

Getting Started

Youth Community Service Projects (for Groups)

It is great that you have decided to get your group involved in community service! But I bet you are wondering... ***Where do I start?***

Here are a few questions to consider before getting started:

- 1) What are the interests of your group? Would your group like to volunteer with animals, the homeless, youth/childcare or is your group open to volunteering anywhere?
- 2) What is the availability (days of the week & time of day) of your group and how often you are going to be available to volunteer? Is your group interested in a one time (episodic) volunteer opportunity, or are you looking to make a regular weekly or monthly commitment?
- 3) Are there any limitations to where your group can volunteer for transportation or other reasons? Does your group need to volunteer in your direct community or are you open to traveling to neighborhood communities?
- 4) If your group has youth younger than 14 years old, will there be enough adult chaperones to attend the service project in the instance that your group gets split up? **Most agencies require adult chaperones for children under the age of 14 years old.*

Now that I know more about my group's interests, availability and limitations... ***How do I find a volunteer opportunity?***

There are several options to help you find an opportunity to fit your group's needs:

- Visit the Volunteer Center's website, www.volunteerwaukesha.com and search by group or youth opportunities
- Call the Youth Program Manager at the Volunteer Center at (262) 547-8459
- Call a specific non-profit agency that you are interested in working with. Many agencies will have a Volunteer Coordinator available to help your group get started.

Age appropriateness in youth service activities

The service of young people is an important resource in solving community problems. But like any volunteer, they need to be matched with volunteer opportunities that are appropriate. Developing age appropriate service activities will ensure that they and the agency they are serving receive the most out of their experience.

As young people grow from childhood through adolescence to adulthood, there are appropriate service opportunities for them at every age. Just as young people have opportunities to participate in age-appropriate athletics from Little League to varsity sports, so they can have increasingly complex and involved service experiences as they grow up.

What is and is not an age appropriate service project for K-5th grade students?

Is Age Appropriate

Is Not Age Appropriate

Participating in an environmentally conscious project, like a river or bike trail clean up	Testing water samples from a local lake or river and documenting the findings for the community
Making placemats for a soup kitchen or homeless shelter	Volunteering in a soup kitchen or homeless shelter
Read-a-thon projects, where students read to younger kids	Organizing a phonics fair to help improve reading skills
Initiating a liter patrol at school during lunch or recess	Starting a recycling program for the entire school
Collecting used books for a shelter for homeless children	Writing letters to corporations asking for donations for a shelter for homeless shelter
Performing plays and skits depicting community problems and their solutions	Holding a youth summit to dialogue about problems in the community and possible solutions
Visiting senior citizens who live in a nearby home	Collecting and writing personal or community oral histories by interviewing senior citizens

What is and is not an age appropriate service project for 6th-8th grade students?

Is Age Appropriate

Is Not Age Appropriate

Youth Action Councils, where they design service activities for other young people in their school or community	Self directed and self guided Youth Actions Councils without adult supervision
Helping food banks with inventory	Delivering meals to homebound residents without adult supervision
Participating in a community clean up	Building a playground in an underprivileged neighborhood
Volunteering at a soup kitchen, nursing home, or day care center	Making placemats for soup kitchens, nursing homes, or day care centers
Starting a conflict resolution program	Starting a peer counseling program
Tutoring elementary students after school	Tutoring youth in juvenile justice centers
Planting a garden at a homeless shelter	Renovating a homeless shelter

What is and is not an age appropriate service project for 9th-12th grade students?

Is Age Appropriate

Is Not Age Appropriate

Cleaning a polluted lake or river	Making posters about pollution
Researching general information on political platforms and distributing it to peers	Developing a political candidate's talking points for a debate
Making a panel for the AIDS Quilt and give awareness presentations	Facilitating an AIDS support group
Helping design a playground in an underprivileged neighborhood	Building a playground in an underprivileged neighborhood without adult supervision
Holding a forum about racism to find possible community solutions	Organizing and facilitating a weekend diversity retreat
Working as aids in group homes for adults with disabilities	Making holiday decorations to be used in a group home for adults with disabilities
Setting up a peer counseling program	Providing therapy for drug or alcohol addicted peers