

# Youth Leader's Guide

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## What is National & Global Youth Service Day?

*National & Global Youth Service Day, a program of Youth Service America with the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) and PARADE Magazine, is the largest service event in the world. Millions of youth from all 50 states will join in the 19th Annual National & Global Youth Service Day on April 20-22, 2007. Global Youth Service Day, also organized by Youth Service America, takes place concurrently in more than 115 countries.*

### What are the Goals of National & Global Youth Service Day?

- ✦ To **MOBILIZE** youth to identify and address the needs of their communities through service and service-learning.
- ✦ To **SUPPORT** youth on a lifelong path of service and civic engagement.
- ✦ To **EDUCATE** the public, the media, and elected officials about the year-round contributions of young people as community leaders.

### Help Youth Get Involved In This International Effort.

1. Start planning now. Use this guide as a planning tool.
2. Work with youth to establish goals for learning.
3. Work with youth to create a meaningful service project.
4. Get more information from Youth Service America:

✦ **Planning Tool Kit:** This comprehensive guide will help you plan your project, recruit volunteers, generate media attention, raise funds, and more.

✦ **Service-Learning Curriculum Guide:** Use this 8-lesson curriculum guide to develop youth project management skills while planning projects for National & Global Youth Service Day. The Guide is appropriate for youth, educators, and community leaders.

✦ **Project Grants:** Planning grants are available to help youth and organizations plan and carry out National & Global Youth Service Day projects and on-going service throughout the year.

✦ **National & Global Youth Service Day T-Shirts:** A perfect way to recognize and thank volunteers.

✦ **YSA Tip Sheets:** Provide quick and concise information and resources for frequently asked questions and challenges.

✦ **Issue-Specific Curriculum Guides:** These on-line guides on hunger and homelessness, the environment, working with younger children, youth violence, working with senior citizens, and healthy lifestyles link you to service-learning curricula, recommended reading, statistics, on-going initiatives, and more

✦ **Civic Engagement Resources:** Tip Sheets, Toolkits, website links, and more to help engage young people in all aspects of voting, advocacy, and civic engagement.

- To access these resources, visit [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd) or call 202-296-2992.
- Other helpful websites to visit:
  - ✦ SERVENet ([www.SERVENet.org](http://www.SERVENet.org))
  - ✦ The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse ([www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org))
  - ✦ National Youth Leadership Council ([www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org))
  - ✦ The National Service-Learning Exchange ([www.nslxchange.org](http://www.nslxchange.org))
  - ✦ Learn and Serve America ([www.learnandserve.org](http://www.learnandserve.org))
  - ✦ National Service-Learning Partnership ([www.nslp.org](http://www.nslp.org))
  - ✦ Global Youth Service Day ([www.GYSD.org](http://www.GYSD.org))

### Accept the Challenge

As project planners, you can leverage the momentum of National & Global Youth Service Day to initiate powerful change in your community.

1. **Make every project a service-learning project.** Leaders from schools and community groups are using service-learning as a powerful vehicle to improve student achievement, build character, and strengthen leadership skills.

2. **Educate members of the media and elected officials about service and service-learning by engaging them in your N & GYSD project.** It is crucial for the service movement to build support within these two key constituencies. The most ardent champions of service are those who have personally experienced the power of youth leadership in their communities.

3. **Encourage young people to combine service with civic action** to make a lasting impact. This includes voting; encouraging others to vote; educating peers, community members, and elected officials about key issues; advocacy; and more.

4. **Engage young people in youth-led service that lasts year-round,** strengthening their role as decision-makers.

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## More Than A Service Project

### An Introduction To Service-Learning

Service-learning is a methodology that is transforming education across America. Service-learning is a teaching method that combines meaningful service with curriculum or program-based learning. Schools and organizations use service-learning as a tool to help youth build stronger academic skills, foster civic responsibility, and develop leadership skills. The components of this teaching practice include youth voice, curricular connection, addressing a genuine community need, and follow four "stages" --- preparation, action, reflection, and celebration.

### What is Service-Learning?

Picking up trash by a riverbank is *service*. Studying water samples under a microscope is *learning*. When students collect and analyze water samples and the local pollution control agency uses the findings to clean up a river ... that is *service-learning*.  
— From the National Youth Leadership Council

This curriculum poster applies the service-learning philosophy – learning by doing – to planning a project for National & Global Youth Service Day or any other day of service.

### Incorporating “Youth Voice”

“Youth Voice” refers to the engagement of young people as leaders and decision-makers in projects, programs, and organizations. In the context of service-learning, youth voice is the input young people provide in developing and implementing projects, plans, and policies to guide service-learning efforts. Incorporation of youth voice, which is essential from the initiation of the project, gives young people a sense of ownership, cultivates pride, and ensures equality amongst adult counterparts—essential ingredients when looking to thoroughly engage the involvement of youth in service. Youth voice also has a tremendous impact on program participation, community involvement, and civic engagement. Visit [www.YSA.org](http://www.YSA.org) for Tip Sheets on youth voice resources and assistance, or see the National & Global Youth Service Day Planning Tool Kit and Service-Learning Curriculum Guide.

### Civic Engagement: Linking Service To Sustainable Change

While volunteer service is one way to create healthy and dynamic communities, volunteers need to question – and act on – the relationship between their community service and long-term sustainable change. Only by getting involved in the political and policy process can youth participants be sure they are not cleaning the same dirty river or tutoring in the same sub-standard schools year after year. Civic engagement activities include not just voting, but also advocating for solutions, influencing the decision-making process by organizing debates, forums, etc., and writing letters to elected officials to express opinions. These are just a few examples of what it means to be a citizen. Young people have the opportunity through the political process to make a dramatic impact on the issues that are important to them.

### Youth Service Goes Global!

In 2000, inspired by National Youth Service Day, youth in 27 countries participated in the first Global Youth Service Day. This year, youth in over 115 countries will participate in the Eighth Annual Global Youth Service Day, which will take place concurrently with National Youth Service Day, April 20-22, 2007. Global Youth Service Day is a program of Youth Service America with Global Youth Action Network and an International Coordinating Committee. For more information about Global Youth Service Day, visit [www.GYSD.org](http://www.GYSD.org).

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## How Should We Plan our Service Project?

*Develop planning checklists by answering the following questions. Teach project management skills and other academic concepts by making your project a service-learning project. (For a more detailed discussion of these points, obtain the N & GYSD Tool Kit and Service-Learning Curriculum Guide, described on page one, from Youth Service America.)*

### 1. Set specific goals.

What do you want youth to achieve? What should they learn from the experience? What classes or grades or groups of youth will be involved? What community organizations or agencies will you be helping or working with? Will it be a one-day project or the beginning of an on-going effort? If it is a one-day project, how can it have a lasting impact?

### 2. Choose project sites.

Will the project benefit the organization or agency as well as the participants? Will it be at a large site, several smaller ones, or a combination of both? Is it a site at which participants can see or experience the impact of their work? What equipment is needed and how much will you be expected to provide? Is the site easily accessible or must you set up transportation? Is it wheelchair-accessible? Are there restrooms and a place to eat lunch? What happens if it rains?

### 3. Prepare team leaders.

Which youth are willing and capable of being team leaders? Once they are selected, have them divide up tasks, communicate with the target agency or organization, assess the site, determine logistical needs, and recruit volunteers. Remember that persons with disabilities are often eager to volunteer.

### 4. Plan a short kick-off event.

Where can the participants gather first thing in the day? Who will speak about the community, agency, site, and issues related to your project? (For example, if you are serving at a soup kitchen, youth will benefit from learning more about hunger and homelessness in your community/the nation/the world.) Who will give participants a “walk-through” of the day’s projects? What local government officials or VIPs can encourage the volunteers (be sure to invite them to participate in the service project)? How will the kick-off site be decorated (banners, balloons, streamers)? How else can it be made fun (wake-up exercises, skit, music, singers)?

### 5. Create a timeline.

What tasks have to be done before, during, and after the event? Have youth brainstorm, being sure to include: coordination with the project site; structuring the day’s activities; providing food, supplies, transportation; inviting speakers; contacting media; preparing signs, etc. How can those tasks be broken down further? Plot the tasks on a timeline. Who is responsible for each task? How often will youth meet to report on their progress and iron out problems?

### 6. Prepare instructions.

Who will manage what areas of activity? Have participants make a list. What will they be expected to do that day? Make checklists that tell them what to do in chronological order.

### 7. Follow up.

At the end of the day, how will youth reflect on their experiences? When will they complete the reflection/learning survey? What thank-you notes are required and who will write them? Who will tape TV and radio coverage of the event and clip newspaper articles? How will you continue to engage youth in service throughout the year? If youth have become interested in a particular issue surrounding their volunteer experience (hunger, the environment, etc.), how can they be civically engaged to impact the issue?

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## National & Global Youth Service Day: Plan Your Project!

Planning your project can be a piece of cake! You can do it by answering a few simple questions. We already know **WHEN** National & Global Youth Service Day takes place: April 20-22, 2007, now

### WHAT do you want to do?

- ✦ What do you want to accomplish?
- ✦ What do you want to learn from this experience?
- ✦ How will your project meet the recipients’ needs?
- ✦ Will it be a one-day project or the beginning of an ongoing effort? If it is a one-day project, how can it have a long-term impact?

- ✦ Decide how those tasks can be broken down further
- ✦ Plot the tasks on a timeline
- ✦ Plan a short kick-off event
- ✦ Identify a place where participants can meet first thing in the day
- ✦ Identify and invite government officials to inspire volunteers at your kick-off and participate in your project
- ✦ Plan how the kick-off site will be decorated
- ✦ Figure out other ways to make it fun
- ✦ Register your project at [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd)

After it’s all over, remind yourself **WHY** you decided to do this in the first place. Meet with your peers to reflect and share your thoughts.

- ✦ What did you learn from your experience?
- ✦ What surprised you most about the day?
- ✦ Did the activity meet the personal goals you had? Please explain.
- ✦ How can you use what you learned today in your everyday life?
- ✦ Did your perception of this issue or problem change during this project? How? How will you continue to stay involved?
- ✦ What are some ways this project can be improved next year?
- ✦ Having completed this project, what new questions do you have? How will you find the answers?
- ✦ How will you continue to stay involved in your community?

Don’t forget to...

- ✦ Write thank you notes to sponsors, project site leader, and others who helped.
- ✦ Return borrowed equipment.
- ✦ Tape TV and radio coverage of the event and clip newspaper articles and send to Youth Service America.
- ✦ Post your results at [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd)

### WHO will be involved?

- ✦ Will this project involve your class? Your grade? Your school? Your youth group? Your neighborhood?
- ✦ How can you invite youth who aren’t usually asked to volunteer?
- ✦ What community organizations will you work with?
- ✦ Who is willing and capable of being a team leader?

### WHERE will all this happen?

- ✦ Will the project be at a large site, several smaller ones, or a combination of both?
- ✦ What equipment is needed and how much will you be expected to provide?
- ✦ Is the site easily accessible or do you need to set up transportation?
- ✦ Is it wheelchair-accessible?
- ✦ Are there restrooms and a place to eat lunch?
- ✦ What happens if it rains?

### HOW will you pull it off?

- ✦ **Team leaders will need to:**
  - ✦ Divide up tasks
  - ✦ Communicate with the target agency or organization
  - ✦ Assess the project site
  - ✦ Recruit youth
  - ✦ Decide how often everyone will meet to report on their progress and iron out problems
  - ✦ Make a timeline
  - ✦ Determine what tasks have to be done before, during, and after the event.

*Get Wired! You can get great information about what other students are doing at the National & Global Youth Service Day website at [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd). There you’ll find service news, project ideas, grant opportunities, and more. Go to [www.GYSD.org](http://www.GYSD.org) to find out what is happening in other countries.*

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## Project Ideas

Choose a project from one of the following areas or use this list as a starting point to brainstorm new ideas.

### Service-Learning Projects in Language Arts:

- ✦ Adopt a class at a nearby elementary school; read to the youngsters, perform scenes from short stories, and re-write classics into simpler terms.
- ✦ Analyze the ways in which television commercials try to sell products to young people and then write students’ guide to advertising.
- ✦ Write letters to editors, city officials, businesses, the President, etc., describing a need in their community and what should be done about it.
- ✦ Research, write, edit, and publish a “Local Hero’s book” on people who are making a positive difference in the community.
- ✦ Read to the blind through radio broadcasts.
- ✦ Publish a newsletter for the local food bank.

### Service-Learning Projects in Mathematics:

- ✦ Visit homeless shelters and then calculate quantities of food and other supplies that would be needed to prepare meals for the homeless.
- ✦ Make a quilt as part of a unit on measurement and geometric figures, and then donate the quilt to a local charity.
- ✦ Calculate the amount of aluminum discarded in their community and the income that might be derived from recycling.
- ✦ Create a math board game for younger children.
- ✦ Use geometric shapes and patterns to design holiday and birthday cards; present cards to local nursing home residents.
- ✦ Work with neighborhood leadership/advisory boards to put on workshops for low-income area residents on household finances, budgeting, etc.

### Service-Learning Projects in the Sciences:

- ✦ Develop a butterfly garden for elementary school children and teach lessons on the development of the butterfly.
- ✦ Serve as aides, helpers, and animal handlers at local nature centers or zoos.
- ✦ Study weather systems and the damage they can cause; hold a clothing/food drive to help hurricane or tornado victims.
- ✦ Adopt a nearby lake, river, or stream, for research and pollution testing; determine the condition of the water and develop solutions such as trash pickups, waste disposal, public regulations for boat use; inform users of positive actions they can take.
- ✦ Conduct research on environmental effects of development; follow up with landscaping/restoration projects to restore native plant species.

### Service-Learning Projects in Social Studies:

- ✦ Partner with local law enforcement and juvenile agencies to establish a “Teen Court,” where peers help judge and sentence peers.
- ✦ Read about/discuss current events; prepare friendship boxes for children in disaster areas around the world; the local Red Cross can provide lists of appropriate items to include in the boxes.

- ✦ Develop and write proposals, then lobby for inclusion of service-learning in all local schools’ improvement plans and curricula.
- ✦ Track and publish the voting records of local officials.
- ✦ Volunteer to work for political candidates of their choice
- ✦ Study the history of Veterans Day; interview veterans, provide special performances/services/recognition for veterans and their families.

### Service-Learning Projects in the Arts:

- ✦ Design and sell notepads, rubber stamps, bumper stickers, and t-shirts with environmental messages; use funds to purchase trees for planting on school grounds or in community parks.
- ✦ Design playgrounds, parks, or gardens; work with the local community, government, or park system to implement the designs.
- ✦ Conduct folk life research by mapping neighborhoods, interviewing shopkeepers, drawing interiors of buildings, inventorying produce at local markets, and collecting artifacts/curios from the neighborhood; research can be housed in local libraries or hospitals or other public buildings.
- ✦ Research, prepare, and give mini-lectures to your peers or younger students on art styles, influences, history, etc.
- ✦ Prepare and present a tour of a significant museum exhibit for your peers or younger students.

### Service-Learning Projects in Foreign Languages:

- ✦ Spend time with ESL students of all ages, tutoring them in English and teaching them American culture.
- ✦ Translate a museum’s signs into Spanish and lead tours for Latino/Hispanic children to help them become familiar with leading Spanish painters.
- ✦ Provide translations of consumer information to people in the community who do not know English.
- ✦ Become pen pals with the patients in a veterans hospital who are fluent in other languages.
- ✦ Interview immigrants at the local community center about their lives, then transcribe the stories; create books for each immigrant, in their language, based on his/her personal story.

### Service-Learning Projects in Health and Physical Education:

- ✦ Develop a smoking cessation class for students; create a smoking awareness survey for the school, and prepare a statistical analysis with a math class.
- ✦ Collect materials for first-aid kits and distribute them to area churches.
- ✦ Design and construct exercise trails and provide maintenance for them.

Reprinted with permission from *Promoting Academics in Action*, written by the Service-Learning Youth Action Board at Bryan High School (Bryan, Texas)

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## Want a Better World? Spread the Word About National & Global Youth Service Day!

Do you ever feel that young people are portrayed unfairly in the news media? That only bad news gets attention? With National & Global Youth Service Day, you can get the real story out. Let your community know about the powerful contributions to society that students like you are making not just on this special day, but all year round!

To get positive attention, you need to work hand-in-hand with the local news media. It’s simple if you follow some basic steps: See the National & Global Youth Service Day Planning Tool Kit for more information.

1. In planning the event, keep in mind that the news value of the story depends on:

- ✦ **Timeliness.** National & Global Youth Service Day is April 20-22, 2007.
- ✦ **Uniqueness.** Design your event so that it is unusual or different from what’s been done before.
- ✦ **Impact.** Demonstrate that your project will have a big impact on the community, organization, or people being helped, as well as on you, the volunteers.
- ✦ **Prominence.** Involving local officials and community or business leaders will add news value.
- ✦ **Visual interest.** TV news likes to portray people doing interesting things in colorful settings.

2. If your school district or local volunteer agency has a public relations office, contact it for guidance and assistance. Ask for the names of reporters who might be interested.

3. Make a list of daily and weekly newspapers, wire services, radio, and TV stations, and magazines in your area. Include names of key reporters, titles, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and email addresses. The community organization you are helping may already have this list compiled.

4. Two months before the event, send out a short, one-page “pitch letter” or “email pitch” to the media that explains in compelling terms what you are doing and why. Go to [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd) for information about the event on a national and global level, and tips, resources, and templates for communicating with the media.

5. One month before the event, send out a news advisory that contains a brief description of the event, the time, location, participants, and contact information.

6. Several days before the event, telephone assignment editors at newspapers and TV and radio stations, as well as selected columnists and reporters. Tell them again what you’re doing and ask them to cover your project. See if they need any more information.

7. On the day of the event, designate a student to greet the media and direct them to the right people for interviews and more information.

8. Afterwards, monitor and tape television and radio programs and clip out newspaper articles about the event. Send copies to Youth Service America, 1101 15<sup>th</sup> St. NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005, Attn: Communications Department, or via email at [communications@ysa.org](mailto:communications@ysa.org).

9. Don’t forget public service announcements (PSAs), which are free ads that radio and TV stations run for public service organizations. Contact your local stations to see what length they want and if they can help you produce your spot. Then write your own PSAs for N & GYSD using short, upbeat sentences. Make the length either 25 words (10 seconds), 75 words (30 seconds) or up to 150 words (60 seconds). Here’s an example:

America’s youth are committed to making the world a better place through service. According to a recent survey, 80% of young people volunteer in their communities. Become a volunteer on National & Global Youth Service Day joining millions of young people around the world in addressing the needs of their communities for the largest service event. **The volunteer events kick-off April 20th to 22nd.** Please go to w-w-w dot Y-S-A dot O-R-G to get involved today. (Feel free to add local information or information about your project.)

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## After National & Global Youth Service Day

*Strong follow-up is crucial to the success of any service project. It's not always the most glamorous work, but it's critical to ensuring a good experience for all involved, and for your ability to conduct future service projects.*

Here are some important follow-up steps:

### Project Completion

✦ **Write thank you notes** to sponsors, team leaders, site leaders, and anyone else who helped you implement your project. People will really appreciate it, and be more apt to help again if you recognize their contribution.

✦ **Send a final report to sponsors.** In addition to a thank you note, sponsors will appreciate a summary of what you accomplished with their support. Be specific about project accomplishments, and how their support contributed to the project’s success.

✦ **Return equipment and anything else you borrowed** in a timely manner.

### Reflection And Evaluation

✦ **Lead participants in reflection.** This is best done throughout your project planning and on the day of the service project. The simplest way is to ask some basic questions about their experience, such as, “What did you learn today?” “How did your experience differ from what you expected?” “What could your community/government/country do to address the issue(s) we dealt with today?” “What else can you do to affect this issue?”

✦ **Collect evaluations** from participants, team leaders, and site leaders. They will help you plan future service projects.

✦ **Hold a Planning Committee evaluation session.** The members of the Planning Committee who were intricately involved in the planning of your project will have lots of ideas about how to improve the planning process for future events. This is a great time to hand out awards, delegate remaining tasks to be done, and celebrate your accomplishments together.

## Engaging Government Officials in National & Global Youth Service Day

*It is important to cultivate champions for service and service-learning, especially among government officials and other policy-makers. One of the best ways to secure their support is to get them personally involved in great service projects. When a government official supports your event, you will often benefit from increased media attention, greater public awareness about your event, and heightened long-run governmental support for your organization and program.*

Contacting government officials can seem intimidating, because they are important people with busy schedules. Keep in mind, however, that they are there to serve their constituents, and you are their constituent. Most officials will welcome the opportunity to support community leaders like you who are doing something positive for the community.

### Government Officials:

Who They Are and How to Contact Them

Remember that your officials exist on several different levels: local, state, and national.

<b>City/County</b>	<b>State</b>
✦ Mayor/Supervisor	✦ State Senators and Representatives
✦ City Council/County Board members	✦ Governor
✦ School board members	✦ Lieutenant Governor
✦ City/County Manager	✦ Attorney General
✦ Police chief/Sheriff	✦ Secretary
✦ City/County Clerk	✦ Treasurer

### National

✦ Members of Congress (U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators)

Youth Service America’s website can help you find the names of your officials and contact information quickly. Visit [www.YSA.org](http://www.YSA.org).

### Engaging Government Officials in Your Service Project

Before you contact officials, you should decide how you would like them to be involved in your event. Here are some things you can ask officials to do:

1. Participate in your National & Global Youth Service Day project, leading youth by example.
2. Address youth participants at the kick-off rally or closing celebration.
3. Proclaim April 20-22, 2007 to be National & Global Youth Service Day in your state or city (see N& GYSD Tool Kit Appendix for a sample proclamation).

✦ **Complete the online National & Global Youth Service Day evaluation** at [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd). Your input will help YSA make National & Global Youth Service Day even better in future years! This evaluation will also help you summarize the impact of your project. Look for information on our web site about grants that are available for ongoing service.

### Continued Service

✦ **Encourage Participants To Become Civically Engaged.** If young people have a good experience, they will likely be motivated to do more. Let them know that combining future service with civic involvement will maximize their impact. Give them information about how to contact influential elected officials and government leaders in your community. For ideas on civic engagement, visit [www.YSA.org](http://www.YSA.org) and click on Advocate for Youth Service.

✦ **Use partnerships you’ve formed to provide youth with ongoing service opportunities.** People are always looking for ways to volunteer, but don’t necessarily know how. Invite them to join your organization. Partner with other groups to plan future events, and publicize one another’s ongoing service opportunities.

### Recognition

✦ **Award volunteers with the President’s Volunteer Service Award.** This White House Initiative recognizes youth who have performed between 50 and 100 hours of service in any 12-month period. For more information, visit [www.presidentialservice.org](http://www.presidentialservice.org).

✦ **Collect evaluations** from participants, team leaders, and site leaders. They will help you plan future service projects.

✦ **Hold a Planning Committee evaluation session.** The members of the Planning Committee who were intricately involved in the planning of your project will have lots of ideas about how to improve the planning process for future events. This is a great time to hand out awards, delegate remaining tasks to be done, and celebrate your accomplishments together.

4. Distribute a press release or a Public Service Announcement highlighting your N & GYSD project and other N & GYSD activities taking place in your city or state. (See N & GYSD Tool Kit Appendix for sample press release).

5. Write an editorial encouraging youth participation in National & Global Youth Service Day and year-round service.

6. Invite your state’s congressional delegation, legislators, mayors and local government officials, judges and their staff to participate and/or organize activities related to National & Global Youth Service Day.

7. Hold a recognition ceremony for youth at City Hall or the State Capitol after National & Global Youth Service Day and/or invite youth to share their results with government officials.