

Service Learning

more than community service

Oklahoma 4-H Volunteer Development Series



Making a Difference in Our Club, Community and Country

Other helpful information

4H.VOL.109
Planning

4H.VOL.110
Goal Setting

4H.VOL.111
Developing 4-H Project

4H.VOL.117
Youth Adult Partnerships

4H.VOL.135
Life Skills Definitions

[http://4h.okstate.edu/
literature-links/lit-online/
others/volunteer](http://4h.okstate.edu/literature-links/lit-online/others/volunteer)

For more than 100 years the 4-H program has emphasized citizenship, leadership and service. This is done through the project work of individual members, local clubs and county, state and national programming.

Youth “learn by doing” through positive youth development efforts. Our goal is to help youth connect *meaningful* community service experiences with learning about a social

situation/subject, civic responsibility while undergoing personal growth.

Service-learning is a process that takes time and intentional planning. The goal is to balance learning and service. Over the long term, the experience has a significant impact on the child, club and community.

Youth are active participants in the project. They are provided the support and flexibility needed to learn

about the setting and circumstances in which the service is needed or will be delivered and the opportunity to develop and carry out a plan.

When this is achieved, students are using newly acquired skills and knowledge in real life situations. In addition, these experiences assist in the development of a sense of caring for others and empower youth with the belief that they can make a difference in the community

Community Service vs. Service Learning

The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Community Service is the act of volunteering.

Service-Learning is more than volunteering. Service-learning projects 1) determine a real need, 2) learn about the need, 3) plan a project that applies the knowledge/skills learned and 4) do the act of service.

The practice of service-learning supports the 4-H Essential Element Model

focusing as much on “education” (Mastery), as the act of service (Generosity).

The blending enriches both the service and the learning experiences. For instance, the elementary schools in Washington started an adopt-a-stream movement, helping to reclaim some of the state’s most important environmental gifts. At the same time, their service

involved mastering a great deal of scientific knowledge (stream, habitat and ecology), language arts (writing public information tracts, writing to the city council), social studies (getting community support for their project), geography, critical thinking and practical arts (building a fish ladder, a weir, etc.)

Life Skills Develop:

Service-Learning: helping youth connect meaningful community service experiences with learning about a subject/social situation, personal growth and civic responsibility.

Critical Thinking: asks questions before, during and after acquiring information.

Decision Making: identify and choose between alternatives.

Self Responsibility, Self Discipline: managing one's time in an effort to follow-through with commitments and personal responsibilities.

Contributing to Group Efforts: learning and putting into practice the skills necessary to be a contributing member of a committee/club.

1998 4-H Life Skills Model

Service-Learning Framework

Preparation is the learning activities that take place before the act of service. Students must understand the need, situation, circumstances and possible laws before they can identify ways to meet the need. Preparation will include:

- Identifying and analyzing the problem
- Selecting and planning the project
- Training and/or orientation necessary to carry out the service

Action is the service itself.

The action needs to meet the following criteria:



- Be meaningful
- Have academic integrity
- Have adequate supervision
- Provide for student ownership
- Be developmentally appropriate for youth

Reflection allows students to critically think about all parts of the experience. Processing continues the learning process encouraging youth to think and share with others while building life experiences to draw upon later.

Structured reflection can be done through:

- Discussion
- Reading
- Journaling

- Projects-video, story, PPT
- The Arts

Celebration recognizes students for their efforts and provides closure. Society needs to let young people know that their contributions are valued.

Do not skip this step. Involve as many parties as possible from various steps along the way—government officials, law enforcement, instructors, agencies, recipient, etc.

Ways to celebrate:

- Joint celebration with service recipients/agency
- Pizza /Ice-cream party
- News/media coverage
- Certificates

Plan Outline

- I. **Preparation**
 - A. Selecting Project
 - B. Defining the Situation
 - C. Prepare a Plan
 - D. Training and Orientation
 1. Guest Speakers
 2. Project Work
 3. Field Trips
 4. Programs
- II. **Action** - Youth apply knowledge, information and skills to the plan and complete the service.
- III. **Reflection**—Recording what was learned through discussion, debriefing, photos, video, journaling, poetry, stories, art, displays, etc.
- IV. **Celebration**—All involved partners and participants come together to celebrate their achievement.

Examples of Service-Learning

The four general types of service include education, environmental, human need and public service.

Education

- Serving as a tutor, study buddy or literacy volunteer
- Assisting with the design/implementation of a youth leadership program
- Energy Audit – individual and family awareness about simple energy conservation practices
- Safety Awareness

Environment

- Restoring weather damaged areas
- Improving parks or public grounds
- Sampling, monitoring and mapping natural resources
- Recycling—home, school, community
- Weather proofing a home or business
- Xeriscaping - landscapes are defined as “quality landscaping that conserves water and protects the environment.
- Home Grounds—lawn

care, composting, proper use and disposal of chemicals

- Urban Wildlife Habitat

Human Needs

- Weather proofing a home for low-income housing/elderly
- Planting trees for shade and windbreaks
- Clothing-Staying warm or cool with less energy, repurposing, recycling, adapting, etc.
- Food- Community Gardens, composting

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

- Green Space – parks and recreation areas
- Making/restoring toys, games, household items, clothing and food
- **Public Safety**
- Violence Prevention

- Texting/Distracted Driving
- Illegal dump sites
- Water conservation/pollution
- Carbon Footprint
- Recreational Safety—hunting and fishing, bicycle, 4-wheelers,

water skiing, skate boarding, etc.

- First Aid
- Signage—lights, signals, signs for schools, parks, etc.
- Green School—
http://www.kidsconsortium.org/grn_award.php

Guide to Successful Experiences

- **Positive Role Models**
- Youth need people who they can admire and respect, and who project positive values or skills.
- **Simple Strategies** – Be sure that youth and adults have a clear image or feeling of what they are attempting to accomplish. Ask, “Is the project/service for “my” benefit or the “recipients?” The task should be developmentally appropriate, provide a challenge for growth

- and have meaning.
- **Keep it Fun** – The quickest way to a person’s mind and heart is to make learning fun! Academic integrity can be maintained through games and activities.
- **Be Positive and Hopeful** – Youth and adults define themselves and their abilities based upon what they see in the mirror we hold up to them. Remind the club to think and act in ways they have agreed will help them

accomplish the goals of the group/individual.

- **Concrete Strategies** - Take advantage of everyday opportunities. Help club members recognize what is within their potential control and what is not. Provide for youth ownership.
- **Individualized Approach** - Get to know each individual and their capabilities. Give each individual all that they can handle while providing adequate supervision.

Benefits of Service-Learning

Group

- High Academic Performance
- Leadership Development
- A Heightened Sense of Purpose
- Intellectual Growth
- Social and Personal Growth
- Citizenship Development
- Increased Interest in

Learning and 4-H Work

- Acceptance and Awareness of Others from Diverse and/or Culturally Different Backgrounds

Individual

- Personal Growth
- Social Growth
- Intellectual Growth
- Civic Responsibility
- Career Exploration

For More Information

Service– Learning in Community-Based Organizations and S.L.A.P. Guide
<http://4h.okstate.edu/literature-links/lit-online/leadership-development/service-learning>

The **National Service-Learning Clearinghouse** (NSLC) supports the service-learning community in higher education, kindergarten through grade twelve, community-based organizations, tribal programs, and all others interested in strengthening schools and communities using service-learning.

<http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/content/national-service-learning-clearinghouse>

Learning by Doing: Students Take Green to the Community

<http://www.epa.gov/osw/education/pdfs/svclearn.pdf>

Innovation Center for community & youth development

<http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/catalog/toolkits/resources>

Beyond 4-H Community Service... To Community Service Learning

<http://www.4-h.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=4578&libID=4573>

Kids Consortium

http://www.kidsconsortium.org/grn_award.php

Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.

Benjamin Franklin

