



Youth Service-Learning Project Ideas

Arts and communication

- Tutor younger kids to improve their reading and writing skills.
- Make cards or decorations and deliver in-person to those in nursing homes or hospitals.
- Go caroling or bring singing telegrams to homes of the elderly and shut-ins.
- Hold a youth-led talent show in your community.
- Design and paint a mural in a public place with permission.
- Create an educational bulletin board for a church, school, or community center.
- Interview elders and write stories about the history of your community.
- Meet with a foreign-born student or neighbor to practice speaking English.
- Hold a fundraiser to obtain books for your school or community library.
- Read aloud or electronically record stories for people who are visually impaired.
- Offer performing arts lessons in dance, drama, or music at an afterschool program.

Citizenship and service

- Write a proclamation for a community beautification week, and ask the mayor to sign it.
- Conduct a media campaign challenging kids to volunteer.
- Present safety demonstrations and programs at schools or childcare centers.
- Serve on community boards and committees (MU Extension county council, park board, YMCA, United Way, churches).
- Volunteer to assist poll workers at a voting place.
- Advocate for youth issues with governing bodies.
- Organize a festival to share and celebrate cultural/ethnic diversity in the community.
- Write letters to military personnel away from home.
- Maintain landscaping at veteran's or nursing homes.
- Help elderly neighbors mow the lawn, pull weeds, shovel snow, etc.
- Build a walkway to make a public area more accessible for those with special needs.
- Invite police to your school or club meetings to share educational programs and be recognized for their public service.
- Tour a local food pantry or regional food bank. Raise money and make a donation to buy bulk food to feed hungry children and families.
- Work with local government officials to create youth job shadowing, apprenticeships, or summer employment opportunities.
- Organize a public issues forum. Invite people to share ideas on an issue affecting children and youth in the community.
- Make fleece blankets and donate them to shelters, police stations, or fire stations.

Growth and Leadership

- Introduce kids in after school programs to a hobby or favorite activity.
- Start a buddy system at school to befriend students with special needs.
- Volunteer with social service agencies that allow you to explore careers in public service.
- Plan a workday or cleanup at the County Fairgrounds, MU Extension office, etc.
- Organize and conduct a festival or celebration to boost community pride.
- Create a guide of volunteer opportunities in your community, listing purposes, needs, and opportunities.
- Serve on a community betterment committee, representing your school, club, or all youth in your community.
- Develop a “first friends” program for new students at school - someone to eat lunch with, introduce them to others, and help them get through their first day.
- Host an event to educate others about the critical issues facing diverse or underrepresented groups in your community (racial minorities, immigrants, refugees).
- Organize a bicycle safety program to educate drivers and provide kids with bike helmets and safe riding stickers.
- Visit retirement centers or nursing homes to talk, play board games, or participate in other activities with seniors.
- Make cards and personally deliver to hospital patients (children, veterans, families).
- Take the lead on introducing or expanding a recycling program in your school, park, fairgrounds, or community.

Home and Consumer Life

- Read books to children in a library program.
- Organize, promote, or volunteer in food recovery efforts to benefit those in need.
- Act as *big buddies* to children who need extra support and role models.
- Lead a session on disaster preparedness and show how to create a family disaster kit.
- Develop a brochure of all services and help available to new parents.
- Volunteer to help with child care for those who can't afford it.
- Take up a collection of gently used items (shoes, eyeglasses, coats) for children in need.
- Organize a Safe Walking Program to escort younger children to and from schools.
- Host a “from the farm to you” program for to explain where food comes from.
- Organize a workshop teaching young people and adults about savings, credit, and debt.
- Create an awareness campaign on the benefits of buying local products.
- Volunteer to help build affordable housing in your community (Habitat for Humanity).
- Organize an event to teach high school students and their parents how to fill out financial aid forms and college applications.
- Host a workshop about cyber bullying and safe use of social media and the internet.

Service-Learning Project Ideas (cont.)

Nutrition and Health

- Present an anti-drug/tobacco use workshop for your school or afterschool program.
- Help cook and serve meals at a homeless center or shelter.
- Sponsor a community blood drive.
- Establish a fitness course in a public park with permission.
- Conduct a series of food preparation or preservation classes for community members.
- Advocate or raise funds for mental and emotional health services.
- Organize events such as 5K race, fun run, or bike hike to promote physical activity.
- Initiate a school-based backpack program to provide healthy food to students from limited resource families.
- Start a community or school garden for youth and adults to grow fresh produce.
- Offer a self-defense workshop for community members.
- Assist an after-school little league or other sports program for younger members.
- Organize a first-aid training session for your school, club, or community group.
- Hold a panel discussion inviting experts to talk on the dangers of drinking and driving.
- Start a composting project, collecting food waste from restaurants and school cafeterias.
- Organize a day of play outside with your school in honor of all active, healthy kids.
- Prepare and deliver meals to those in need, such as the elderly or disabled.

Outdoors and Nature

- Deliver a presentation being a good steward of the environment to elementary classes.
- Plant trees in a public area (park, courthouse, memorial site, cemetery) with permission.
- Work with local businesses to beautify a downtown street with hanging flower baskets.
- Establish demonstration plots of native plants or flowers to attract pollinators.
- Work with your school to start a paper, plastic, or aluminum recycling program.
- Organize trash pick-ups to clean a local park, fairground, or highway.
- Clean up a stream bed and plant vegetation along its banks.
- Encourage community groups and businesses to use recycled products.
- Work with your community to clean up abandoned buildings and vacant lots.
- Test the health and quality of water in your local lakes, rivers, or streams, and share your results with local media.
- Teach children and youth how to conserve water through everyday actions.
- Organize a battery and electronics recycling campaign.
- Plan a project to help maintain or build local hiking and biking trails.
- Create a brochure or online map of local nature areas and places of interest.
- Clean up and maintain a neglected historical site with permission.

Service-Learning Project Ideas (cont.)

Plants and Animals

- Organize a farm visit for nursing home residents, schools, day care centers, etc.
- Volunteer at an animal shelter.
- Participate in bird or wildlife count programs and report data to agencies.
- Take pets to visit nursing home residents.
- Bring a dog or small pony to “read” to kids in childcare or afterschool programs.
- Donate extra garden produce to the food pantry or soup kitchen.
- Make a shelter or feeder for birds or other small animals.
- Create or improve habitat for native plants and animals.
- Host a workshop teaching community members how to identify and prevent invasive plant species.
- Offer to care for a neighbor’s animals while they are away.
- Host a program for pet owners to learn about animal care and nutrition.
- Arrange to bring crop displays and/or farm animals to local businesses to educate the public about agriculture.
- Start a community garden and invite local residents to join in growing and harvesting their own produce.
- Make a presentation about animal showmanship to younger students.
- Create an awareness campaign about the damage plastic items such as soda bottles pose for wildlife.
- Plan a canoe outing that involves trash clean-up of a local lake, river, or stream.

Science and Technology

- Tutor younger kids who have trouble in science or math.
- Teach those unfamiliar with computers or software how to use them.
- Lead kids in an afterschool program in how to build a junk drawer robot.
- Offer a social media boot camp for local businesses or individuals who want to learn.
- Reclaim broken bicycles, fix them, and donate them to low income families.
- Develop a public display that highlights local scientists and their work.
- Organize youth science café talks and hands-on activities during evenings or weekends.
- Create a GIS disaster evacuation map and present it to the city council.
- Educate others about the risks of online identity theft and how to protect yourself.
- Coordinate a GPS project to map local sources of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Design a website for local business or non-profit organization.
- Work with your community to establish a maker space, public shop, or shared lab.
- Train young people on how to make their homes more energy efficient.

**For more information on 4-H Service-Learning, please visit
<http://4h.missouri.edu/service/main>.**

Sources: The Kid’s Guide to Service Projects, Youth Service America