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Reviewed by: Mary Banks Former Admissions Committee Member, Columbia University Reviewed: 4/26/24 Interested in giving back to your community? Need some community service ideas to inspire you and kickstart your volunteer journey? Read on to learn more! Gandhi proclaimed, “To find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others,” and he wasn’t alone in his sentiments. Dozens of influential leaders have expressed strong opinions on volunteerism, illustrating its importance and value within society. From Gandhi's quote alone, it’s clear community service is a two-way street where both parties can experience mutual benefits. As the beneficiaries receive the support they require to improve their quality of life or circumstances, volunteers gain perspective, a sense of purpose, and invaluable skills that will aid them throughout their lives. With all that being said, it can be difficult to pick the right community service project to dedicate your time and effort. To help you in the process, this guide will provide you with 150 community project ideas! Privacy guaranteed. No spam, ever. Before sharing our list of excellent community service projects, let’s go over the basics. What is community service? Community service refers to voluntary activities undertaken by individuals or groups with the aim of benefiting an affected community or, sometimes society, as a whole. Community service acts are unpaid and involve dedicating your time and skills to assist others, address social concerns, and contribute to your community—which isn’t confined to just your immediate geographical area! Your community might extend to the entire nation, neighboring countries, your home country, or the globe as a whole. Community service can take on various forms and is not defined by its impact—whether you help one person or a thousand, it can still be considered a service act. Outside of improving the community, the primary purpose of community service is to promote social responsibility, foster empathy, broaden perspectives, and strengthen community bonds. Privacy guaranteed. No spam, ever. The next question we need to address is, “why is community service important?” There are several benefits to community service projects, including: Skill development: Engaging in community service allows students to develop and enhance a wide range of skills, such as communication, leadership, problem-solving, and organizational abilities. Academic growth: Community service can complement classroom learning by providing practical experiences and real-world applications. It helps students understand the relevance of their studies, encourages critical thinking, and deepens their understanding of social issues. College applications: Many colleges and universities value community service and consider it when evaluating applicants. Students who have actively participated in community service demonstrate qualities such as initiative, compassion, and commitment, which can strengthen your college applications! Personal growth: Community service offers opportunities for personal growth and self-reflection as students develop a sense of empathy, social responsibility, and cultural awareness. Networking and connections: Engaging in community service allows students to build relationships and expand their networks. They can connect with like-minded peers, mentors, and professionals who can provide guidance, support, and potential career opportunities. Career exploration: Community service exposes students to various industries, professions, and social issues. It can help them explore their interests, passions, and potential career paths. Civic engagement: Community service instills a sense of civic responsibility and active citizenship. It encourages students to become informed, engaged members of society who make meaningful change in the world, Personal fulfillment: Knowing you’re helping others can bring a sense of fulfillment, happiness, and purpose to your life. Many students also make lifelong memories and friendships through these experiences! Overall, community service projects are extremely important! It is a valuable and enriching experience that prepares students for successful and meaningful futures. Privacy guaranteed. No spam, ever. To help get the ball rolling and ensure you find the community service activities that fit your interests and address the social concerns that you’re most passionate about, here are 150 diverse service project ideas! General Ideas Here are some general community service examples if you aren’t set on volunteering with a particular group or organization: Start or participate in a fundraiser to donate to a charitable cause Set up a car wash fundraising event to raise money for a charitable cause Assist local festivals or events with their set-up and ensure the activity runs smoothly Organize a marathon or walk for a special cause Volunteer with violence prevention programs Volunteer at a local religious organization Volunteer as a peer counselor at a local church Volunteer at a local pool as a lifeguard Volunteer at a local thrift shop Volunteer to assist with voting in your community Volunteer at a local community legal aid clinic Volunteer at a local fire department Participate in or start a neighborhood watch program Participate or initiate a community dance workshop Assist with community mental health awareness campaigns Create websites or assist with social media marketing for nonprofit organizations Help organize a community art project Volunteer at a local veteran’s organization Volunteer at a local theatre or performing arts center Volunteer to assist with grant writing proposals for nonprofit organizations Assist with a substance abuse prevention program Volunteer at an adult education center Organize a charity bake sale to donate to a cause of your choosing If applicable, assist with disaster relief efforts by volunteering with organizations that provide emergency responses or support Participate in community-building activities, such as helping with sports organizations or cultural events Assist with blood drives or participate in campaigns that raise awareness about the importance of donating blood Volunteer at a local library to assist with organization and book returns Volunteer at a local museum or art gallery Volunteer with Habitat for Humanity to help provide your community with affordable housing Volunteer with disability support groups or organizations Volunteer at a local hospital or medical center Participate in a beautification project in your community Start a book drive at your school to collect and donate books to underprivileged schools or libraries in your area or abroad Volunteer for an international volunteer organization to provide medical care in an underprivileged community Participate in an international volunteer brigade to help build infrastructure in under-resourced countries Volunteer abroad in countries where women are extremely marginalized to promote gender equality and teach them valuable life skills Volunteer at refugee camps abroad to ensure a smoother transition for those seeking to immigrate to other countries Help document history by volunteering with archaeology projects abroad Volunteer abroad to teach communities about HIV and AIDS Volunteer with the California Innocence Project to aid in the release of wrongfully convicted individuals Volunteer with the UN to assist with advocacy, research, writing, or teaching Join efforts such as “Be My Eyes,” a virtual app that connects you with people with visual impairments to assist with everyday tasks such as reading mail Assist with projects to help transcribe and review historical documents Organize a child or family sponsorship in your class or school Assisting Children and Teens Whether you’re interested in working with children in the future or simply feel the most connected to the youth in your community, there are several ways to help address their needs: Participate in your school’s peer mentoring program or ESL program Volunteer at local libraries or reading circle programs in your community to help promote literacy among children in your community Assist in creating hope kits for Ronald McDonald children Participate in local or remote tutoring or mentorship programs to help students with subjects they struggle with Participate in local or global tutoring programs to help children learn English Volunteer at local community centers or youth organizations to assist with recreational activities Volunteer as a mentor for a special needs child Participate in initiatives to sew blankets for premature babies Volunteer as a camp counselor Help organize a community science fair for students to participate in Volunteer as a translator to help those that do not speak English Collect used costumes to distribute to low-income children for Halloween Volunteer to coach a youth sports team Offer free babysitting services to families in need Volunteer at a local foster care agency Volunteer at a daycare to assist with childcare Volunteer at a youth crisis hotline Volunteer at a children’s choir or music program Volunteer at children’s rights organizations Participate in programs that promote children's safety Mentor a younger student through programs such as Big Brother or Big Sister Participate in international brigades to offer childcare in developing countries Volunteer abroad to increase young girls’ literacy and education Assist with youth development projects abroad to help empower disadvantaged children Assist with your community or school’s anti-bullying campaigns Participate in school-building efforts abroad to help students gain easier access to education Assisting the Homeless If you’d like to promote more inclusion and empathy in your society, consider participating in the following community service projects that focus on assisting the homeless: Volunteer at local women’s, LGBTQ+, youth, or other homeless shelters Volunteer at local soup kitchens Volunteer at a homeless outreach organization Volunteer at a mobile medical clinic that serves the homeless Participate in food drives that donate to homeless shelters Volunteer at a homeless veterans' organization Start or assist with baby basket programs to help homeless pregnant women prepare for their newborn Collect plastic bags and create waterproof blankets from them to distribute to the homeless Participate in educational campaigns to raise awareness, challenge stereotypes, advocate for change, and increase the resources available to the homeless population Start a “wish list” program at a local shelter to collect and fulfill special requests from homeless individuals Start an initiative in your community or school to create care packages for the homeless, including essentials Initiate a campaign to collect and distribute sleeping bags or tend to homeless individuals Assist with resume writing and job application workshops for homeless individuals Participate in mental health support programs for homeless individuals Volunteer at a homeless legal aid clinic Volunteer with mentorship programs that provide educational and employment assistance to the homeless population Start a winter clothing drive to collect coats, mittens, scarves, hats, and boots for homeless individuals during the winter Participate in clean-up efforts to improve the living conditions of homeless encampments Assist with financial literacy programs for homeless people Start or participate in pet care drives to provide the pets of homeless people with food, vet care, and foster homes Participate or initiate a community garden program that involves the homeless to provide with skill-building opportunities, therapeutic benefits, and fresh produce Volunteer at a local laundry facility that provides free laundry services for homeless individuals Participate in cooking initiatives to hand out homemade meals to homeless people Participate in holiday gift drives to provide presents to homeless children and families Volunteer at a mobile shower unit, providing clean and safe shower facilities for homeless individual Organize or participate in a backpack and school supplies drive to ensure homeless students have the resources needed to go to school Assisting Seniors Seniors have and continue to make up a large percentage of the volunteer force. For as long as they’re able to, a large percentage of seniors dedicate their time to giving back to their community. As such, it only seems fitting that you give back to those who have made such great contributions to society! Here are some community service experiences to assist seniors: Assist with meal preparation and delivery for homebound seniors Assist with the collection and delivery of groceries to seniors Participate or start a companionship program where you and your peers connect with seniors through calls or visits Assist with the organization or recreational activities at senior centers or retirement homes Assist with technology teaching programs to help seniors use smartphones and laptops to stay connected with their friends and family Participate in reading programs where you read out loud to visually impaired seniors Assist with memory-enhancing programs for seniors Assist with baking and cooking lessons for seniors Participate in mentoring services to help seniors learn new skills or English Volunteer with oral history projects to preserve seniors’ life stories Volunteer with assistance programs to provide cleaning, personal care, and grooming services to seniors Organize music or singing performances at senior homes with your school band or some peers Volunteer to assist with arts and crafts sessions at senior homes Assist with pet therapy programs that visit senior homes If you have your license, volunteer with transportation programs to provide seniors with transportation to events and appointments Assisting Animals For all you animal lovers, these next community service examples are just for you! Volunteer at a local animal shelter Volunteer at a local zoo or animal sanctuary Volunteer at a reptile or amphibian rescue organization If you have a knack for photography, photograph animals at adoption centers to assist with their adoption Assist with feeding and caring for animals at a farms Help organize and participate in adoption events Participate in animal rescue missions during natural disasters Offer pet-sitting services for free Assist with repairing wildlife nesting boxes or building birdhouses for your community Participate in bird or wildlife monitoring programs to gather data on population and behavior Volunteer at a guide dog training center to help socialize future service dogs Offer dog-walking services for free Participate in spay/neuter campaigns to reduce pet overpopulation Participate in educational campaigns about proper pet care Participate in educational campaigns about wildlife conservation in your community Assist in conducting wildlife surveys and monitoring populations of endangered species Campaign against poaching Help build and maintain shelters or outdoor enclosures for feral cats Participate in foster programs to care for animals until they find permanent homes Organize a pet supply drive to collect items for animal shelters or rescue organizations Volunteer abroad to assist with wildlife conservation on islands, in the savannah, and in rainforests Become a marine conservation volunteer abroad to help protect threatened marine life Volunteer abroad to assist with the maintenance of private game reserves Volunteer abroad to provide basic veterinary care to animals Assisting the Environment They say charity begins at home, so consider participating in a community service project that protects everyone’s home—Earth! Volunteer at a local environmental organization and assist in their initiatives and campaigns Participate in your school or community’s recycling program Help organize Earth Day initiatives Join a community bike repair program to promote cycling Participate in neighborhood cleanup events to pick up litter Participate in beach cleanup events to decrease water and plastic pollution Assist in restoring and maintaining local parks, nature reserves, or trails Launch a composting initiative at your school Assist in tree-planting programs Volunteer at a renewable energy installation project, helping with solar panel installations Volunteer at local farmer’s markets to support sustainable agriculture practices Assist with workshops and campaigns to educate others on sustainable living, energy conservation, and water conservation Participate in food-recovery programs to decrease food waste Participate in campaigns to reduce single-use plastic consumption in your community Participate in initiatives to protect and restore coral reefs and marine ecosystems If you're looking to gain valuable experience, start a new hobby, and make a positive impact on your community, these community service ideas will be a valuable resource for you. Plus, if you aren’t involved in any extracurricular activities, these suggestions are a good way to get started. Privacy guaranteed. No spam, ever. For any remaining questions about community service projects, read on to find your answers! 1. What Is the Most Common Type of Community Service? Working with children is one of the most common types of community service. High school students typically tutor them, care for them, or mentor them. 2. How Can I Positively Contribute to My Community? Choose community service projects you’re passionate about. Dedicate your sincere time and effort to these projects and empathize with the people affected. Stick to these projects for a long period of time so you form connections with the beneficiaries and can make a meaningful, positive impact on them! 3. How Much Time Should I Dedicate to Community Service? There isn’t a set amount of time you should dedicate to community service. It should not be treated like a chore or a competition–the aim is not to get as many community service hours as possible to boost your resume. Dedicate as much time as you can to volunteering while being mindful of your other commitments, like academics and extracurriculars. Whether it be just a couple hours a week or 20, any time spent contributing to your community over time can make a difference! 4. How Can Community Service Benefit Students? Community service offers numerous benefits for students. It provides an opportunity to develop leadership skills, gain practical experience, explore potential career interests, and strengthen their college applications. It can also open more doors for them when it comes to scholarships, as many scholarships seek students with a commitment to community engagement. Moreover, community service allows students to develop a well-rounded character. They gain unique perspectives, are exposed to diverse cultures, and learn to be more empathetic. They may also be able to challenge some of their own stereotypes and misconceptions and become more inclusive and culturally competent individuals. 5. How Do I Choose the Right Community Service Projects? Choosing the right community service projects involves considering your interests, skills, and the needs of the community. Here are some steps to help you make the right choice: Reflect on your passions: Start by thinking about the causes or issues that you feel strongly about and would want to dedicate your time to Assess your skills and strengths: Consider your talents, skills, and areas of expertise. Determine how you can use these abilities to contribute effectively to a community service project and which types would benefit most from your skills Research local community needs: Learn about the specific needs and challenges faced by your local community Consider volunteering abroad: If you’re passionate about issues outside of your immediate community, look into international volunteer opportunities Evaluate available opportunities: Explore different community service organizations, projects, and initiatives in your area or abroad. Consider factors such as time commitment, project duration, and the level of involvement required Consider the impact: Assess the potential impact of the community service project. Will it make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals or the community as a whole? Seek guidance and advice: Talk to teachers, peers, mentors, or community leaders who have experience in community service. They can provide insights, guidance, and recommendations based on their knowledge and expertise Reflect on your personal growth: Consider how the community service project will contribute to your personal growth and development. Think about the skills you want to develop, the experiences you want to gain, and the impact you want to make If, after all of these steps, you still don’t resonate with a particular community service project, feel free to start your own! Overall, as many influential leaders and celebrities would argue, giving back to the world is a fundamental part of life! It not only provides support to those who need it most but can offer you a sense of fulfillment, assist with your self-discovery, and teach you lifelong lessons. Now that you have a long list of community service ideas to choose from, it’s time to find yourself by helping others! 15 community service ideas for college students Volunteer with local organizations. … Participate in trash cleanup. … Offer free college essay workshops. … Make hygiene, first-aid and food kits for donation. … Provide cost-free child care in your community. … Run a voter registration drive. … Coach a sports team. College students should participate in community service because it will enable them to support those who are in need. College students who engage in service-oriented activities may be able to enhance their communities, enrich their own lives, gain perspective, and have a positive effect on other people’s quality of life. Additionally, college students can typically list their volunteer and community service experiences on their resumes to demonstrate to potential employers that they understand the value of getting involved in their local communities. 15 community service ideas for college students College students can give back to their communities in a variety of ways. Here are 15 different volunteer opportunities that college students can engage in to change the world: 1. Volunteer with local organizations There are probably a lot of nonprofit organizations working to support your community in your area. You can submit an application to volunteer with one of these groups and provide your services. From here, you can help reputable organizations that are already operating that depend on volunteers to carry out their missions. 2. Participate in trash cleanup By taking part in a trash cleanup initiative, you can contribute to making your community a better place to live. You might be able to locate a neighborhood group that promotes environmental causes in your neighborhood. In a heavily littered area, you could also try to organize your own cleanup effort. 3. Offer free college essay workshops You probably had to write a college essay to get accepted to the school. With this in mind, you may understand how difficult it can be for many high school seniors applying to colleges to write an effective essay. As a result, you can interact with your neighborhood by hosting free college essay workshops to assist high school students in pursuing their objectives. 4. Make hygiene, first-aid and food kits for donation Underserved communities frequently rely on recurring donations of nonperishable food, first aid supplies, and hygiene items. These items are common household necessities that you can get for a reasonable price. With this, gathering these supplies for donation or organizing a donation drive for them is a compelling way to give back to your community. 5. Provide cost-free child care in your community For working families, child care can be a significant expense, and this is particularly true in households with a single parent. If you feel confident in your babysitting abilities, you can help your neighborhood by providing free child care while parents are at work. This service might assist families in saving money that they can put toward other essential costs. 6. Run a voter registration drive Consider running a voter registration drive in your local area. You can empower others and promote democracy in your community by doing this. Additionally, taking part in civic engagement activities can assist you in advocating for your community and enhancing its quality of life. 7. Coach a sports team If you have prior team sports coaching experience, consider coaching a youth league in your area. Consider holding practices for sports like soccer, baseball or football. This can help families reduce the cost of extracurricular activities while providing their kids with fun, healthy activities. 8. Volunteer as a peer counselor For many families, it can be difficult to both access and afford counseling services. By working as a peer counselor as a volunteer, you might be able to help meet the demand for these services. By giving them a place to talk and deal with their problems, you can assist other young adults through such initiatives. 9. Help build local infrastructure If your community has adequate infrastructure, everyone who lives there will be safer and have a better time. You can volunteer to build and improve local infrastructure. For instance, you might be able to aid in the construction of a playground, put up benches in a park, or make bike lanes so that others can enjoy the outdoors in comfort. 10. Petition for community improvements As was already mentioned, taking part in civic engagement activities can have tremendous benefits for both you and your community. Consider petitioning for change if you see a need for it in your neighborhood. For instance, you can ask your local officials to hire crossing guards or put up better signage for drivers if you see a lack of safety at crosswalks. 11. Hold a donation drive for winter clothing For those with limited resources, winter clothing such as coats, scarves, gloves, hats, and boots can be pricey. Think about organizing a donation drive for people in your neighborhood to provide new or used winter clothing. Then, you can give any items you’ve gathered to a neighborhood shelter or another respectable organization so they can be distributed. 12. Train a service animal Volunteers are used by many organizations to train service animals for the disabled. To do this, you can enroll in training sessions with the organization in question, work with an animal for a predetermined amount of time. From here, the organization might help you donate the animal you handle to a person in need. 13. Organize a social media awareness campaign You can use social media to raise awareness of a variety of societal issues. Consider organizing a local awareness campaign using a social media platform to your advantage. This kind of activity can assist you in advocating for changes and improving your social environment. 14. Help facilitate mutual aid The voluntary exchange of resources or services within a community is referred to as “mutual aid.” By establishing a network for it in your community, you can aid in the facilitation of mutual aid. Consider creating a group on social media where members of the neighborhood can ask for help. 15. Offer cost-free yard work Similar to child care, landscaping services can be very expensive for some people and can be difficult for elderly or disabled people to navigate. Think about providing free yard work in your neighborhood to help others who might be struggling with maintenance. You might be able to put together a group of other college students to offer these services frequently. Community Service Projects and Ideas FAQ What are some good ideas for community service? Do Things for Your Community: Walk kids home from school. Rake leaves for an elderly neighbor. Mow your neighbor’s lawn. Offer dog-walking services. Clean up cigarette butts on the ground. Be a translator at parent-teacher conferences if you are bilingual. Babysit during PTA meetings. Foster a shelter animal. What can students do to help the community? How to Get Involved in Local Community Projects as a High School Student Figure Out What You’re Interested In. What are you passionate about? . Join Clubs or Other Extracurricular Activities. … Participate in Class Discussions and Be an Active Learner. … Volunteer Your Time to Help Local Community Organizations. What is the easiest community service? Here are 10 easy ways to volunteer without making any long-term commitments. Donate clothes that you no longer wear. … Donate food. … Donate toys. … Pick up some trash. … Pass on birthday gifts for the benefit of others. … Give back to the troops. … Find others to join a shared cause. … Donate books. Community Explore 30 dynamic community service ideas to inspire and empower your community involvement. From innovative digital fundraising to impactful educational projects, discover actionable ways to make a real difference today! Community service reaches across all ages and demographics to help people build a sense of empathy, social responsibility, and community. For kids, it builds compassion and teamwork. Teens gain skills and awareness of societal issues. And adults can contribute their skills and expertise to build stronger communities, while setting positive examples for younger generations. We believe that through community service, individuals of all ages learn the value of giving back. And with these community service ideas, anyone can get involved.Community Service Ideas for High School StudentsCommunity service is essential for high school students to learn empathy, build their skills and college resumes, and begin to figure out their own strengths and weaknesses. These are also great community service ideas for college students.Organize a food drive: Food drives aren’t just a Thanksgiving community service idea. Set up collection points at school and in your community to collect non-perishable items year-round. Volunteer at an animal shelter: Spending time caring for animals, cleaning shelters, and helping with adoption events is incredibly rewarding.Tutor younger students: Offer tutoring sessions for elementary or middle school students to improve their academic skills and build your leadership abilities.Mentor your peers: Join or start a peer mentoring program at your school. Offer support, advice, and a listening ear to fellow students facing challenges.Help out at a senior center: Spend time with seniors, helping with activities, reading to them, or just offering companionship.Support a local library: Libraries often need extra help. Volunteer to assist with shelving books, organizing events, or running summer reading programs. Community Service Ideas for Kids While they’ll need adult supervision, there are plenty of types of community service younger children can get involved in. Try out these ideas with your local kids. Make cards for seniors: Create handmade greeting cards for residents in senior centers. Brighten their day with colorful drawings and kind messages.Bake treats for community helpers: Bake cookies or other treats and deliver them to local firefighters, police officers, or healthcare workers to show appreciation.Decorate lunch bags: Decorate paper lunch bags with cheerful designs and messages and donate them to a local food bank or meal program.Collect toys, clothes, and books: Gather gently used toys, clothes, and books and donate them to shelters, foster care organizations, or libraries.Create hygiene kits: Assemble hygiene kits with items like toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, and hand sanitizer. Donate them to homeless shelters or disaster relief organizations.Draw posters for awareness: Create colorful posters that promote important causes like recycling or healthy eating and display them around your community. This fun community service idea develops both creativity and empathy. Environmental Community Service ProjectsHelping the environment is always a popular cause. These are also excellent community service ideas for Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts who want to earn environmental badges.Help with a local cleanup: Host an event to clean up local parks, beaches, or neighborhoods. Provide gloves, bags, and recycling bins to collect trash and recyclables.Get involved in a gardening project: Plant flowers or trees in public spaces or at schools, or start a community garden where community members can grow vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Create a composting initiative: Start a composting program for organic waste in your community. Teach residents how to compost and use the compost in local gardens or parks.Build and install birdhouses: Construct birdhouses and place them in local parks or green spaces to support local wildlife and encourage biodiversity.Organize a workshop: Host workshops or seminars on topics like recycling, conservation, and sustainable living. Invite experts to speak and provide practical tips.Create a rain garden: Design and plant a rain garden to manage stormwater runoff and improve water quality. Use native plants to create a habitat for local wildlife and reduce soil erosion.Educational Service Project IdeasEducation is one of the biggest ways we can all make a difference in the world. That’s why some of the best community service ideas focus on education.Hold a STEM workshop: Host workshops focused on science, technology, engineering, and math. Engage students with hands-on activities, experiments, and guest speakers.Start a homework help club: Create a club where students can get assistance with their homework from volunteers who provide guidance and resources.Collect school supplies: Host a drive to collect supplies like notebooks, pencils, and backpacks. Distribute the supplies to organizations that help students in need.Create a language exchange program: Set up conversation groups, language classes, or pen-pal systems where students can practice new languages with native speakers.Host a career day: Help young people explore different career paths by organizing events where professionals from various fields speak about their careers. Plan educational field trips: Provide hands-on learning experiences with field trips to museums, science centers, historical sites, or nature reserves.Virtual Community Service IdeasOnline fundraising has changed the game for nonprofits, but the rise of digital options has also opened the door for some truly unique community service ideas.Host virtual fundraising campaigns: Organize virtual fundraising events, such as online auctions, crowdfunding campaigns, or virtual readathons.Offer virtual tutoring: Use video conferencing tools to offer online tutoring sessions in subjects like math, science, or language arts.Create educational content: Develop tutorials or videos on subjects you’re passionate about, then share them on YouTube or educational websites.Advocate on social media: Use social media to raise awareness about important issues. Share informative posts, create campaigns, and use peer-to-peer fundraising to support causes that matter to you.Provide remote help: Help a nonprofit with tasks like data entry, managing social media accounts, or designing marketing materials. Some of the best examples of community service come from volunteers who are behind the scenes. Transcribe historical documents: Volunteer with organizations like the Smithsonian or Project Gutenberg to transcribe historical documents, making them more accessible to researchers and the public.Bring Your Community Service Project Ideas to Life with DonatelyCommunity service and fundraising go hand in hand. The right donation platform is key to turning good community service ideas into great events that raise money and awareness for your cause. Whether you’re organizing an online event, hosting an in-person gala, or simply need to raise money so you can bring your idea to life, you’ll need a place where the community can donate. Donately is a donation platform that makes it easy for donors to support your cause. Beyond custom forms and pages, you can also take advantage of peer-to-peer fundraising and native integrations with Mailchimp and Facebook to reach a wider audience. Sign up for a free account today and make your best community service ideas a reality. May 16, 2024 Community service projects can look great on college applications. But the difference between a worthwhile community service project and a flimsy excuse to check a box is not only vast but easily recognizable by college admissions officers. Before you start adding new commitments to your schedule, take some time to think about what areas you’re most interested in, whether that’s working with children, cleaning up local trails, coaching youth sports, etc. Then, explore which community service projects exist (or might be possible) in your area. Hoping for some inspiration? Our list of 130 community service examples and ideas for high school students will get you started. What makes community service projects worthwhile? Not to go all The Bachelor on you, but…are you here for the right reasons? Here’s what we mean. If you’re a high school junior or senior, then nearly everything leading up to this point in your life has involved self-betterment. Anything from geometry class to football practice to choir will have focused on making you a mature thinker, a talented athlete, a star harmonizer or soloist, etc. Community service, on the other hand, is not self-focused. It aims to help the community, at the expense of your own time, without offering any compensation. Accordingly, the needs of whichever organization you’re assisting should be front and center, meaning that the tasks you’re involved in (at least to start) may not be what you initially envisioned. To put it plainly, what makes a community service project “worthwhile” depends primarily on its importance to others. Still, that doesn’t mean that community service projects can’t contribute to your own learning, or feel rewarding. In fact, you should pick something you’ll enjoy doing because having a genuine interest in the project will allow you to offer more creative ideas and make stronger connections with others. How should I choose a project? Choosing community service projects that relate to your interests will help you gain new skills and learn more about a subject in a “real world” context. These projects can allow you to meet people you wouldn’t have met otherwise. Even if you don’t make new best friends, you’ll certainly form ‘weak-tie’ friendships, which research shows help increase an individual’s overall happiness and sense of belonging. By networking and expanding your list of contacts, you’ll also learn about jobs and opportunities in the field. Your community service project may even teach you something new about altruism, and the joy that comes from actively making the community a better place. Moreover, choosing a project or organization that relates to your interests will make it more likely that you’ll stay involved over a longer period of time, which is what will allow you to truly get to know the needs of the organization and perhaps even organize one or two of your own original initiatives. You don’t have to do anything groundbreaking in your first few weeks or months of service—aim to start small and build your impact over time. Do community service projects strengthen my college application? In college, your professors will expand your education by moving away from a model of learning for self-betterment and toward a vision of communal and global betterment. Ultimately, educators hope to form students into individual thinkers, doers, and leaders who will harness their talents to improve the lives of others. For this reason, community service projects strengthen your application by showing admissions officers that you already care about your impact on the wider world. It will send a signal that you are a student they’d like to teach—and have as part of their campus community. Note: a few hours of community service here and there likely won’t do much to move the needle for an admissions committee or adequately demonstrate your community involvement. We’re talking hours, weeks, months, and even years of commitment. How should I reach out to organizations? Many organizations accept free help if the offer presents itself. Yet some don’t respond to messages, or call you back promptly. This isn’t because they’re ghosting you—many nonprofits and community organizations are severely short-staffed or may even have a mostly volunteer-based staff, both of which make it difficult to keep up with emails and phone messages. You can also try reaching out on social media. If a second follow-up doesn’t elicit any response, you may try doing an old-fashioned drop-in. Bring a resume, if you have one, and check online for the organization’s operating hours. If your initial queries work and you’re asked to come in for an informational meeting or interview, make sure to arrive on time and act responsibly. Be both dependable and flexible. Nonprofits and community organizations accomplish serious work, and ought to be taken seriously. Furthermore, do keep your own safety in mind and make sure you’re comfortable with the level of supervision that you will (or won’t) have. Finally, go with an open mind! You could even consider going with a friend, so long as they also register or sign up properly. Bringing a buddy with similar interests can work as a boost for both the project (which will benefit from more helping hands) and yourself (if you’re nervous about trying something new). 130 Examples of Community Service Projects for High School Students As you read through the following list, eliminate the ideas that don’t appeal to you, as well as ones that aren’t relevant to your community. Take note of the ideas that sound promising. Categories: Animal Care Volunteer at an animal shelter and care for cats, rabbits, dogs, and guinea pigs. Organize a community bird feeder workshop. Host a workshop on how to install flowering planters for pollinators. Foster animals that shelters can’t accept. Organize a group committed to feeding, neutering, and monitoring strays. Join a group that educates the public on local wild animals. Culture, Community, and Civic Duty Volunteer at your local archives or folklife center. Volunteer at a voting center and help register people to vote. Join a group repairing and renovating public spaces. Repaint community fences, park benches, bus stops, etc. (with permission). Think about how you could make a public space more accessible, useful, or clean—perhaps adding a handicapped ramp, recycling bins, etc. Campaign for new playground equipment. Participate in or help organize a community play, variety show, or art show. Host or participate in a community concert. Create or join a group to clean up public roadways/walkways (parking lots, roads, boardwalks, etc.). Create a neighborhood program to welcome and help migrant families. Petition your town to build more drinking fountains and public restrooms. Volunteer to clean up (and recycle) after a community event. Clean up after holiday festivals and parades. Clean up after a natural disaster. Volunteer at a local museum by giving tours. Volunteer for a political campaign, helping with events or door-knocking. Host a cultural night at your school or in your community. Offer to paint original artwork or a mural on a building or in a public space. Organize an event, rally, or protest in support of a cause you believe in, like reproductive or LGBTQ+ rights. Community Service Project Ideas — Continued Environment Host a clean-up of your local park or hiking trail. Join and work at a community garden. Create a composting center in your neighborhood, and host how-to workshops. Create a Christmas tree recycling program. Join a tree-planting organization working to reduce greenhouse gases. Organize a recycling and composting workshop to teach upcycling habits. Help maintain the walking trails in local and national parks. Host a clean-up of a nearby river, lake, or beach. Create a community pledge to boycott the consumption and use of toxic products. Organize a carpooling network to reduce car emissions. Join an organization that plants and protects endemic species. Advocate for more bike lanes and improved public transport. Volunteer at a nature center to teach visitors about the local environment. Volunteer at a bird sanctuary. Host a workshop on how to recycle and donate batteries and electronics. Volunteer at a botanical garden. Organize and lead nature walks. Organize a group to plant flowers and seeds in bare public spaces. Faith Participate as a counselor or volunteer in a religious camp. Volunteer as a reader in a spiritual center. Volunteer at faith-based events at your church, mosque, or synagogue. Organize rides to services for older community members. Organize a faith-based service group at your school. Help teach Sunday School or volunteer with childcare during services. Community Service Project Ideas — Continued Food & Shelter Cook and distribute food at a soup kitchen. Volunteer with Habitat for Humanity. Babysit (for free) for a neighborhood family in need. Prepare home-cooked meals for the residents of a local homeless shelter. Help organize and sort drop-offs at Goodwill and other donation centers. Babysit children while their parents look for jobs. Visit, entertain, and tutor children in a homeless shelter. Set up a free food stand in a city food desert. Host a farm-to-table cooking class for youth. Fundraising Ask family and friends for charity donations as birthday presents. Set up a neighborhood car wash or garage sale, with all profits going to charity. Sign up as part of a road race team for a particular charity or organization, and ask family and friends to sponsor you. Host a bake sale. Host a silent auction, trivia night, or fashion show. Ask local businesses if they’d be willing to match any donations you receive. Health & Wellness Get involved in your local Red Cross. Help organize a community blood drive. Volunteer with a local health clinic to immunize children from diseases. Assist your local hospital by delivering gifts, clothes, and meals to patients. Knit or crochet blankets for children in the hospital. Spearhead an initiative to make free period products available in your school’s bathrooms. Organize free public outdoor exercise and meditation classes. Community Service Examples — Continued Online/Virtual Become an online tutor in your favorite subject. Provide virtual healthcare assistance through organizations like Be My Eyes or the Red Cross. Volunteer to start or run social media accounts for a local nonprofit or organization. Volunteer in online translation services. Volunteer for a political campaign, making calls or sending emails from home. Ask local organizations or agencies if they have any computing, programming, or graphic design projects that they need assistance with. Develop a free app that would assist your school or community with an area of need. Safety Take a junior lifeguarding course and volunteer at your local pool, lake, or beach. Host self-defense workshops. Organize drug-free workshops and awareness campaigns. Volunteer for a crisis hotline, bringing help to people in emergencies. Volunteer as a crosswalk monitor for your nearby elementary school. Advocate for a safety-related cause, such as gun violence or better lighting in public parks. Senior Care Volunteer at a nursing home; converse, play games, and read with residents. Help drive seniors to doctor’s appointments. Check-in on elderly neighbors, bringing groceries and medication. In extreme weather, check that elderly neighbors have functioning heaters, fans, etc. Teach computer skills to the elderly. Help them avoid computer viruses and spam. Help an elderly neighbor maintain their yard or garden. Rake leaves, pull weeds, plant flowers, shovel snow. Help an elderly neighbor clean their house. Cook with an elderly neighbor, or bring over homemade treats. Participate in a holiday meal for senior citizens. Pick a senior buddy and keep in touch through letters or email. Organize an event or series of events at a senior center, such as small music concerts, a letter-writing initiative, etc. Sports Coach or assist a community or youth sports team. Help out at the refreshment and first-aid stands of local races. Organize pick-up games for popular sports in your community. Run (or walk, or skip…) in a charity race. Volunteer at the nearest local Special Olympics. Volunteer to run an after-school movement-based club at your local middle or elementary school, such as jogging or yoga. Organize a running, walking, or hiking group in your area. Community Service Project Ideas — Continued Supply Collection Donate old and unused toys to charity drives. Collect clothes, makeup, and perfume to donate to a women’s center. Create collections of hygiene and/or period products to donate to shelters. Host a winter clothes drive and give donations to a homeless shelter or families in need. Collect textbooks for schools, libraries, and shelters. Donate books to your local used book store and libraries. Collect working electronics for people in homeless shelters. Collect sports gear and shoes to donate to community sports programs. Donate canned food and non-perishables to a food bank. Donate blankets, clothes, and sleeping bags to a homeless shelter. Collect ground coffee to donate to a shelter—many go through hundreds of cups per day! Collect eyeglasses for donation. Collect puzzles and games for senior centers or after-school care organizations. Youth & Education Tutor younger students in an after-school program. Volunteer at a local daycare or preschool. Volunteer at a summer camp. Read stories and articles to someone who is visually impaired. Join and volunteer at one of these literacy organizations. Volunteer at your local library, reading to school groups and re-shelving books. Give free music lessons to kids in your neighborhood. Sponsor a student from a foreign country through an educational exchange program. Train to volunteer as a teen crisis counselor. Advocate for more playgrounds in the community. Donate textbooks to a school you didn’t attend. Tutor and teach English to ESL students. Teach a course on computer literacy to students without access to computers. Start or join a buddy program that pairs high school and elementary students. Start a coding or programming club for elementary or middle school students. Community Service Projects — Next Steps Once you’ve made your list of community service ideas, do a little digging to see which opportunities exist in your community. This will narrow down your list some more. Then, contact one or two organizations, and mention your availability. If you plan to organize or host a community service project for others, you may want to consider getting an adult chaperone on board who can handle crisis management situations. From there, you’ll need to contact relevant city, town, and/or school officials as well as charities you wish to collaborate with. Consider how long the project will take, the main goals, how many volunteers you’ll need, whether you’ll need to fundraise, and how you’ll promote the community service project. Looking for additional volunteer or extracurricular-related resources? You may consider checking out the following: bookmark