nursing homes.
9. Help build KaBOOM!'s Map of Play! Find, add, rate, and review playgrounds in your community. Take the Playground Challenge: Take pictures of playgrounds and win gift cards in their biweekly sweepstakes for toys, shoes, ice cream, and more.
10. Help prepare your family for a disaster - and make sure your neighbors are ready too!

Source of the above list: <http://www.gysd.org>. The next Global Youth Service Day is April \_\_\_\_.

Here are some suggestions about where and how to locate volunteer opportunities:

1. **Animal Shelters.** Your local animal shelter may need help cleaning, walking dogs, petting cats, or even fundraising. Animal shelters may have age requirements that prevent younger teens from volunteering without an adult present.
2. **Libraries.** Libraries often welcome volunteers of all ages to put books on shelves, organize displays, or read to children.
3. **School Clubs.** If your teen isn't likely to follow through with volunteering independently, a school club can be a great alternative. Many high schools offer Key Clubs or other civic-minded clubs that get teens involved in giving back to the local community.
4. **Nursing Homes.** Nursing homes, boarding homes, or other facilities that serve the elderly often need volunteers. A teen who volunteers with the elderly may be able to do anything from assisting people with making crafts to providing them with musical entertainment.
5. **Charities that Need Help Fundraising.** Many community service agencies need help with fundraising. Teens who aren't able to commit to regular volunteer work may be able to get involved with an organization's fundraising events.
6. **Informal Volunteer Work.** There are always people in need in the local community if you know where to look. Encourage your teen to mow the lawn for an elderly neighbor or provide free babysitting services for a single parent. Just be sure to assess the safety of any situation before your teen begins helping other people.
7. **Environmental Organizations.** Many environmental causes are always looking for eager volunteers. Teens can formally assist an organization with cleaning up trails or neighborhoods, or simply provide clean-up services on an informal basis. Get a group of teens together and volunteer to clean a local beach or park.
8. **Homeless Shelters.** Soup kitchens and homeless shelters often rely on volunteers. Teens may be able to serve food, donate toiletries, or assist staff with various projects.
9. **Red Cross.** The Red Cross has many activities and service projects designed specifically for youth. Volunteer opportunities can range from fundraising to disaster response. Check with your local Red Cross about current volunteer needs and opportunities.
10. **Hospitals.** Hospitals often depend on volunteers to help with anything from printing pamphlets to giving directions. Teens who are interested in a future career in the healthcare field may especially benefit from volunteering in a medical setting.

Source of the list above: <http://www.gysd.org>

- ✓ **Soup kitchens are perfect opportunities for teens.** A soup kitchen in your area may serve one or two times a day and are always in need of dishwashers and general help for the serving of food. If you teen has two hands, they will put them to good use.
- ✓ **The local Ronald McDonald House is in need of your teen's help.** Ronald McDonald House exists to provide a home-away-from-home for parents and families who have traveled seeking medical treatment for their sick children. The easiest way for a youth organization to help the Ronald McDonald House program is to form a 'pop tab' collection. The pop tabs off of an aluminum can are collected and donated to the program and help with the operations of the program. You can find their phone number in the white pages of your local phone book.
- ✓ **The local food bank is always looking for donations.** This is a very easy service project. You can go door-to-door with a group, put an ad in the paper with a drop off point and time or just have everyone in your youth organization bring a can to the next meeting. Try to do this in January through September as the holiday months are usually already covered. If you have a hard time finding the local phone number, most local churches know who the contact person is.
- ✓ **Habitat for Humanities is looking for youth.** They build and give houses for poor people in local communities. They have a Youth United program in which the youth in your organization can plan and build a home for a local family. Learn more about it on their website.
- ✓ **The local library needs youth who like to have fun and read.** Join with the local library and run a themed event for young kids in your area. You could just offer your time to help clean and sort books or seek book donations from your neighborhood. Contact the children's librarian, trust me, she has a list of things your teen or group can do.
- ✓ **Meals on Wheels is looking for crafty youth.** They enjoy placing 'tray favors' on meal trays. It brightens up someone's day and teens enjoy making the little treasures. One of my youth organizations likes to make and donate different napkin holders, complete with napkin. Give your Local Meals on Wheels program a call - you can find them in your phone book or on the ad in the local paper.

Source of the list above: <http://parentingteens.about.com>