

I Volunteer



Youth Works!

Creating and developing youth-led volunteer projects

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I • Your Community, Your Vision

Do you see things in your community that you would like to support, build on or change? Do you ask yourself, “How can I make a difference?” Volunteering is a way for you to answer those questions.

Volunteering your time, energy, skills and feelings is a way to contribute to your community. There are many ways that you can help. You can:

- get involved in community events
- volunteer at a food bank or shelter
- fund raise for an important cause
- plan a special project that meets a community need

If it's important you do things you truly believe in, to show that you care, then a service project offers a great way for you to play a role in shaping your community. Creating a service project involves more than just volunteering your time, it puts you in the driver's seat—*your initiative and your energy can make it happen!*

What is a service project?

A community service project can be anything you make it, from helping an elderly neighbour with yard work to organizing a blanket drive. It can involve just one person—you—or it can involve many.

Real-Life Success Story

Jessica helped to organize a service project in her community.

I was walking to the Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC) when I saw a cold, wet, homeless man. I felt really bad. When I got to YVC I talked to the other volunteers about what we could do. We decided to hold a blanket drive. We have now just done our third annual blanket drive and I feel like I have made a difference in my community.



Jessica Hodgins, 12, Nanaimo, British Columbia

... life on the street is tough

The word “community” can mean more than just where you live. Community can also be your school, your faith, or any other interest or cause that ties people together. So your service project can be designed around the community that has the greatest need or the most meaning to you. You decide.

It doesn't matter how big or small your project is, what matters is that *you can create your own opportunities* to serve your community.

Why get involved?

The great thing about volunteering is that you get as much out of it as you put into it! Often you get a whole lot more. There are many benefits to doing service projects, both for you and your community. These benefits include:

- making a positive contribution—building something, changing something, giving something back
- gaining self-confidence
- responding to a community need
- discovering your strengths and talents
- creating important community networks
- developing valuable job-related skills (leadership, teamwork, organization, time management)
- learning about yourself (meeting new friends, pushing your boundaries) and learning through service

Real-Life Success Story

Volunteering always provides me wonderful new experiences. We do so many exciting things. I feel that my volunteer experience has helped me to be a better person. I've learned how to be considerate of others and I've gotten to know and become friends with many people in my community. Because of all the service projects I have worked on, I feel I can help people better.



Amanda Foote, 14, St. John's, Newfoundland

... I have so much to offer

Planning a service project may seem a little overwhelming at first, but in fact, there are ways to make it easy. You'll have a lot of fun in the process and there are real rewards for you and your community.

How this guide can help?

This guide can help individuals and groups to organize community service projects by providing practical information on:

- developing an idea for a project in your community
- working independently to create a project—the value of one
- building a strong team to carry out a project—the power of many
- planning the project
- budgeting
- finding sponsors and community partners
- promoting your project
- recognizing your efforts
- evaluating your success

A service project can be many things. You can take control and make it happen all on your own—*the value of one*—or you can team up with other youth who want to make positive changes—*the power of many*. Either way, both you and your community will benefit from youth-led volunteerism.

The guide won't give you a magic formula for planning a great service project. But, read through it and you'll get lots of good ideas to help you get started. You'll find helpful sample forms, checklists, tips and success factors that will help make your vision for a better community come to life.



II • The Value of One—Working Independently

If you are ready to take on a challenge by yourself, this section will help you to think about what's involved. Remember, sometimes the simplest projects have the most impact!

Like Renee, you too can use your talents to create some magic within your own community. Look around. What would you like to support or change? What issues get you excited?

Real-Life Success Story

One day when I was helping my Grandma in her yard, I noticed her elderly neighbor, Henry, struggling with his lawn mower. Grandma told me that Henry has no family or friends for support. I left my Grandma's that day feeling unhappy. Then I realized that I have something to offer! After all, I like helping out. So, I set out to adopt Henry. He was a little hard to talk to at first, but now he's great. We laugh and talk about so many things. I help with his yard work and we go grocery shopping together. My Grandma says Henry has started to socialize with the neighbors and he seems to smile more. I have found a project that makes a visible difference in someone's life—Henry's.



Renee Williams, 25, Calgary, Alberta

Think you might want to volunteer, but don't know where to begin? Check out Volunteer Canada's VOLUNTEERING WORKS! Youth Guide.

It has detailed exercises that will help you assess your own skills and determine your volunteer priorities. You may also find this self-assessment helpful in preparing for your service project.

The Youth Guide is available online, go to www.volunteer.ca and follow the youth links under Volunteering in Canada, or call 1-800-670-0401.



Deciding on a project

To help you decide what kind of service project you would like to do, ask yourself:

- What issues do I feel strongly about?
- What talents and gifts would I like to share?

As you think about these questions, make a list of all the issues that are important to you. Think about the things you could do in your community to address these issues. Use the form below to get started. We've provided a blank version for you to use, it can be found in the Appendix.

What is important to me	Possible actions
protecting the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recycle at home • develop and promote recycling
fighting poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gather clothing from neighbours and give it to a local shelter • collect grocery coupons to give to the local food bank
promoting animal welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • walk dogs for the local animal shelter
supporting children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • become a walking buddy for a youngster • tutor a younger student who needs help
My talents put to work
I'm a great organizer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan a recycling program
I have artistic ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paint a mural on wall at the longterm care centre
I'm good with computers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teach a "grandfriend" how to use a computer and the Internet
I'm a great communicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create an awareness campaign around an important issue

Great work! Before you finalize your ideas remember, doing your own service project can take time, effort and energy. Think about how much time you can contribute to a community service project. Talk to the people closest to you: how might your involvement in a volunteer project affect your commitments to school, work, friends and family? To help you make your final decision you might ask yourself:

- Which of these ideas do I feel most passionate about?
- Which service project can I do a good job on with my skills and time?
- Is my project compelling? Will I be able to get the help and support I need to pull it off?

Once you have answered these questions, you'll be ready pick one of your ideas—and go for it!

Although you've decided to take on a service project by yourself, you don't have to feel alone in your goals. Discuss your ideas with your family, friends and co-workers. Ask for their support and ideas to help you make your project a success.

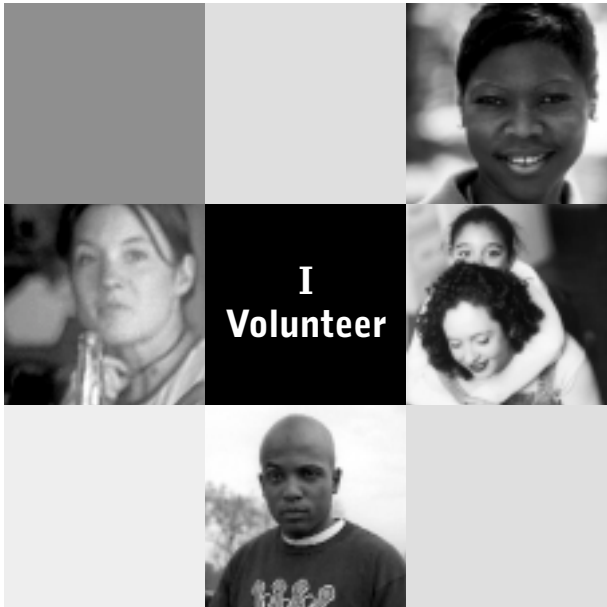
It's a good idea to develop an action plan, a budget (if necessary), and a way to evaluate your personal service project. This information is included in *Section IV, Getting Organized*, so read on and find helpful tips and forms to keep you organized and prepared for every possibility.

SUCCESS FACTOR #1

Set realistic goals

You don't have to plan a big project to make a difference.

Carefully consider how much time and what skills you have to devote to a service project.



III • The Power of Many—Teaming Up

You may have an idea for a project that involves more work than one person can handle. For instance, you may want to:

- create awareness about the health of a local river
- organize a food drive
- hold a talent show at your local nursing home
- offer a bicycle safety event
- paint a mural on a vacant building
- start a community garden
- collect recyclables and donate proceeds to a charity that is important to you
- host a fundraiser for local charities or for disaster relief

You'll need help to plan these larger projects. If you don't already have a group of friends eager to start on a project, then recruit volunteers from the places you know best—home, school, and work.

Here's a list of people and places you can approach to find other young volunteers to work with you on a service project:

- family and friends
- volunteer agencies and centres
- community organizations (e.g. neighbourhood co-ops, local volunteer centres, Youth Volunteer Corps of Canada, YM/YWCA, Boys and Girls Club, Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, Rotary Club)
- your school and other educational institutions.

At this stage you are looking for volunteers to help in the planning and organization of a service project. If you are planning an event, other volunteers may be needed later. These volunteers can be recruited closer to the date of the event. (See Section IV, Recruiting and Training, page 24 for more information.)

SUCCESS FACTOR #2

Meet a community need

You will get more support and cooperation for your project if it meets a community need.

Once you have recruited a team, gather everyone together for a brainstorming session. Remember the project idea form from Section II? It will also help your group to consider all the possibilities for a service project, and focus on an idea that everyone wants to work on.

What is important to us	Possible responses
protecting the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • launch an educational campaign about keeping local waterways healthy
fighting poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • start a breakfast program at the local elementary school
helping neighbours in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan a spring clean up day for older or disabled shut-ins
activities for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan a pre-teen dance
promote equipment safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan a farm equipment safety workshop for children and youth
encourage community spirit and neighbourhood involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organize neighbours to plant, tend and harvest a vegetable garden
Our skills, talents and abilities...	... put to work
Sandra: leadership skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rally the volunteers and keep them motivated
Tran: creative skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design any flyers or posters needed to promote the project
Greg: communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek out sponsors and community partners
Steve: problem solving skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • event day supervisor
Gretchen: teamwork skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • event day supervisor
Vijayta: math skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare and monitor a budget

Tips

Try to recruit people who have skills that pick up where yours leave off. Not only will you complement each other, but you'll also have a chance to learn from each other.

It's important that all the members of your team believe in the project, and are committed to seeing it through.

Be enthusiastic and passionate about your project—it will be easier to involve others.

Research done by volunteer organizations shows that a volunteer service project's success is often tied to whether it meets a real community need.

To find out your community's most pressing needs, talk to people who live and work in it, read local newspapers, listen to or watch the local news, and interview friends and family.

As a team, you will need to decide how big a project you want to undertake. There is a lot to do when planning a service project with a team. **Section IV, Getting Organized** will take you through all the necessary steps to effectively carry out your project idea.

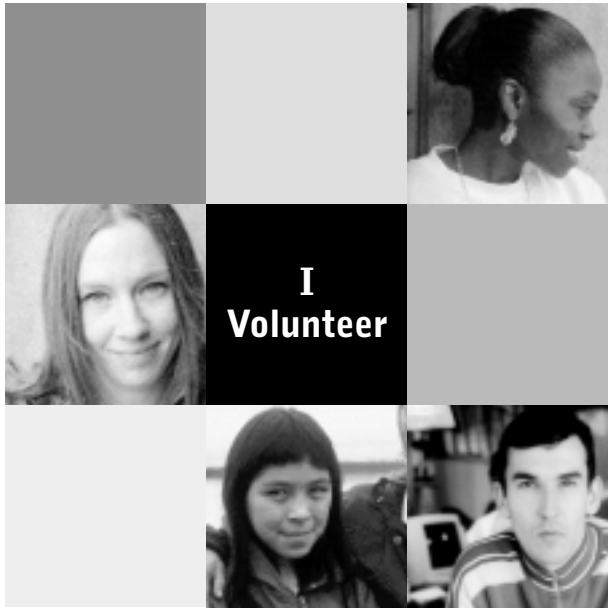
Real-Life Success Story

In my school, special needs students attend separate classes, eat their lunch in their classroom and have very little to do with the student body as a whole. During the summer, with the permission of the Resource Teacher and Principal, I researched and organized C.A.R.E.S. (creating a real life experience for students). After setting up a committee, we recruited volunteers. The main goal of C.A.R.E.S. was to integrate special needs students with the rest of the student body. Those involved in the program found that they benefited from their time spent with their fellow students. Integration proved to be a two way street.



Anita Turner, 17, Delta, British Columbia

... I believe in community



IV • Getting Organized

Once you have decided on a project idea, it's time for action! As an individual or a team you can now decide:

- what is my/our goal?
- what activities will I/we do to achieve that goal?
- when will I/we do it?
- how will I/we do it?
- who will help me/us carry it out?
- how much will it cost?

SUCCESS FACTOR #3

Be organized.

Make and use lists, action plans, budgets, schedules, etc.

A well organized service project will have fewer problems, will make a better impression on your community, and is more likely to be a success.

Here is a practical checklist to get you thinking about where to begin:

- Make a contact list of all your team members
- Find a place to hold meetings (e.g. someone's home, a local volunteer centre, a community centre, school or college)
- Do research on your project idea (the Internet, public and school libraries, talk to people who have similar projects, and those who will benefit from your project)
- Check out resources at local volunteer centres and community service clubs—ask their staff for advice on how to carry out your project
- After collecting as much information as you can find, report back to the team
- Establish an action plan, a budget, a schedule, etc., as needed

Develop an action plan

You can create a form like the one below to help you organize the project.

The Goal: paint a mural on a vacant building

What needs to be done?	Who will do it?	When completed?	Specific steps
1	Develop a budget for the project		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• estimate what the service project will cost• assess what items could be donated rather than bought
2	Draw up a schedule		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• select a date for the event• determine completion dates for all the steps required to make the event happen
3	Get approval to paint the building		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• meet with the building owner to explain the plan and to ask if you can paint the mural• check local bylaws
4	Find community sponsors and partners		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• create a description of the project• make a list of the businesses or government departments that might be interested• rehearse the “ask”• set up appointments and make your pitch
5	Create a design for the mural		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• prepare a mock-up design• have building owner approve design, form partnership with owner

What needs to be done?	Who will do it?	When completed?	Specific steps
6	Collect supplies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make a complete list of supplies needed • write up a list of potential suppliers • ask for donations, identify which suppliers are willing to sponsor the project with cash or in-kind donations, * or those who may volunteer time and staff to your project • arrange for pick up • write thank you letters
7	Recruit more volunteers for the day of the event		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • team members to recruit friends, etc
8	Train volunteers		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • find a site for training • prepare a training agenda • prepare information to hand out to volunteers

* In-kind donations are donations of necessary supplies and materials rather than money.

You can see that the Action Plan calls for you to do things like prepare a budget, a schedule and to find sponsors. Don't worry, the rest of this section gives you tips on how to go about these tasks.

Tips

Completing the Action Plan will also help you to produce a timeline for your project. Stick to your timeline, even when the going gets tough.

Budgeting

Budgeting is an important part of planning your project. A budget is necessary for big and small projects: it shows you what things need to be purchased or obtained through donations. To see the different expenses your project may incur, it's helpful to break your costs into different areas, as shown in the sample budget below.

Item	Amount needed	Cost	Sponsor Fund
Supplies			
paint			
paper (for letters and flyers)			
film			
etc.			
Subtotal			
Services			
photocopying			
film developing			
Subtotal			
Equipment/tool			
ladders			
paint brushes and trays			
scaffolding			
Subtotal			
Other Expenses			
gas			
postage			
Subtotal			
TOTAL			

Don't be discouraged if you are not great at budgeting. Budgets are really best guesses about what a project might cost. Check through flyers or call companies or stores for quotes in order to get an idea of how much items cost.

Tip

Plan a project with a budget that is obtainable. Sometimes the projects with limited or no budgets are the most powerful. For example, teaching someone to read.

Sponsors and Partners

With creativity, and a good knowledge of your community network, it's possible to find sponsors and partners to donate the money or materials needed for your project.

What's the difference between a sponsor and a partner?

A sponsor is a person, business or organization who donates money or in-kind donations toward your service project. A community partner is a person, business, or organization who plays a significant role in making your project happen. A partner will want to be involved in all decisions, they share in the responsibility of the project.

In the example of painting a mural on a building, the building owner is your partner. You can have more than one partner, and they may also donate money or give their time and knowledge to help plan a project.

A sponsor, on the other hand, might donate the paint for the mural, or the pizza to feed the volunteers. The sponsor provides support but won't be part of the decision-making process.

SUCCESS FACTOR # 4

Establish community partnerships

Be open to learning from others. You will need the support and advice of people who have different skills and strengths.

Creating ties with various organizations helps to build a strong community, and you'll be amazed at the new contacts and friends you'll make along the way.

Your action plan and budget already identify what's needed for your project. You can find sponsors and partners right in your own community. Like you, other members of your community are eager to give. To find appropriate sponsors you need to ask yourself:

- *Who or what organizations can provide the needed materials or information?*

Check out local phone or business directories at your library. Ask active volunteers, community associations, volunteer centres, or service clubs for advice on who you might ask for support. Make a list!

Researching potential sponsors and partners can save you a great deal of time. Understanding what they look for in a request, or how they like to receive requests, is important to know when you make your first contact. For example, some potential sponsors may not give in-kind donations, and others might require a formal letter of request for donations. Potential partners may want to meet with you face-to-face, or just talk to you on the phone. Once you have prepared a list of potential sponsors and partners, make an initial phone call to find out what their request preferences are and then tailor your requests accordingly.

If a letter is all that is required, then your job is relatively easy. Draft a letter that includes the following elements:

- the purpose of your project
- who is involved—identify yourself/your team and other sponsors and partners
- details of important dates and times related to your project
- a clear explanation of what you are requesting from them.

(See the Appendix for a sample sponsorship letter.) Follow-up with a phone call to ensure the letter has been received. If you haven't heard back in a few weeks, call again and ask if anyone has had a chance to review your request. Remember, it can't hurt to ask!

For organizations that require a phone call or visit, you might use the information below to prepare your key questions and approaches.

Contacting Potential Supporters—Partners or Sponsors

1. Ask who makes the decisions about supporting community projects.
Ask to speak to that person.
2. Explain the reason for your visit/call: you are looking for a partner or sponsor for your project. Describe your project. Explain how the organization could contribute (i.e. by providing volunteers, funding, supplies, prizes, or advice). Be clear on what you are asking for.
3. Ask direct questions like:
 - Is your organization interested in supporting this project?
 - When can the organization make a decision about participating in the project?

Not everyone you ask will be able to give money or supplies. Be sure to ask for their knowledge and advice—it can be priceless. Always follow up a contact with a thank you letter. Even if you don't get support this time you will improve the chances of getting support the next time it's needed, by you or someone else.

Finally, keep a log of your visits/calls, indicating the date, contact name, responses, etc. This log might be helpful to future projects and future volunteers.

Tips

- *Individuals or local businesses are not the only ones who can support your project needs. Community agencies and organizations have experts and staff who believe in your project and are willing to help.*
- *Make one person on your team responsible for recruiting sponsors and partners. It can be confusing when a company receives numerous calls about the same service project.*
- *If money is donated, keep careful records. Keep a log of all donations received and open a special bank account for the donated funds.*
- *Be sure to acknowledge the contributions of your sponsors and partners in a way that is meaningful (see Recognition, page 28).*

Promoting your Service Project

If community participation is an important element of your project's success, then you need to promote your event. There are several ways to create interest in a project:

- use word of mouth—tell everyone you know and ask them to pass it on
- make signs, flyers or notices to hand out and hang at school, shopping malls, volunteer centres and local hangouts
- contact the media using a public service announcement or media release
- develop a Web site
- conduct telephone campaigns

Your local yellow pages will provide complete listings of all community newspapers and radio and television stations. A public service announcement (PSA) can be used to invite the public to your event (see the Appendix for a sample PSA). Don't forget about school, work, and church newsletters as a way to get your message out.

How do you get the attention of the media?

A media release summarizes your project and invites the media to “cover your story” (see the Appendix for a sample media release).

Speaking with people directly has much greater impact than just submitting written information, no matter how well it's written. You have a chance to sell your idea, and to express your enthusiasm and passion in person. So send your media release and then follow-up with a call to ask if they have read it. Ask to speak with the Assignment Editor, Feature Editor or Reporter, or Photo Editor.

Create a form like this one to keep track of your calls.

Media Contact List

Media Org.	Contact Person	Date contacted	Interest/commitment	Deadline	Comments
Newspapers					
Daily Times (address)	Jane Sims Feature Editor 765-1238		will do a story on the project	March 10	call March 5 to update on project
Rosemere Community Newspaper					
Radio					
CJNB 93.6	Mark King Reporter 745-9872		will do an interview for morning show	day of event	send info. and directions to event site

Recruiting and Training Volunteers

SUCCESS FACTOR #5

If your service project is centred around an event or major activity, you and your planning committee will need more volunteers. You can find volunteers in all of the same places listed on page 11.

As project leaders, it's up to you and your team to provide training to the new volunteers.

The level and amount of training will depend on the scope of the project. For instance, if the project involves taking risks (e.g. using power tools, ladders), safety training should be provided in order to prevent accidents. If the project requires people to carry out a new task (for example, fundraising or tree planting), you need to identify a teacher and create a training program.

Here's an example of an agenda for a volunteer training session. If necessary, prepare written information of everything your volunteers need to know.

Recruit volunteers and provide training

People are more likely to offer their time and energy if they know exactly what's in store. Effective volunteer training can make a volunteer feel more confident about their role in the project.

Real-Life Success Story

Jonathan attended a volunteer training session for assisting with a bingo event for senior citizens.

It was my first time volunteering for this sort of event and I was nervous. I was afraid I might say the wrong things to seniors about their disabilities. The youth who planned the service project and delivered the training made me feel more prepared to help out.

After the event, I felt great. Making a senior smile is the best feeling in the world! It was something that I'll never forget and I won't have any anxiety about offering my aid to seniors again. Perhaps next time I will plan my own service project to get other people involved.



Jonathan Aylward, 15, St. John's, Newfoundland

... I'm needed

Agenda for training volunteers

1. Review the service project with all the volunteers, including:
 - your mission statement (why you're doing it)
 - the where, what, when, and how of the event or activities
 - provide the schedule of activities for the event, site maps, directions, etc.
 - who's involved: provide a list of volunteers, sponsors, partners
 - give each volunteer a brief job description or step-by-step guide to the task they will be doing

2. Describe:
 - how the event or program is being promoted
 - any contests, prizes, or draws associated with the event
 - the people involved—volunteers, staff, those who receive the service

3. Go over the volunteer roles and expectations:
 - the volunteer schedule (who's doing what, where and when)
 - why their role is important
 - discuss any safety issues and give training if necessary

If the project involves an event that volunteers need to be trained for, set the training close to the event date so that the information is still fresh in the minds of your volunteers.

Expect the Unexpected

Even though you think you've planned for everything. . . expect challenges. Low turn-out, volunteer no-shows and poor weather are just some of the things that could go wrong.

There's only one way to prepare for the unexpected—make back-up plans to prepare for every possibility. Get the team together and brainstorm solutions to problems that could occur. This mental preparation will result in quick responses to unexpected events.

Here's a checklist to help you remember all those forgettable details and minimize the chances of things going wrong.

- Over-recruit volunteers (things do come up and some volunteers have to cancel or don't show up)
- Delegate. Don't let one person be in charge of everything
- Hold a volunteer training session
- Clarify the exact times for volunteers to arrive
- Hand out site maps and give clear directions to meeting places
- Ensure that your location is accessible by transit or arrange carpools
- Make sure everyone knows who they report to and that they have an assigned task
- Let your volunteers know if they need to pack a lunch or if food will be provided
- Advise volunteers of appropriate clothing and what they should bring
- Make a list of supplies needed
- Double check your supplies the day before you begin
- Write down the details of the event or the program. Make copies for all the volunteers so everyone knows what is going on.

Working Things Out

Sometimes problems arise from conflicts within the team or from unclear roles. It is essential to manage the problems from the start, before they get out of control.

Here are some potential problems and suggested ways of dealing with them:

- Members do not show up to the planning meetings.
You can: give lots of advanced notice for meetings
remind people of the meeting by sending out an e-mail or calling them
set a bottom line: miss more than three meetings and you're out
- Members don't participate at the meetings.
You can: ensure that each person has some responsibility
encourage everyone to participate
do the odd go-around at the table asking everyone what they think
make sure there is enough time to discuss all the issues
double check for agreement
- Volunteers are unclear of their responsibility.
You can: review what is to be done by whom and by what date
be clear on the job to be done, the outcome and by what date
give them a written job description or task list
- Volunteers do not complete their tasks.
You can: contact volunteers regularly to see how they are doing with their tasks
offer help if they are behind schedule or feeling unsure
put people to work in pairs
ask people to update their progress at meetings
- Team members seem to be unhappy with each other.
You can: talk to those who seem upset before the problem gets worse
clarify what the problem is
determine common agreement
focus on the issue not the people
don't get discouraged—stay positive
don't gossip about the situation to other members
decide what your team can work with and what they can't—stick to it
brainstorm on how to settle disagreements
set aside time in meetings to clear the air

Recognition

Thanking everyone involved is the best recognition you can give. Be sure to acknowledge the special and extra efforts of others. Share positive comments with the team and review the areas where you can improve next time.

Here are some ways to recognize abilities and show your appreciation during and after the project:

- give additional responsibility to those who show they can handle it
- buy someone a coffee or soft drink while they're working (perhaps even budget for this type of expense in the planning phase)
- tell volunteers they are doing a great job
- say thank you at every opportunity
- post a sign at your event naming your sponsors, partners and volunteers
- after your event is over congratulate everyone involved
- send thank you letters
- nominate individuals for community achievement awards
- say thank you through public service announcements and newsletters
- host a volunteer party or a recognition ceremony
- write up testimonies from those who benefit from the project and distribute to volunteers, partners and sponsors

SUCCESS FACTOR # 6

Recognize contributions and celebrate achievements

It's important to recognize the contributions of sponsors and volunteers during and after the project.

Thanking someone both acknowledges and celebrates the value of giving.

Spend some reflective time remembering why you got involved and congratulate yourself. Volunteering for change is a good reason to celebrate; you have contributed to your community, learned tons of new skills like program planning, delegation and leadership, and you've met new people. Be sure to add these new skills to your resume. Employers view planning your own service project as valuable experience!

Evaluation

Your project isn't over until you have evaluated your work.

How can you determine your success? If your project involves a small number of people, like your planning committee, you can informally ask yourselves:

Did we make a difference?

Did the project do what we wanted/expected?

What did we learn from this experience?

What will we do next?

For a project that is larger in scope, you might ask all those involved to complete an evaluation form. See the sample evaluation form in the Appendix. You can customize the evaluation questions to fit your particular project.

The evaluation process will give you valuable feedback so that your next project is even better.

SUCCESS FACTOR #7

Set realistic goals

Evaluating your service project helps you reflect on what you did, what impact it had and what suggestions could be made for the next time you or someone you know starts a community service project.



V • Your Vision — Making it Work

In the real world, perfect projects rarely happen. But a project doesn't have to be perfect to be successful. If you achieved some of your goals, if you did something important to help your community or brought people together for a common purpose, then you have succeeded.

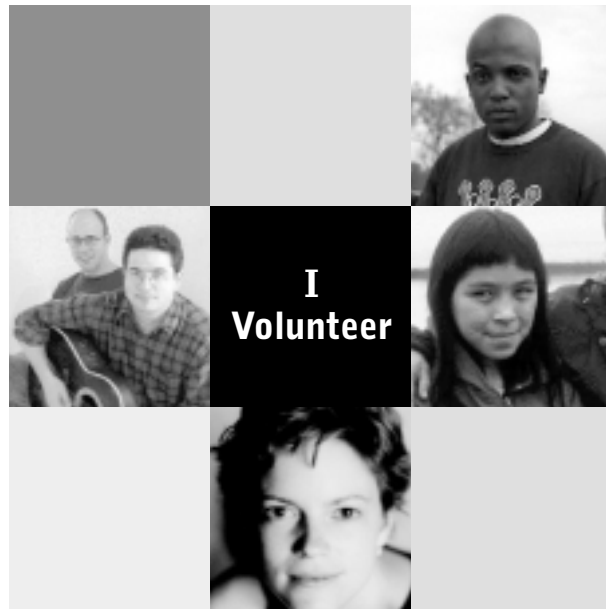
This guide has given you ideas for getting started on your own community service project. You now have a good grasp of what to expect and are probably excited about getting started. There's lots to learn in the process—and lots to give!

Before you start planning your new project, review the factors for success::

1. *Set realistic goals*
2. *Meet a community need*
3. *Be organized*
4. *Establish community partnerships*
5. *Recruit and train volunteers*
6. *Recognize contributions and celebrate achievements*
7. *Evaluate your project*

Keep these success factors in mind—post them in a place where you, your planning committee and all volunteers can see them—and you'll stay on the right track.

By taking a leadership role and creating a service project, ***you can volunteer for change in your community.***



Appendix: Sample Forms

What is important to me	Possible actions

My talents, skills and abilities...	...put to work

Action Plan

The main goal of this service project: _____

What needs to be done?	Who will do it?	When completed?	Specific steps
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			

The Budget

Item	Amount needed	Cost	Sponsor Fund
Supplies			
Subtotal			
Services			
Subtotal			
Equipment/tool			
Subtotal			
Other Expenses			
Subtotal			
TOTAL			

Sample Sponsorship Letter

Date

Recipient

Recipient's Address

Dear Sir or Madam,

On Saturday, August 12th approximately 50 youth in our community will be helping to keep our city friendly looking and beautiful by painting a mural over the graffiti-covered wall on Main Street.

This day cannot be success without your help. We would gratefully accept any support that (company's name) can provide. We need supplies such as paint, brushes, trays, and rollers. We will be working with the media to promote the event and your business would be acknowledged as a sponsor in any coverage that results from this project.

We thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal and we look forward to hearing from you. You can contact me at 555-2345 or e-mail janesmith@thank.you.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project!

Sincerely,

Jane Smith

Youth Service Project Planner

Media Contact List

Media Org.	Contact Person	Date contacted	Interest/ commitment	Deadline	Comments
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Newspapers

Name:					
Title:					
Tel.:					
Name:					
Title:					
Tel.:					
Name:					
Title:					
Tel.:					
Name:					
Title:					
Tel.:					

Radio

Name:					
Title:					
Tel.:					
Name:					
Title:					
Tel.:					

Media Release/Media Alert

[Title of your project/event in bold lettering]

Contact: [Send the release to someone you have already spoken with or someone you want to speak with.]

What: [Write a description of the project/event]

Who: [List guest speakers, celebrities, main sponsors, partners and beneficiaries]

When: [Give the date of the event, and any significant pre-event activities]

Where: [Give the location of the event]

Why: [Explain the impact your event will have on the community and link it to your service project's mission and goals]

How to contact organizers: [Provide your contact information]

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Sample Media Release: Youth Support Pine Lake Tornado Victims

Contact: Renee Williams (555) 555-1234

What: Youth volunteers have planned a car wash to raise money for victims of a tornado. This project, created by a team of seven youth, will raise awareness and funds for families and individuals struck by the tornado that devastated Pine Lake residences only two weeks ago.

Who: In partnership with the Silver Dollar Action Centre, Child Friendly Calgary and YMCA Calgary youth will be out in force to raise money for disaster relief.

When: On July 28, 2000 youth will be cleaning cars between 12 p.m. and 6 p.m. The best photo opportunities will be between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

Where: Silver Dollar Car Wash, 5505 2nd Street SW, just off of MacLeod Trail South.

Why: "This is a terrific fund- and awareness-raising project for youth to be involved in," comments Jemison Jackson, one of the youth planners. "This service project gives young people a chance to get involved in their community. By creating our own volunteer initiatives, we can give assistance where it's really needed. This project is only one example of the compassionate and caring attitudes of youth in Calgary."

For more details on this event, contact Jemison Jackson, youth planner, at (555) 555-6789

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Sample Public Service Announcement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Literacy Fair Public Service Announcement

ST. JOHN'S, NFLD.—Have you ever wondered what life would be like if you couldn't read and write at a proficient level? Seemingly simple tasks that literate people take for granted, simple things like reading a menu at a restaurant, would be a constant struggle. A group of caring youth recognize the importance of literacy, and have planned a day of activities that both promote the value of literacy, and make reading and writing fun for all!

You will have a chance to participate in activities such as: bookmark making, poetry and story reading, story writing, mural drawing, musical activities and more!

The place: 555 Main Street

The date: Saturday, November 12

The time: 1:00 to 3:00 P.M.

The cost: Absolutely Free!

Come and support literacy in your community—and have loads of fun doing it!

For more information, please contact Jenny Smith, youth organizer, at (555) 555-7789.

Project Evaluation

Project:

Project date:

How well did this project achieve its goals?

What were the strongest components of this project?

Did you receive adequate training to complete your volunteer responsibilities? What else was needed?

What recognition was given for your efforts? What else could have been done?

What could be improved next time? (e.g. timing, duration of planning, leadership, type of service, communication, administration, etc.)

What issues do you see in the community that could be addressed by our next service project?

Volunteer Canada thanks the Government of Canada and Investors Group for their contribution to the production of this manual.

Today, more than ever before, young people are discovering the value of volunteerism. Canada's youth are the fastest-growing segment of volunteers compared to any other age group, and contribute an average of 125 hours a year to worthy causes. The work of young volunteers not only helps to build and strengthen our communities, it also provides important life and employment skills that benefit us all.

Investors Group believes in making a difference in the communities where we live and work. That is why we are pleased to support the efforts of Canada's young people through Youth Works! Creating and developing youth-led volunteer projects. Our hope is that through this initiative, more young Canadians will be inspired to volunteer their time and their talents for the betterment of our communities, and for their own personal growth.

In honour of International Year of Volunteers 2001, we dedicate this guide to the spirit of young Canadians committed to improving the quality of life we all share.

*H. Sanford Riley
President and Chief Executive Officer
Investors Group Inc.*



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Version française également disponible.



Canada