

Summer Service: ideas and projects for your students

Volunteerism and community service make the world go around on a daily basis. But what better time to serve your local or global community than during summer break! Students can use the time off of school to engage with their communities.

This past year has been a challenging one for all of us. Students, in particular, faced a lot of roadblocks including being isolated and disconnected from peers, classmates, and their community while learning from home.

However, as some schools plan to return to in-person classes this fall and nonprofit organizations begin to offer more in-person volunteer opportunities, students have the chance to get involved this summer. Community service is a great way for students to reconnect and re-engage with others and continue that vital personal development that sets them up for success in the future.

There are a variety of service ideas and projects students can do during the summer months to make a big impact on the world around them!

Outdoor Service Ideas

- **Parks**

Students can enjoy the outdoors by serving in national parks. Lead hikes, clean up parks or plan activities outdoors. There are so many different ways to volunteer while getting to enjoy the great outdoors.

- **Clean Up Projects**

While enjoying being outdoors in the summer, students can do local clean-up projects. Whether it's planting in a local park or cleaning up local creeks and rivers, students passionate about the earth can make their neighborhood that much cleaner.

- **Working with Animals**

Work with local locations of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) or park systems for outdoor-based service activities. Students can work with the local ASPCA to play with dogs or work with the park system to help plant trees and clean up areas.

- **Fitness Classes**

Host a fitness class outside in a local park to encourage activity and exercise.

Groups of People

- **Senior Citizens**

Work with local senior centers to connect with the elderly. Students can host virtual talent shows, connect via Zoom and phone calls, write letters, and more.

- **Mentorship**

Students can engage with younger students in summer school through mentorship and tutoring

- **First Responders, Medical Staff, Service Men and Women**

Write letters of encouragement and thanks or create goody bags to show appreciation

Personal Service Project

Students can get creative and use their extended time over the summer to develop a personal service project. The purpose of this is to encourage students to connect with a cause they are passionate about or interested in. Encourage them to:

- Identify an issue, problem, or cause they are passionate about
- Research to see what is being done and where the need is
- Scale the project - is it local or is there a way to serve at the national level?
- Receive approval from service leader or school
- Execute the service project!
- Reflect on what they learned from the whole experience

Advocacy

This past year has revealed students' passion and curiosity for social issues and social justice. Encourage students to think critically about social issues they care about and research how to get involved. They can dedicate their summer to a specific cause or effort:

- Literacy
- Homelessness/Poverty
- Equality
- Those Impacted by COVID-19
- Writing letters to congressmen and senators
- Learning and reflecting on social issues in that student's community
- Understanding the importance and impact of voting
- Watching documentaries and Ted Talks about current issues and writing reflection essays on what the student learned
- Volunteering with local political campaigns

Engaging with Local Nonprofits

Want to encourage your students to take ownership over their service projects? Recommend that they reach out to local nonprofits in your area and ask what needs they have during this time.

Ask them things such as:

- Do you have volunteer opportunities this summer?
- What needs does your organization have right now that I can assist with whether it be in person, socially distanced, or virtual?
- How have the individuals or communities you benefit from been impacted by COVID-19 and what help do they need?

No one knows the needs of nonprofits, better than the nonprofits themselves. So don't be afraid to contact them directly and ask how you can be of service.

Virtual/Socially Distant Service Ideas

- Zoom tutoring for other students in summer school
- At home projects, assembling gift bags, care packages, military paracord bracelets, goodie bags, hygiene kits, and
- Writing letters of encouragement to military, elderly, and sick to spread positivity
- Host online webinars or share videos with performances, storytelling, fitness, and more.
- Host a hygiene product drive and create goodie bags to distribute to those in need or via a local homeless shelter

BONUS - Establishing a Virtual Service Program at Your School: Hear from [Connelly School of the Holy Child](#) about how they continued to engage their students in meaningful service even through COVID-19. And download a "HOW TO" guide on establishing a virtual service program at your school!

[Read More!](#)

Organizations with Virtual Opportunities

- [Foldit](#)
- [Zooniverse](#)
- [United Nations](#)
- [The Smithsonian](#)
- [Catchafire](#)
- [Foldit](#)
- [Translators Without Borders](#)
- [Be My Eyes](#)