

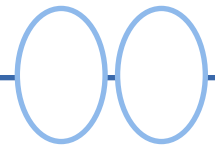
# HOOT

## NATIONAL & GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY SUPPLEMENT

A guide for youth facilitators and youth on completing a F.I.L.M. service project on National & Global Youth Service Day 2006

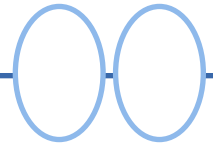


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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE HOOT PROGRAM AND NATIONAL & GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY



### *What is the Hoot Program and How Does it Relate to National & Global Youth Service Day?*

F.I.L.M. (Finding Inspiration in Literature & Movies) is excited to present a new program around the upcoming Walden Media and New Line Cinema picture, *Hoot*. This movie is based on Carl Hiaasen's Newbury Honor-winning children's book, *Hoot*. The story revolves around Roy Eberhardt, a 14-year-old Montana boy, whose family has just moved to Coconut Grove, Florida. As Roy begins school, he is distracted by a blond, barefoot boy running beside the school bus each morning.

Roy's curiosity to learn about this strange boy leads him to befriend Beatrice, an eighth grade girl who happens to be the running boy's step-sister. Roy soon discovers that the running boy goes by the name of Mullet Fingers and has run away from home. As Roy gets to know Mullet Fingers he learns about a nearby construction project which is threatening to destroy the local population of endangered burrowing owls that live there. Roy, Beatrice, and Mullet Fingers embark on a mission to save the burrowing owls. The three unlikely friends initiate a protest to save the owls from the brand new restaurant that is about to be built on the land. Roy's campaign leads him to courageously take on construction people, corporations, and local police all for the sake of the owls.

All F.I.L.M. programs consist of 3 steps for youth to complete. Youth participate in the activities from the free, downloadable activity guide, read the book and see the movie, and complete a related service project. The release of *Hoot* falls a few weeks after National & Global Youth Service Day (April 21-23, 2006). Participants are encouraged to complete the service project component of the *Hoot* program in conjunction with National & Global Youth Service Day (N&GYSD). F.I.L.M. has used Youth Service America's N&GYSD 2006 Tool Kit to create this N&GYSD supplement for facilitators and youth to use as they plan and implement their projects.

Just as Roy, Beatrice, and Mullet Fingers fight to save the endangered owls in their town, youth can focus on an issue of importance in their community for the completion of their service project. National & Global Youth Service Day is an excellent opportunity for youth and other community members to rally around a community concern. Youth should focus on a theme from *Hoot*, such as environmental activism, wildlife protection, and anti-bullying, and develop a plan of action to be implemented on N&GYSD.

### **WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF NATIONAL & GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY?**

*National & Global Youth Service Day has three primary goals:*

- **MOBILIZE** youth as leaders to identify and address the needs of their communities through service and learning
- **SUPPORT** youth on a lifelong path of service and civic engagement; and
- **EDUCATE** the public, the media, and policymakers about the year-round contributions of youth as community leaders

## *Who Participates in National & Global Youth Service Day?*

Over the past 17 years, National & Global Youth Service Day has brought together more than 31 million people in thousands of communities nationwide. In 2000, the program expanded to include youth projects in countries for the first annual Global Youth Service Day, held concurrently with the event in the United States.

## *What Happens on National & Global Youth Service Day?*

Youth, businesses, families, schools, individuals, and local organizations plan activities that will serve and improve their communities. Millions of young people are introduced to volunteering on N&GYSD, and are inspired to begin a lifetime of service. Other youth are recognized for their year-round contributions. Finally, new initiatives are launched on N&GYSD that continue to improve communities long after N&GYSD is over.

## *How Should We Use this N&GYSD Supplement?*

This supplement is a comprehensive guide to creating effective projects for National & Global Youth Service Day as part of the latest F.I.L.M. program based on the book and movie, *Hoot*. Use it as a complete package or refer to specific chapters that apply to your needs.

## *What's New for 2006?*

Youth Service America has partnered with several organizations that are providing additional new resources and opportunities for National & Global Youth Service Day:

- **MAKE YOUR PROJECT AN INTERFAITH PROJECT:** The National Days of Interfaith Youth Service (NDIYS), coordinated by the Interfaith Youth Core, will be held in conjunction with National & Global Youth Service Day on April 22-23. Each year, NDIYS brings together thousands of religiously diverse youth across the nation to serve their communities. These youth explore and act upon the impulse of service in their religious traditions and work toward better inter-religious understanding. To make your service project an interfaith project, visit [www.ifyc.org/ndiys](http://www.ifyc.org/ndiys) to access organizing and training materials and register your project.
- **PARTNER WITH NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION WEEK ON APRIL 16-22:** National Environmental Education Week 2006 will be the largest organized environmental education event in U.S. history. It will help capture and focus educator and student enthusiasm for Earth Day on increasing the number of hours applied in schools to environmental learning. To access resources for your project on the environment, visit [www.eeweek.org](http://www.eeweek.org)
- **TEAM UP WITH J-SERVE ON APRIL 23:** J-Serve is the Jewish piece of an annual day of service for youth throughout the world. It is a day on which Jewish teens join their counterparts in other faith communities, other cities and other countries in giving of their time to serve the communities in which they live. To register your own project, find a project to join, or apply for a mini-grant, visit [www.jservice.org](http://www.jservice.org)
- **ACCESS RESOURCES FROM THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION:** The National Wildlife Federation, YSA, and F.I.L.M. are teaming up to develop project planning resources and to encourage more youth-led environmental projects. Visit [www.nwf.org/nationalwildlifeweek](http://www.nwf.org/nationalwildlifeweek) for more information.
- **LAUNCH A SUSTAINABLE YOUTH VENTURE:** Youth Service America and Youth Venture have teamed up to make every day National & Global Youth Service Day by giving youth the opportunity to create new sustainable N&GYSD projects. Awards of up to \$1,000 in start-up funds will be available to youth (ages 12-20) who want to create sustainable new, civic-minded organizations, clubs or businesses (iVentures!). These Ventures must be created by youth, youth-led, and designed to be a lasting asset to the community. Visit [www.youthventure.org](http://www.youthventure.org) for more information.

## EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR N&GYSD

### *1. Start Early and Pay Attention to Planning and Strategy*

Detailed and timely planning is necessary to build true partnerships and allow youth to lead the way. Think about the themes of *Hoot*, the latest F.I.L.M. that happens to fall around National & Global Youth Service Day 2006. Themes from *Hoot* include environmental activism, wildlife protection, and anti-bullying. Brainstorm on a project that targets one or more of these themes.

### *2. Build Broad-Based Community Support*

National & Global Youth Service Day is an opportunity for the entire community to come together for a common cause. Bringing together schools, businesses, neighborhoods, religious and professional groups, clubs, and/or organizations will provide access to an unlimited amount of resources. This event creates a positive common ground that can be the foundation for future relationships and collaborations for your community.

### *3. Increase Your Community's Capacity to Support Young People*

National & Global Youth Service Day is intended to inspire and build upon the idea that youth are current assets of a community. As you plan, consider what relationships, events, and learning activities will increase the community's ability to support youth leadership long after National & Global Youth Service Day is over.

### *4. Seek Out Diverse Community Members to Help*

Define diversity in your community; every community is different and definitions vary. Reach out to those who might not otherwise be asked to participate. Look for differences in race, ethnicity, political affiliations, religious beliefs, gender, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, age, education, and ability or disability.

### *5. Let Youth Lead*

N&GYSD provides powerful opportunities for youth to be community leaders. F.I.L.M. encourages youth to take the lead and the best projects are inspired and led by youth, starting from day one.

### *6. Allow Planning to Build Inter-Generational Relationships*

Use the planning process to build relationships between generations. Let old and young learn from each other and create an environment where communication is expected and respected.

### *7. Create Service-Learning Opportunities*

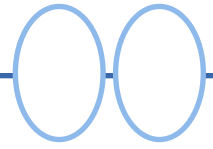
Schools and community groups are using service-learning as a powerful vehicle to improve youth achievement and personal development. Build in learning opportunities through all the stages of the process- preparation, action, reflection, and recognition.

### *8. Link Service to Civic Engagement*

Quality service exposes volunteers to pressing community needs. Help youth learn about and address the causes of community problems through advocacy and civic engagement. Youth maximize their impact when they combine service and civic engagement.

### *9. Engage Media and Elected Officials*

The best way to build support for youth and service within these two critical groups is to let members of the media and elected officials see great projects for themselves.



**EARLY AND DELIBERATE PLANNING IS THE BEST WAY TO ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL NATIONAL & GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY. THIS CHAPTER DISCUSSES THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:**

- STEP 1: Create a Planning Committee
- STEP 2: Create a Common Vision and Purpose
- STEP 3: Set Goals
- STEP 4: Pick your Projects
- STEP 5: Set up a Planning Structure
- STEP 6: Create a Timeline
- STEP 7: Create a Realistic Budget and Start Fundraising

**NOTE:** Download the free Service-Learning supplement for F.I.L.M. to help youth develop important project management skills for their project. This supplement should be referenced for all F.I.L.M. service projects, including those done as part of N&GYSD in April.

## STEP 1: CREATE A PLANNING COMMITTEE

National & Global Youth Service Day is an opportunity to ask the community to come together, to go beyond the usual networks and associations and to forge powerful new relationships. Let N&GYSD be an example of how the community can unite through a common commitment to youth and service.

Since N&GYSD focuses on youth who are involved in out of school organizations, include youth workers, volunteer parents, and facilitators on the planning committee.

Sometimes the most difficult part of community planning is recognizing who else should be involved. Most of us tend to rely on people and organizations we already know. That is a good starting point, but this project can go beyond being another event on the calendar if it pulls together people and groups in new ways. When planning a project for N&GYSD, think about answers to the following questions:

- How does your community traditionally organize itself? Where are its greatest assets?
- To whom do people look to for leadership?
- Who are well-connected people? Where do people gather?
- Who values youth and community service in your community?
- Who is usually involved in these projects? Who is not? Why not?

*Create a list of key stakeholders in the community. How can you involve the following groups?*

- Youth Committees or Councils
- Local businesses
- Schools and colleges
- Service clubs
- Senior centers
- Athletic groups or associations
- Elected and appointed officials
- Corporations (especially those that involve their employees)
- Nonprofit organizations
- Fraternal organizations
- Local government officials and agencies
- Neighborhood associations
- Media

In addition to recognizing the year-round accomplishments of youth, National & Global Youth Service Day should be a youth-led accomplishment in itself. Adults sometimes think it is easier to do things for youth. However, National & Global Youth Service Day and the F.I.L.M. project are about utilizing the skills and enthusiasm of youth. This is an excellent opportunity for youth to plan a major community event so that N&GYSD can be both by and about youth.

## ADVICE FOR YOUTH WORKING WITH ADULTS

### *1. Schedule Time Thoroughly*

Time is essential because adults work on different timelines than youth do. Make sure you get commitments from adults on when they will do things. Also make commitments for when you will finish your tasks. Hold adults and youth equally responsible for their tasks!

### *2. Create Structure*

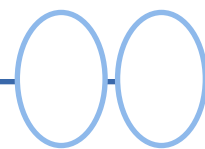
Make sure you have the plan you need to get the job done. Do you feel you should have more say in what goes on? Are your ideas taken seriously? Let adults know when the committee meetings, decision-making, or instructions are not working for you.

### *3. Foster Learning*

Let adults learn from the process as well. Most adults have never planned a project like this, so most of them will be learning too. Listen to them when they talk. Learn from them and let them learn from you.

### *4. Keep the Lines of Communication Open!*

A common source of challenges in event planning occurs when people think they are on the same page, but they really aren't. Be as clear as possible about expectations, responsibilities, and deadlines, and continually check in with your team.



## ENGAGING YOUTH VOLUNTEERS WITH DISABILITIES

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s words, "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve" are still true today. Inclusion and diversity are the cornerstones of the service ethic. In this spirit, N&GYSD encourages and challenges you to consider ways to involve participants with disabilities in your project. It is important to view youth and adults with disabilities as valuable individuals who can serve others, rather than people who only receive services.

*The Effective Practices Guide to Creating Inclusive and Accessible Days of Service*, written by in collaboration by City Cares, Points of Light Foundation, and Youth Service America with support from the Bubel/Aiken Foundation and the Corporation for National and Community Service, is available at [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd). It will help you address the most common challenges to engaging persons with disabilities in volunteering, such as,

### 1. Assessing the Organizational Readiness

Sometimes the most difficult obstacles to surmount involve attitudes such as prejudice and stereotyping. Get a sense of your group's sensitivity to and knowledge about persons with disabilities. Assessing organizational readiness will help your group engage in conversation about where you are and where you would like to be in this area of volunteer management.

### 2. Making Your Meetings Accessible

While it may seem difficult, small changes can make a big difference in allowing persons with disabilities to participate. Consider if your meeting spot is wheelchair accessible, if there is a need for a sign language interpreter, etc.

### 3. Interacting with Persons with Disabilities

The key to ensuring a successful service project experience for everyone is PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST. Volunteers with disabilities are no different. Like all volunteers, they want to give their time and energy to improve their community. An individual's disability should only be considered to determine what accommodations are necessary to allow that individual to participate fully.

### 4. Partnering with Organizations that Reach Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities can be found in the same places as able-bodied persons, in schools, community organizations, workplaces, etc. But there are many organizations that exist specifically to help persons with disabilities integrate into everyday life. These groups can help you recruit persons with disabilities and involve them more effectively.

### 5. Creating Promotional Materials in Alternative Formats

You will want to make sure that your message is accessible to persons with disabilities. Learn alternative formats (such as Bobby approved status) to make websites, print material, and spoken messages easier for people with disabilities to use.

### 6. Creating an Inclusive Event

The primary step in creating an inclusive event is to assess and understand what skills and tasks will be involved for each activity. Most activities can be adapted to make them accessible for all volunteers to participate.

Visit these organizations' websites for more information on how to engage youth with disabilities:

- Best Buddies, International  
[www.bestbuddies.org](http://www.bestbuddies.org)
- National Organization on Disability  
[www.nod.org](http://www.nod.org)
- March of Dimes  
[www.modimes.org](http://www.modimes.org)
- United Cerebral Palsy  
[www.ucp.org](http://www.ucp.org)
- AmeriCorps Program Directors Resource Guide to Disability Inclusion  
[www.nationalservicerresources.org/filemanager/download/593/disabilguid.pdf](http://www.nationalservicerresources.org/filemanager/download/593/disabilguid.pdf)
- American Foundation for the Blind  
<http://www.afb.org>

## STEP 2: CREATE A COMMON VISION AND PURPOSE

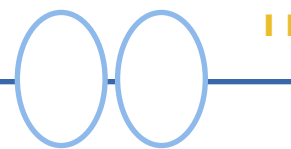
After assembling the planning committee, discuss the vision for your N&GYSD event. Make sure it somehow relates to the themes of *Hoot*. Youth play a critical role in this process, so incorporate opinions from youth outside the planning committee. Use the worksheet in this chapter to initiate the visioning process. Have youth and adults fill in the blanks. The answers will make a great basis for discussion.

Brainstorm to write a vision statement that determines your group's purpose for participation in N&GYSD. For example: "We envision N&GYSD as an opportunity for every youth in the city to participate in a meaningful community service event. Our participation in N&GYSD will foster a sense of civic responsibility and pride among our youth!"

## STEP 3: SET GOALS

Once you've assembled your planning committee, use your vision and purpose to set specific and measurable goals. Goals may include certain learning objectives (see section on service-learning in Chapter 3). Although your group might be very ambitious, try to pick just three major goals, such as:

- To recruit more people into existing service programs
- To highlight the accomplishments of youth
- To complete the service project component of the F.I.L.M. *Hoot* program
- To forge new community partnerships
- To develop youth leadership in the community
- To address the problem of \_\_\_\_\_



## **STEP 4: PICK YOUR PROJECT(S) (SEE CHAPTER 3 FOR IDEAS)**

## **STEP 5: SET UP A PLANNING STRUCTURE**

After you decide what project(s) to take on, determine what committee structures will best fulfill your needs. Create your structures based on the key questions: When? Where? How? Who? Materials? Cost? It is very important to establish a structure that allows for youth voice. Consider the lines of communication, the process for decision-making, and the channels of accountability.

It is important to have a clear idea of who is doing what and when they are doing it. Your committee set-up depends on the size of your project, the amount of participants for the project, how elaborate your goals are, and what project you choose for N&GYSD. The best structures have multiple leadership positions so many talented people can work on a project at the same time. This also increases the capacity of the project to handle many volunteers. The following is a sample list of committee chairs for N&GYSD. Many of these roles and responsibilities are explained later in the supplement.

- Overall coordinator
- Fundraising chair
- Project logistics chair
- Photo/video coordinator
- Public relations chair
- Recruitment chair
- Service-learning coordinator
- Evaluation and record-keeping chair

## ADVICE FOR ADULTS WORKING WITH YOUTH

### *1. Schedule Time Thoughtfully*

Plan ahead and start early (the first time you plan something it will take longer). Set generous timelines. Asking and answering questions take time. Remember, this is a day for the youth to shine. Utilize all of their intellectual and physical capacities. Once invested in the project, they will likely become actively engaged. If youth work to capacity, the results will far surpass expectations.

When working with youth, ask them questions: What do they like? What do they know how to do and what do they like to do? How are they involved in the community? How do they want to be involved in the community? What do they want to learn to do or experience? What would they like to change or improve in their community? Allow all people to talk freely. Be attentive to their interests and responsive to new ideas.

### *2. Create Structure*

- Write out guidelines and instructions
- Suggest ideas on where to go for help
- Discuss what needs to be done.
- Discuss and visualize the results
- Clearly define what decisions will be made by youth and what decisions will be made by adults
- Give specific expectations and parameters of a project and follow through! Do not say, "Design it yourself," if you might turn down the idea later. Say, "Here is an example to look at," etc,
- To create structure that supports initiative and decision-making:
  - Set up committees of youth
  - Put youth on adult committees
  - Be clear about expectations and limitations
  - Hold youth accountable; do not do the work because it is not getting done quickly enough or to your satisfaction. Express to them that people rely on them, etc.
  - Continually review decisions and ideas to make sure everyone is on the same page.

## STEP 6: CREATE A TIMELINE

Work from N&GYSD backwards when setting dates and create a structure for ongoing evaluation and accountability. For example, discuss the timeline at the beginning of each meeting. If things are not on schedule, the group determines how to keep things on track and what additional support or resources might be needed. Things to remember when writing a timeline: be realistic and remember that each deadline affects many others. Each committee should determine their own deadlines that are added to their own master list.

## STEP 7: CREATE A REALISTIC BUDGET AND START FUNDRAISING

Great things can be accomplished with very little money, but do not underestimate costs. Fundraising events are a great way to publicize your N&GYSD project and to gain community support. See Chapter 6 for more budget and fundraising information.

### N&GYSD SUGGESTED TIMELINE *(This can be adapted)*

#### *First Stage*

- Recruit members for the Planning Committee
- Create Planning Committee
- Set up sub-committees and assign chairs
- Research community needs, F.I.L.M. program themes, and determine N&GYSD event(s)
- Apply for a project grant from YSA or other sources (see F.I.L.M. service projects web page)

#### *Second Stage*

- Develop informational materials, flyers, etc.
- Begin planning event logistics: equipment, etc.
- Put the N&GYSD and F.I.L.M. logos on your organization's web page
- Begin volunteer outreach process
- Begin soliciting funds, sponsors, etc.
- Invite members of the media and elected and appointed officials to participate

#### *Third Stage*

- Invite key speakers and presenters for events
- Post your activity on [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd)
- Tell F.I.L.M. about your project and it will be featured on their website and newsletter
- Select/finalize sites for projects and events
- Start youth projects and display in public

### *Fourth Stage*

- Begin pre-registration
- Determine site specific equipment needs
- Finalize all donations, materials, and publicity
- Prepare agenda of event and logistical needs
- Obtain permits, if necessary
- Solicit/confirm food donations or purchases
- Launch media campaign
- Confirm with sites, team leaders, and donors

### *Fifth Stage*

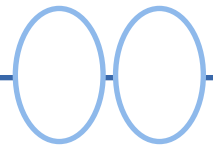
- Prepare signage for event
- Reconfirm sites, donors, media, speakers, elected officials, etc.
- Arrange transportation and storage of material
- Visit sites for last minute preparations
- Perform team leader training
- Perform final walk-throughs
- Schedule future volunteer opportunities that you can promote at your N&GYSD project

### *During Event (April 21 - 23, 2006)*

- Morning check-in with organizers
- Set up check-in tables, food
- Put up balloons, banners, streamers, etc.
- Set up stage and test PA equipment, etc.
- Greet press
- Manage events, details, volunteers
- Distribute and collect evaluation forms
- Take down equipment, table, chairs, etc.
- Pick up trash

### *Post Event (see Chapter 8)*

- Hold a reflection meeting for volunteers and brainstorm future service projects and continuing engagement
- Post your results and complete evaluation at [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd)
- Send F.I.L.M. a summary of how your project went
- Send thank you letters to leaders, donors, etc.
- Return borrowed or rented equipment
- Evaluate with planning committee
- Collect and compile volunteer evaluations
- Engage volunteers in organizing ongoing service and civic engagement
- Send final reports to sponsors
- Log hours under the President's Volunteer Service Awards ([www.presidentialserviceawards.org](http://www.presidentialserviceawards.org))
- Thank volunteers



There are countless ways to celebrate N&GYSD as part of F.I.L.M. Make plans based on your community's needs, the themes of *Hoot*, and according to the interests of the youth volunteers involved. This chapter contains the following information to help you plan your project:

1. Thinking about your Service Project
  2. Service Project Ideas
  3. Service-Learning Model
  4. Civic Engagement Activities
  5. Recognition Activities

## THINKING ABOUT YOUR SERVICE PROJECT

National & Global Youth Service Day projects can address a wide variety of issues, including hunger and homelessness, the environment, health and nutrition, public safety, tutoring and mentoring, and many other areas. When thinking about what kind of project you will do, first think about the central themes of F.I.L.M.'s *Hoot* program. Next, look around your school, community center, neighborhood, country, or world. Think about where the needs are, what you would like to see improved, and how you can make a difference. The Service-Learning Supplement contains activities to guide you.

When considering your service project, also consider the issue(s) that you are passionate about. For example, if you enjoy spending time with animals, host a Pet Awareness Fair to teach the community about proper care of pets and encourage people to adopt animals from your local animal shelter. If you like to hike, adopt a section of a local trail and work with friends to keep it clean and well maintained. You may also wish to select a project that will help you learn more about an issue or specific skills you want to develop.

*Whatever your project, there are several things you can do to maximize the impact of your project:*

- Make your project a service-learning project: Service-learning is a powerful educational strategy that enables youth to address important community needs by planning and executing service projects that are tied to curricula.
- 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.
- Invite others to serve with you, especially those who aren't typically asked to serve: The number one reason that people volunteer for the first time is that someone directly asks them to. Yet many groups of youth are traditionally not invited to serve; for example: young children, youth with disabilities, youth of color, youth who are not performing well in school, youth in foster care, and youth who live in poor communities. Make a special effort to reach out to these youth, and others you know of who have not typically been asked to help others.

### *Types of Service Projects*

- **SINGLE SERVICE PROJECT:** Pick one from this chapter or create your own.
- **COMMUNITY-WIDE CELEBRATION:** Follow the example of over 50 communities, regions, and states that are planning special, coordinated celebrations for N&GYSD 2006, led by Lead Agencies. Lead Agencies organize a planning coalition, host opening/closing celebrations, coordinate local media outreach, involve elected officials, and more. To access effective practices shared by Lead Agencies, visit [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd)
- **SERVE-A-THON:** Serve-a-thons allow you to combine community service and fundraising for local projects or organizations by taking pledges for hours of service. Create pledge sheets that volunteers can use to solicit contributions before the service day, and collect the funds raised when volunteers arrive for their service projects.
- **INTERFAITH PROJECT:** The National Days of Interfaith Youth Service (NDIYS), coordinated by the Interfaith Youth Core, will be held in conjunction with National & Global Youth Service Day on April 22-23. To make your service project an interfaith project, visit [www.ifyc.org/ndiys](http://www.ifyc.org/ndiys) to access organizing and training materials and register your project.
- \* **AWARENESS BUILDING OF AN ONGOING SERVICE EFFORT:** National & Global Youth Service Day is a great time to build enthusiasm and support for existing efforts. Hold an educational fair, a volunteer recruitment drive, a fundraising effort, or a signature service project to strengthen year-round programs.

## SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS FOR HOOT

In *Hoot* three middle-school youth embark on a mission to save endangered burrowing owls in their community. You, too, are encouraged to complete a service project on National & Global Youth Service Day that relates to one of the central themes in the book/movie. These themes include helping the environment, protecting animals, and trying to stop bullies. Below are some ideas for service projects that relate to these themes. Choose one of these or think of your own idea!

### *Environmental Activism*

- Plant a garden or a tree where the whole neighborhood can enjoy it
- Plant a community vegetable garden and promise to donate a portion of the produce to a local soup kitchen
- Set up a recycling system for your community center or community as a whole
- Organize a carpooling campaign in your neighborhood to reduce air pollution
- Paint a mural or clean up a local park
- Build a playground
- Create a campaign to encourage biking, walking, and public transportation instead of driving
- Test the health of the water in your local lakes, rivers, or streams
- Build a model sand dune at the youth center; study the effects of erosion and soil loss over time; design/implement restoration projects using native vegetation planted on real sand dunes at the coast.
- Study the effects of global warming; start a campaign against household products that contribute to global warming
- Establish a district-wide environmental library; complete the library with field guides, resources, developed materials, etc.
- Research problems such as the introduction of non-native species of plants and animals; evaluate the extent of the problem, generate possible solutions, and conduct service projects to address the problems
- Clean-up and maintain a hiking trail; create a trail guide for the community
- Establish a youth center rainforest; sell youth-constructed products (such as clay model poison dart frogs) or t-shirts depicting rainforest dwellers, and buy a piece of the rainforest.
- Monitor toxins in aquatic life in a local water source; learn sampling/measuring techniques; help educate the local community about safe eating habits
- Help solve local issues or problems, like wetlands and rainwater drainage
- Conduct research on the environmental effects of development; follow up with landscaping/restoration projects to restore native plant species
- Develop botanical guides to local flora and fauna, or a field guide to local parks; make them available to the public
- Collect and properly dispose of batteries; share information in the community about battery safety
- Research local resource use and environmental issues and convey the information and recommendations to policymakers
- Partner with a local water management district and collect field data, co-manage land, develop trails, and establish picnic areas.

- Keep records of rainfall totals, including information about pollutants in the water and the effects on the environment; report findings to the local community with recommendations for action.
- Create a botanical zoo for people with disabilities and/or vision loss; accompany visitors through touch and feel stations and explain items.

### *Helping Animals*

- Create a habitat for wildlife
- Help preserve a wildlife habitat that is endangered by neighborhood construction or pollution
- Study an endangered animal species in your area and do a presentation for community members on ways to help protect it
- Adopt a zoo animal or species by sponsoring fund-raising recycling drives; use the money to enhance zoo facilities.
- Study an endangered species; build a birdhouse or other animal habitat for the animal and donate it to a wildlife refuge
- Produce a videotape, book, play, or puppet show for younger youth on the care of pets and animals
- Work with local humane societies, zoos, or nature centers to care for injured and healthy animals
- Work with the local humane society to transport animals to hospitals, retirement homes, and schools for educational and therapeutic purposes.
- Create a new fresh water pond and/or bird feeders and bird houses to bring back migratory birds and endangered species lost
- Develop a butterfly garden for younger youth and teach lessons on the development of the butterfly
- Study vegetarianism and host a vegetarian festival in your community

Access Resources from the National Wildlife Federation: The National Wildlife Federation, YSA, and F.I.L.M. have teamed up for *Hoot* to develop project planning resources and to encourage more youth-led environmental projects. Visit [www.nwf.org/nationalwildlifeweek](http://www.nwf.org/nationalwildlifeweek) for more information.

### *Anti-Bullying*

- Learn ways to cope with bullies and then teach them to other youth
- Make posters with anti-bullying messages and then hang them in community stores, youth centers, libraries, schools, and other buildings
- Set up a hotline in your community/youth center for youth to report bullying
- Write a song about bullying and perform it on National & Global Youth Service Day
- Plan a party with youth you do not know well to break down the barriers that can lead to bullying
- Set up a workshop to teach adults what youth need to feel safe and to reduce bullying
- Start a bully patrol in your community's schools and youth centers; you can serve as a mediator
- Host a workshop for youth and adults to learn about bullying and ways to prevent it; invite speakers and initiate discussions
- Put on a play, puppet show or skit about how to deal with bullies
- Start a community-wide campaign against bullying; contact your elected officials about the need for anti-bullying legislation

## SERVICE-LEARNING MODEL

Service-learning is a teaching method that combines meaningful service to the community with curriculum-based learning. Schools and community organizations across the country are using service-learning to help youth build stronger skills.

The following example from the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) can be very useful:

### *What is service-learning?*

Picking up trash by a riverbank is service.

Studying water under a microscope is learning.

When youth collect and analyze water samples and the local pollution control agency uses the findings to clean up a river, that is service-learning.

NYLC describes service-learning as a philosophy, a community development model and a teaching and learning method.

As a philosophy, service-learning embraces youth as a community resource and asset. It views all people in a democratic society as citizens with the capacity to contribute, no matter their age.

As a community development model, service-learning takes on real issues such as pollution control, hunger and homelessness, and diversity. Communities change for the better when service and learning are joined.

As a teaching and learning method, service-learning is a form of active learning that values critical thinking and problem solving. Research shows that when service-learning is effectively implemented students gain in measures of academic achievement, citizenship, and character. (James C. Kielsmeier, National Youth Leadership Council, 2000).

Service-learning projects typically follow four steps: preparation, action, reflection, and celebration. While every service-learning project is different, the following questions can apply to guide you through these four steps:

- What are the needs in this community?
- Why does this need exist? What are the underlying factors and causes of this issue?
- How can we address these needs through service?
- What do we need to know to provide this service?
- What do we already know that will help us provide this service?
- What will we/ have we learned from this service experience?
- How does our learning relate to the F.I.L.M. themes?
- How did this experience affect you?
- How did your experience differ from what you expected?
- How will you continue to work on this issue? What else needs to happen?

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

While service is one way to participate in the community, projects should include lasting mechanisms of civic engagement to ensure change. What good is today's project if the next generation of volunteers has to clean up the same dirty river or tutor in the same sub-standard schools? These eleven tips will increase the impact of volunteer work in your community.

1. Work for government policies that support volunteer services. Urge officials to change current laws and policies or write new ones by writing letters, asking to meet with officials or their staff, and voting on Election Day. Also, write letters to the editor of your local paper about the issues and potential solutions.
2. Invite local, state, and federal officials and candidates to participate in your service activities. Educate them about your perspective on the issue and ask for their support. (See Chapter 8 for more information).
3. Invite the local newspaper, television or radio station to cover your volunteer project. If your project is highlighted, send a copy of the clip to your elected officials. Include a thank you letter if they participated, or invite them to participate in your next project. (See Chapter 7 and 8 for more information.).
4. Create a website. Educate your community about an issue.
5. Organize a debate, town hall meeting, or youth forum to engage local leaders or candidates and youth in discussions about youth issues.
6. Map your community's problems and assets. Share the results with local, state, and federal officials and candidates.
7. Volunteer for an issue or for a candidate's campaign.
8. Launch a letter-writing campaign to your Congressional Representative or Senators in support of national service, service-learning, and other issues of importance (find more information at [www.YSA.org](http://www.YSA.org) and click on Advocate for Youth Service Now!).
9. Work with local officials to increase funding for youth activities in your community.
10. If you are 18 or older, REGISTER AND VOTE in the next election (local, state, and national). If you are under 18, volunteer at the polls, encourage your family to vote, take someone who needs assistance to vote, etc.

Check out these websites for more ideas and information on youth service and civic engagement:

- [www.civicyouth.org](http://www.civicyouth.org)
- [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org)
- [www.comotionmakers.org](http://www.comotionmakers.org)
- [www.kidsvotingusa.org](http://www.kidsvotingusa.org)
- [www.publicwork.org](http://www.publicwork.org)
- [www.SERVE.net.org](http://www.SERVE.net.org)
- [www.takingitglobal.org](http://www.takingitglobal.org)
- [www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org](http://www.youthpolicyactioncenter.org)
- [www.vote-smart.org](http://www.vote-smart.org)
- [www.youthactivism.org](http://www.youthactivism.org)
- [www.youthvote.org](http://www.youthvote.org)

## RECOGNITION ACTIVITIES

Many communities celebrate N&GYSD by recognizing the contributions youth make year-round. Recognition is a powerful motivator to encourage youth to continue their service throughout their lifetime. You may choose to spend part of the day doing a service project, followed by a recognition activity. Sample activities include:

### *1. Awards Ceremonies*

Deserving volunteers should be rewarded for their service. Host a dinner or reception for the ceremony and contact area restaurants to get donations of food or plan a pot-luck. Invite community leaders, government officials, elected representatives, or area celebrities to speak and present awards. Performing groups from local schools, colleges, or community centers can provide entertainment.

### *2. Young Hero Awards*

Set up new awards for outstanding youth in the community. Take nominations from area youth organizations and local schools, or simply have youth nominate their peers. One award could be for the best N&GYSD project.

### *3. Free Concerts*

Host a free concert featuring performing groups from local high schools, colleges, or community music and theater groups. Have service be the theme. Youth who participate in service activities can read their favorite quotes about service or present their own ideas and words of wisdom.

### *4. Panel Discussion/Presentation Host*

Host a presentation or panel discussion by current volunteers, alumni, administrators, politicians, members of the media, and community leaders focusing on the values of community service. Presentations might include videos, slide shows, or journal readings. Be sure to make the panel as representative of participants as possible. Consider inviting a speaker representing another country to learn about the nature of community service from an international perspective.

### *5. City-Wide Forums*

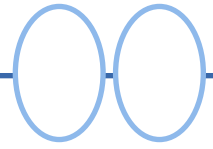
Invite youth to convene local government officials to discuss major challenges facing the community and how young people can address these issues.

### *6. Know Your Community Projects*

The N&GYSD planning process is a great opportunity for youth to learn more about their community. Community asset mapping, historical facts, folklore, demographic patterns, and current community issues and social problems are all rich areas for exploration. Display or present projects on National & Global Youth Service Day and ask the local paper to publish examples.

### *7. History of Youth*

Youth can research outstanding youth and their contributions to society. Such projects can be fun and inspiring for young leaders and can be presented to the community as a whole.



National & Global Youth Service Day is the perfect time to organize a large service project that can engage old and young alike. When working with youth, it is especially important to monitor the volunteer experience, since it will likely influence their future decisions and ideas about community service. Carefully consider what will make the experience meaningful and provide an environment in which the participants can learn and grow. Ideally the project will connect volunteers to opportunities that are available year-round.

This chapter is organized by blocks of tasks and issues to address as you plan your service project(s). They are presented in a suggested order; however you may wish to make adjustments to fit your community and timeline. This chapter will also help you deal with unexpected issues or obstacles that arise.

1. Define Your Project
2. Create Teams and Assign Leaders
3. Prepare Team Leaders
4. On N&GYSD
5. Solutions to Common Problems

## DEFINE YOUR PROJECT

### *1. Set Specific Goals*

Using your overall vision, purposes, and main goals of National & Global Youth Service Day, think about how you want the service project(s) to look and what you want the project(s) to articulate to the community and/ or the media. How many youth should you expect? What do you want the youth to get out of the experience? (for example, understanding community needs and strengths, leadership skills, understanding of issues related to the environment). What long-term impact do you want to facilitate?

### *2. Size and Scope of your project*

Your community's unique social needs and the issues you choose to address impact the size and scope of your project and its site(s). Decide how many and what types of sites you should find based on how many people you want to volunteer. Some groups organize a few large sites, like clean-up projects, to accommodate large numbers of volunteers, while other communities prefer one or multiple smaller sites for fewer volunteers. Choose sites where the volunteers can see and experience their impact.

### *3. Logistical Communication and Expectations*

Always consider and ask these logistical questions when planning:

- What equipment is needed to complete the project and who will acquire/provide it?
- Will agency staff be on hand to help with orientation and provide support on N&GYSD?
- Does the agency have its own van or bus to help transport volunteers?
- Is the site on public transportation routes? Is parking available?
- Is there a place for volunteers to have lunch and to use washrooms?
- How far is the site from the morning kick-off site? Is the site wheelchair accessible?
- If the project is outdoors, what happens if it rains?

Work with agencies that have realistic expectations about what can be accomplished in the allotted time and have experience working with youth. If an agency is difficult to contact or does not return calls promptly, consider choosing another site.

### *4. Transportation*

Put a detail-oriented and responsible person in charge of transportation. Make sure drivers have detailed instructions and directions. Transportation arrangements will depend on your budget, volunteers' origin and destinations, and community resources. Think about contacting school bus companies, public transportation, places of worship, or non-profit organizations for borrowed vans. Carpools and chartered bus companies are also often used for service events.

## CREATE TEAMS AND ASSIGN LEADERS

A project with too many volunteers and not enough meaningful work can spell disaster. Most small projects (and sites) can accommodate a team of 10-15 volunteers, depending on the particular project. Regardless of how many sites you have, count on one team leader to every 10-15 volunteers. Teams with participants younger than 12 years old often need extra supervision, and youth and adult team co-captains are usually quite effective. If you are unsure about volunteer turnout, use a combination of large and small sites to prepare for a large number of volunteers. Your bigger, more public sites can accommodate larger-than expected turnouts and allow your team leaders to assign meaningful work to all participants. An overall coordinator may oversee team leaders and be responsible for their training.

### *In Advance of N&GYSD:*

- Do a site assessment
- Communicate regularly with project site
- Make sure site expectations are met
- Participate in a team leader training
- Develop an ongoing relationship with site
- Help recruit volunteers for the site

### *On N&GYSD*

- Lead orientation sessions
- Coordinate/lead volunteers on site
- Act as liaison between agency and volunteers
- Ensure safety and well-being of volunteers
- Administer evaluation to volunteers
- Hold a reflection service for volunteers

### *After N&GYSD*

- Meet with other team leaders to reflect
- Complete site evaluation with agency
- Send thank you letters to the site
- Return equipment

## PREPARE TEAM LEADERS

Detailed training for team leaders is crucial, as they will train their volunteers on the day of the project. Team leader training should take place in advance of the project to allow time to address last minute questions. Team leaders should meet the day before the project to run through the activities for the day. Team leader training should address:

### *1. How to Orient Volunteers*

Volunteer orientation should be no longer than 30 minutes and address three major issues:

- Introduction to National & Global Youth Service Day and F.I.L.M.: Team leaders should set the stage by introducing the history and objectives of N&GYSD on the national and community level (see chapter 1), and explain the importance of their particular project. Explain the F.I.L.M. project and the *Hoot* program and how the project relates to a theme from the book/movie. Scripted outlines ensure that team leaders have this information and can communicate it to the volunteers.
- Background information on the agency/site and related issues: Team leaders may ask the agency contact to lead this part of the orientation. Give him/her a specific time limit and ask for background on the organization, as well as insights into the broader issues they deal with on a daily basis. Discuss the agency's ongoing volunteer needs to inspire N&GYSD participants to make a long-term commitment to the agency.
- The day's schedule and specific project instructions: Team leaders should tell volunteers what time to break for lunch, who to contact if they have a question or concern, where to find restrooms and water, assign tasks, and give directions for the projects.

### *2. Liability and Safety Issues*

Inform team leaders of emergency procedures and any relevant liability issues. They should know what to do in case of an accident: where to locate a first aid kit on site, who to contact, how to transport a volunteer to the nearest hospital.

### *3. Evaluation with Volunteers and the Site*

Team leaders must understand the importance of evaluation. Walk through the questions from both volunteer and team leader evaluations and discuss why certain questions are asked and how the information will be used. (For example, see the N&GYSD Evaluation in Chapter 9 of this guide). Make sure team leaders know whether or not pens or pencils will be provided, how and when to distribute and collect the evaluation forms, and where to drop them off at the end of the day. Be very specific about this process, and include a ballpark figure on how much time it will take to complete the forms on site. Evaluations with agencies should be done the week following N&GYSD. Set a time to meet in a relaxed environment to discuss how the day went and to complete any unresolved issues.

### *4. On Site Learning and Reflection*

On site learning occurs through the experiences of the day. This can be done by asking volunteers one or more questions at the start of the event for them to consider during the day. These questions could be about the agency, the issue, clients, or personal ideas and attitudes. The best way to facilitate reflection is to simply ask teams to sit down at the end of the day for a few minutes and share their thoughts about the day and what they learned from the experience. Reflection sessions should use a few simple questions that help participants process their experience. Samples include "What surprised you most about the day?" "What did you learn from this experience?" "How can you use what you learned today in your everyday life?" "Did your perception of (relevant issue) change as a result of this service project?"

## ON NATIONAL & GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY

### *1. The Kick-Off Event and Closing Celebration*

The kick-off event sets the tone for the day and initiates the spirit of N&GYSD. Hold your kick-off on the day before or the morning of N&GYSD, and use it as a central gathering place and pre-service pep rally. If volunteers will disperse to different sites, arrange for transportation from the kick-off, and transport volunteers to the after-party celebration at the end of the day. This gives people an opportunity to share experiences with volunteers who worked on other sites, relax, and have fun. This is also a great time to have elected officials or other community leaders address volunteers.

Both the kick-off and the closing celebration are excellent opportunities for local media to interview volunteers and learn more about National & Global Youth Service Day. Have media kits ready and available at a special check-in area for media. Decorate the space with banners, balloons, and streamers. Invite elected and appointed officials, members of the media, and other personalities well in advance to draw more attention.

Programming for these events varies tremendously. The kick-off event should be short, no more than thirty minutes. It is important to get people to their sites promptly to meet the day's expectations. Music (provided by a school band, radio DJ, etc.) always gets people excited and ready to work. Ask people to come a half-hour early to sign-in and eat breakfast (if applicable), so when the kick-off ends they will be ready to go. It is also useful to let people know what time transportation will leave the kick-off site. Here is a sample agenda for the morning:

**7:15–7:59** People arrive, sign in, eat breakfast

**8:00–8:05** Welcome and choir performance or skit

**8:05–8:15** Motivational words by organizers and thanks from local celebrity or official

**8:15–8:20** Directions to sites and any announcements

**8:20–8:30** Move to transportation

**8:30** Transportation departs to sites

Closing celebrations provide a great way to thank volunteers, highlight accomplishments, give awards, and just have fun. Hold the closing event at a fun place for youth (a park, recreation center, beach, etc.)

## 2. Day of Event Activities

Good management and advanced planning are keys to success on N&GYSD. The more people that know what is going on, the more likely things will run smoothly. Make a list of who will manage registration, the kickoff presentations, transportation, and the media. Also, assign someone to act as a trouble-shooter throughout the day.

It is important to talk through everyone's roles on the day of the event. Organizers should wear special T-shirts or hats which make them easy to find in a crowd. If your event is very large and complex, you may want to consider renting or borrowing walkie-talkies for communication.

Checklists and written instructions are also a must for the day of the event. Make sure everyone is as prepped as possible for the day so there are few surprises. Get lots of rest so that you will be clearheaded and have a great time!

## 3. Follow Up

Hold a meeting for organizations to discuss wrap-up details and to share experiences from the project. Bring pictures, give certificates, and thank-you gifts, etc. Make a list of all the wrap-up activities and delegate assignments, including:

- Completing service site evaluations
- Compiling volunteer evaluations
- Writing a final report
- Sending thank you letters to team leaders, donors, media, volunteers, speakers, etc.
- Returning equipment

## SOLUTIONS TO COMMON PROBLEMS

### *1. Volunteer Turnout is Higher or Lower than You Expect*

**THE PROBLEM:** It's difficult to accurately predict the number of volunteers who will turn out on N&GYSD. Fewer volunteers than you expected means projects won't get done, which often disappoints the host site. More volunteers than you expected means there may not be sufficient work for everyone, which is damaging to volunteer morale.

**SOLUTIONS:** Many people do not feel committed to show up to an event unless they pre-register. Even when everyone pre-registers, assume you will have 85-90% of those numbers on the actual day. Make back-up plans. Set up several sites to accommodate extra people and sites willing to participate only if you have overflow. Make sure they understand there is a chance they may not be utilized. Determine ahead of time which sites should be cut if necessary.

### *2. Rain*

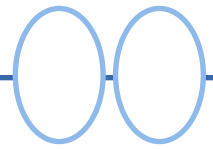
**THE PROBLEM:** No one wants to work in the rain. Many people will stay home and parents will decide that their children should not participate in bad weather.

**SOLUTIONS:** If your kick-off is scheduled outside, have alternate indoor sites ready. Make sure presenters and team leaders are familiar with rain sites and procedures. Buy extra boxes of large trash bags to be used as rainwear; ground cover; etc. If sites have scheduled outdoor sites that cannot be completed in severe weather, have a secondary plan and rain date for volunteers. Discuss these alternatives with the site in advance.

### *3. Incomplete Projects*

**THE PROBLEM:** Unrealistic expectations from an agency or team, too few volunteers, unavailability of necessary equipment, insufficient team skills, late arrival, or other situations can result in an unfinished project at the end of the day. This can be a serious problem, since many local agencies do not have the resources to complete the work later.

**SOLUTIONS:** Set and communicate realistic expectations for the allotted time, and be sure that team/site leaders arrange for all necessary equipment ahead of time. Perform a mid-day assessment, if you see work that may not be completed on time, reassign volunteers or call in extra help. Most importantly, don't start a project that can't be finished in a timely manner. It's better not to start a project than to leave it half done. In the case that you can't finish a project, discuss the issue with staff, and find a resolution that fits everyone's needs.



#### *4. Teams Arrive Late*

**THE PROBLEM:** A late start on the day can disrupt everything, from media coverage, to meal times, to relationships between volunteers and project sites. Agency staff, media, and VIPs schedule their day to accommodate the volunteer time. Tardiness disrupts the schedule, lessens the chances of finishing the project, and shows disrespect.

**SOLUTIONS:** Event organizers and team leaders must plan details thoroughly and stick to schedules. Registration must occur on schedule. Secure details for transportation, including public transit schedules and detailed maps for drivers. Have teams stand together during the kick-off so they do not waste time finding each other after the kick-off. Assign someone to be time-keeper for the day and make sure things run according to schedule.

#### *5. Volunteers Did Not Work With People*

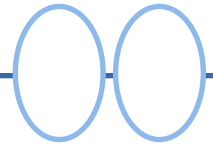
**THE PROBLEM:** One-day service projects are often activities in which volunteers do not work directly with the clients of the agency. There are many good reasons for this. For example, the best way for a large group of volunteers to make a lasting impact may be to accomplish a physical project like painting or cleaning that the agency staff often cannot finish on their own. Agencies may want to provide their clients with as much consistency as possible; volunteers who might not return may build false expectation for clients. Many agencies also have strict screening and training processes for their regular volunteers to ensure the safety and well being of the clients.

**SOLUTIONS:** Let people know up front why they might not have much client contact and tell them how meaningful their assignment is for the agency. Schedule a lunch break or another specific time to give volunteers and clients a chance to interact. Give volunteers information about how to get involved with the organization on a long-term basis.

#### *6. Team Assignments*

**THE PROBLEM:** This is one of the trickiest aspects of organizing a large one-day service project. Some groups want to stay together and others may want to split up to meet new people.

**SOLUTIONS:** Since the large percentage of N&GYSD volunteers are youth, a simple way to make assignments is by age group. Another method is to split age groups so that older youth will be working with younger youth. Team leaders can either be assigned to teams or be responsible for recruiting their own teams. Start with selecting sites and team leaders, and then discuss the breakdowns into teams with the facilitators and administrators from participating youth programs.



### BRINGING PEOPLE ON BOARD RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS FOR N&GYSD

The number one reason people volunteer for the first time is that someone personally asks them to help. One of the most effective ways to recruit youth volunteers is to have other youth directly and personally invite them to participate. Let people see how excited YOU are about the project and your enthusiasm will be contagious! The key is to let them know how fun it is to help other people!

Spreading the word is the secret to successful recruitment. Ask everyone to spread the word about your project. Even people who cannot volunteer at the event can tell friends and neighbors about your plans and the need for help.

Make people feel important! Think of specific tasks you know they would do well. Tell your potential volunteers why they are needed and how F.I.L.M. and N&GYSD can benefit from them personally. Make statements like, "I think our project could really use your experience with budgets and raising money. Would you like to be on the fundraising committee for N&GYSD?" This request is much more likely to yield results than a more general statement, "Do you want to get involved in N&GYSD?"

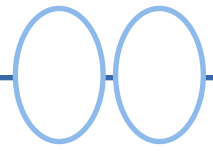
Once you have volunteers on board, put them to work! People will not stay involved unless they feel needed. Make sure people have tasks and responsibilities as soon as they get involved with the project. Stay in touch with volunteers and check on their progress every week or so. Look for creative ways to thank them and let them know that you are counting on them.

## FINDING ENOUGH VOLUNTEERS

Imagine everyone in your community knew about N&GYSD!

This goal requires a good plan. Start by prioritizing groups or people you want to reach. Think about who needs to know early and who can be contacted closer to the event. What meetings do you need to attend? This chapter offers ways the recruitment committee can work with the public relations committee to catch the attention of everybody in your community.

1. National & Global Youth Service Day posters. Hang them up everywhere. The sooner you can get them out, the better. Attach tear off response cards with a phone number to get more information. Contact YSA for preprinted posters or design your own!
2. Post your project on the N&GYSD website at [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd). A surprising number of people seek service opportunities online. Posting your project will help potential volunteers find you.
3. Ask your mayor and governor to help. Ask them to film/tape a Public Service Announcement, issue an official proclamation of N&GYSD, and serve with you! FYI: The US Conference of Mayors is an N&GYSD National Partner. See Chapter 8 for additional ideas.
4. Place announcements in high school/college/local newspapers. Contact local radio and television stations for spots in their volunteer sections. Inquire about newsletters for places of worship, community organizations, U.S. Congressional offices, and your state department of education.
5. Set up information/pre-registration tables in cafeterias, shopping malls, and other busy public places. Have sign-up sheets available.
6. Distribute buttons, stickers, and flyers in the community center, library school lobby, or local shopping mall. Contact Youth Service America for information about National & Global Youth Service Day 2006 promotional materials.
7. Sponsor an assembly or speaker focused on community service at a school, campus, corps, or agency site. At the presentation's end, invite everybody to help out at your N&GYSD project.
8. Build partnerships with other recognized community organizations and clubs (4-H, Scouts, Lions Clubs, YMCAs, etc.) for your N&GYSD event. You will double your people power in publicity and action!
9. Arrange a display at a local art gallery, at a local bank, business, library, airport, or city hall. Include information on how to get involved.
10. Send out an email inviting everyone to get involved in your project.
11. Send out a press release to the local media. They are always looking for community functions to publicize! See Chapter 7 for more details.
12. Include everybody. Families, youth, senior citizens, young children, people with disabilities, business people, low-income families, and community officials all have something to contribute to your day of service.



There are many ways people can support your project through monetary and in-kind contributions, but all fundraising is generally broken down into three simple steps:

- Target potential supporters;
- Inform them of your project;
- Ask for and solidify their contribution.

#### *Creating a Budget*

Before you begin fundraising, design a budget itemizing all of your project expenses. Keep in mind that service projects don't have to be expensive. Make sure, however, that your budget includes everything you might need for your project, for example, stationery, postage, film and developing, long distance calls, copying, and scrapbook or photo album for documentation, food, streamers, balloons, flyers, poster board, T-shirts, hats, buttons, and posters. You may also need to purchase or rent equipment and materials like paint, rakes, or a sound system.

National & Global Youth Service Day project budgets vary dramatically. Building a new playground might require \$50,000 to \$75,000, while smaller events might only need \$50 to cover printing costs for flyers. Once your budget is complete, designate a fundraising committee to identify potential supporters and collect resources. Use the worksheet in this chapter to plan your budget and fundraising strategy.

#### *Fundraising Events*

These events are designed to increase visibility for your organization and youth service while encouraging a large number of individuals to make small financial contributions. They can be a fun opportunity for youth to take an organizational lead in projects. Consider holding a car wash, used book sale, raffle, rummage sale, bake sale, or small reception and tour of your facility. They are easy to plan and most youth have participated in at least one of these events in the past. Ask specific organizations like the student council or a Girl Scout Troop to help organize a project. In addition to the monetary support you receive, these events are great publicity for you and N&GYSD. Fundraisers can build awareness for your programs and forge strong community contacts. Access the Youth Action Net Toolkit for more ideas at [www.youthactionnet.org/toolkit](http://www.youthactionnet.org/toolkit).

#### *Local Business Support*

National & Global Youth Service Day is a great way to include local businesses and corporations in youth initiatives and programs. Involvement can mean more than just writing a check. Make sure you have a list of all the materials you need for your project and ask local businesses to make in-kind contributions like food, office supplies, balloons, film, etc. Ask them to purchase ad space in your event's program or sponsor a paid public service announcement on TV or radio for your National & Global Youth Service Day project. Local businesses may be willing to volunteer their staff's time and experience and may even pitch in on your event day!

Select one business or a whole group, like a shopping center (call the Chamber of Commerce for suggestions), and tell them about your plans. Ask them to sponsor a portion or the entire event. Let them know they will benefit from the publicity and recognition in all of your materials. It is also a good idea to make your budget and event information available to the entire community so that everyone can understand how to help. Tell everyone you seek \$100 or \$500 sponsors who could be recognized at an award ceremony as outstanding supporters of youth initiatives. Keep the community informed about your fundraising progress. The Dollar Thermometer is a popular visual gauge of money yet to be earned and gives a sense of the importance to every dollar given toward the goal.

## *Project Grants*

Youth Service America, with the help of sponsors and several partners, offers hundreds of grants every year to help youth, teachers, and organizations implement service and service-learning projects for National & Global Youth Service Day and on-going service throughout the year.

Through a grants program YSA generates awareness about particular issues, spotlights models of service excellence, and develops the capacity of youth and organizations to plan successful service projects. Typically, the grants and awards program supports service projects that:

- Present a clear project plan (including why the project is needed; proposed number of volunteers, planning timetable, partnerships, etc.).
- Address an important need, and provide clear and specific benefits to those served by the project.
- Involve youth in all stages of the project process (planning, execution, evaluation) and recruit a substantial amount of youth volunteers.
- Reach out to youth who are not traditionally asked to serve (youth with disabilities, younger children, youth in disadvantaged communities, minorities, etc.).
- Invite elected officials and dignitaries at the local, state and/or national level to be involved in the service event.
- Involve members of the media (reporters, disc jockeys, photographers, etc.) to support the project.
- Engage youth in service throughout the year and seek long-term changes.

To find out more about YSA's grants and award opportunities, please visit <http://www.YSA.org/awards>. Here, you can also sign up to receive a free email alert, announcing the latest grant opportunities as they become available.

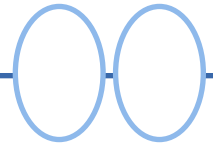
Another source for learning about grant opportunities is through the F.I.L.M. website on the service projects page. Visit <http://www.youthfilmproject.org/film/sprojects.htm#grants> to view a listing of up-to-date grant opportunities.

*Budget Plan*

MATERIALS	AMOUNT	COST PER ITEM	TOTAL COST	POSSIBLE FUNDER
Staff				
Equipment				
Design				
Printing				
Copying				
Promotions				
Transportation				
Telephone				
Fax				
Rental space				
Food				
Misc				

*Fundraising Plan*

POSSIBLE SOURCES/CONTACTS	PRIORITIES/INTERESTS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE/DUE DATE
Businesses		
Foundations		
Individuals		
Government		
Special Events		
Other		



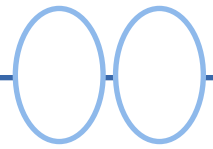
### *Sponsorship: A Two-Way Street*

Don't forget that although sponsors do have the interests of the community in mind, they also want recognition. Approach businesses in your community that would benefit from marketing and public relations through National & Global Youth Service Day, such as sporting goods stores, retail outlets, supermarkets, and toy stores.

Don't forget to check with potential sources of funding in your own backyard. Your school's principal, the director of your youth center, the city office of community relations, the mayor's youth program, and other departments of city and state government may have available funds to sponsor special events that benefit their particular jurisdiction.

### *Take Care of Your Sponsors*

Write follow-up letters and invite sponsors to visit your program. Let them know how much you value their support. Send thank you letters from staff and volunteers. Give them as much publicity and recognition as you possibly can. Try to involve them in the planning of special events, such as a dinner or an award ceremony. Your supporters often make terrific guest speakers. Remember, donors you reach through National & Global Youth Service Day can be potential sponsors for future initiatives and you should solidify relationships as much as possible.



### PUBLIC RELATIONS

National & Global Youth Service Day will help your organization receive recognition for the good work it does year-round. Your community and the nation need to see the powerful contribution youth make to their communities and good media coverage can make this possible. This chapter provides comprehensive tips to help you generate media coverage.

#### *How Youth Service America Can Help*

Youth Service America has developed a two-way, interdependent, local and national public relations plan. They combine their national network with your local and regional efforts to effectively communicate the message of National & Global Youth Service Day across the country. To do this, they need specific details about your plans. Please register your event online at [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd) to ensure your inclusion in their media campaign.

#### *The Role of a Media Coordinator*

Consider assigning a Media Coordinator to engage local and regional media about your N&GYSD project. While the Media Coordinator does not do all the work or give all the interviews, all aspects of public relations go through him or her to minimize confusion. The Media Coordinator should contact members of the media, get them excited about your project and schedule interviews for others working on the project. Keep the media focus on the youth participants. The Media Coordinator may be a youth, or you may designate one or more youth spokespersons to work with the Media Coordinator. Youth spokespersons should be prepared to talk with members of the media about the project, about how it relates to F.I.L.M., about National & Global Youth Service Day as a national event, and how youth service benefits your community year-round.

#### *Compile a Media List*

To assist you in your media outreach, compile an accurate, up-to-date media list with the names, titles, addresses, and telephone/fax numbers of every news organization, reporter and editor who wants, and is most likely to use, the materials you send. Identify and contact local and national media, including newspapers, magazines, TV, and radio by visiting [www.YSA.org](http://www.YSA.org) and clicking on the red Advocate for Youth Service Now! button. Ask PR offices and agency contacts for press lists, introductions, etc. You can also find media directories in the latest copy of Editor and Publisher and The Broadcasting Annual at your local library. Other nonprofits in your area may also have lists you can access. Include daily and weekly newspapers, city or regional magazines, television and radio stations (including cable stations), and wire services. Keep the entire list on labels (without phone numbers) or in a faxable database so there is always a set ready to mail or fax. Use the term "media" instead of "press" to refer to print, radio, and TV.

## CONTACTING THE MEDIA

The media will not come looking for you. YOU must inform the media of your project to receive coverage! If it is possible, make a personal contact to ensure your story is understood. Here are some ways to tell the media about National & Global Youth Service Day, F.I.L.M., and your project's role in both.

### *1. Develop a Relationship*

Take time to get to know key members of the local media. Call and introduce yourself. Ask reporters for a personal appointment to tell them about National & Global Youth Service Day and F.I.L.M. Bring along any written materials you have, including this supplement guide. Be ready to explain in a concise but enthusiastic way why you are excited about National & Global Youth Service Day.

### *2. Engage Media Partners*

Create a formal role for one or more media partners, such as the local affiliate of a national TV network (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX), a popular radio station, or your local newspaper. This gives the media outlet a greater stake in your project, and increases the likelihood that they will cover your event. Roles for the media partner may include:

- Broadcasting live from your volunteer recruitment fair or pre-N&GYSD event. This gives you a chance to talk about N&GYSD and F.I.L.M., and stir up excitement about the event. The media partner could give away prizes to those who come down and register to volunteer.
- Airing pre-N&GYSD public service announcements to let people know how they can volunteer with you on N&GYSD.
- Sending a popular TV anchorperson, DJ, etc. to emcee your kick off event.
- Featuring your event on a television morning show, weather report, etc.
- Giving out awards to volunteers and profiling winners in their newspaper, morning broadcast, etc.

To correspond with the media partner's formal role, identify specific ways you will publicly recognize their support. Make this part of your pitch, and make sure to follow through. If you meet and exceed their expectations, they will likely support you again in the future.

### 3. What's News?

When talking to the media about your event, remember that they choose stories based upon these characteristics:

- **Timeliness:** Is there a good reason to do the story now? The answer is “yes” since the event is tied to a National Day of service and to an exciting new youth film and literacy project, F.I.L.M.
- **Human Interest:** Tie your local event to a larger news event or issue that people in your area are discussing (i.e. education, violence, youth leadership, etc.)
- **Uniqueness:** What makes the event different, surprising, or outstanding?
- **Impact:** Does it have an effect on individual youth? Can you give examples? Does the event or story affect a large number of people in your community?
- **Prominence:** Involving celebrities and local VIPs adds value to a story. The more characteristics you can involve in your story, the greater chance it has of being placed in the media. Focus on the aspects of your story that demonstrate these characteristics when meeting media personnel.

### 4. The Pitch Letter

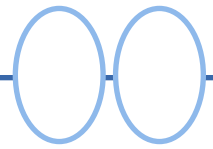
N&GYSD is a good news story. National & Global Youth Service Day is a celebration of the service youth do every day. The news is that millions of youth, contrary to many stereotypes, are responsibly serving their communities year-round and telling the world about it on one specific day. Some reporters may not see N&GYSD this way. They may feel that the event is not newsworthy and therefore not give it as much attention. That's where the pitch letter comes in.

The pitch letter helps sell a story that is interesting, but not late-breaking, news. You might want to write one to interest the editors, assignments editors, and broadcast news directors as your first step in making contact. Keep the letter simple and short. Immediately explain why you are writing, then summarize the most important information in one paragraph. Here is an example of opening paragraph to help you get started:

Dear (name of reporter):

Today, more than ever, youth are pitching in to make a difference in their communities. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, April 21-23, over 500 youth from area Boys & Girls Clubs will paint child care centers, clean up the Waukarusha River, plant trees along Route 1, and volunteer for various community improvement projects as part of National & Global Youth Service Day 2006 and F.I.L.M.: Finding Inspiration in Literature & Movies. These projects were chosen and planned by local youth who will join over three million young people to serve communities across the country.

The letter should be short, no more than a page. Explain why the newspaper or station's audience would be interested and include some of your most newsworthy details. Always follow up your letter with a phone call.



### *5. Follow Up*

Make follow-up calls within a week of sending your pitch letters. In most cases, the assignment editor decides what is news and assigns stories to reporters. Do not assume the editor/reporter knows anything about National & Global Youth Service Day, F.I.L.M., or your program. Give your name, organization, and job title immediately and ask if your letter has been received. Ask if the person is on a deadline; if so, schedule a time to call back, say thank you, and hang up.

If the reporter has time to listen, enthusiastically describe your plans. Convey a sense of excitement. Extend an invitation to your event. If the time is inconvenient, ask him/her to suggest another time to visit the project, preferably before the day of the event. There is always a good story in behind-the-scenes preparations.

### *6. Editors*

Find out the names of your local papers' editors and write each a letter requesting a meeting. State your goal. Do you want an opinion page piece or more coverage? Be sure to stress the timeliness of National & Global Youth Service Day and link it to local and national events/trends. Include background information on your program, contact names, and phone numbers. Follow up with a telephone call and restate your interest in a meeting. Be courteous and professional.

### *7. Weeklies*

Weekly newspapers, including shopper's guides, offer more stories of interest to the local community. They are a major source of information for people outside metropolitan areas, and it is usually easier to place stories in these publications. Once published, they can be clipped, copied, and circulated to other news sources, or filed in the scrapbook of information you are keeping about National & Global Youth Service Day.

### *8. Magazines*

Get started ASAP to place a story about your participation in F.I.L.M. and National & Global Youth Service Day in local and regional magazines. Most of these magazines can offer more time and space to devote to your story, and you will have a printed product that can be saved and calculated. Stories of interest to magazines would include: profiles of volunteers, interaction between volunteers and clients, the streams of service in your locality, why this generation is becoming the "we" not "me" generation, etc. Magazines have a long lead-time, at least three months before the story is published. Check the deadlines and act accordingly.

## 9. Television

Television is a medium for the eyes, and you must have a visual component to your story to get air-time.

Your National & Global Youth Service Day project probably involves people doing interesting things, so offer TV reporters specific details. Explain what will go on at the site—local youth volunteers interacting with at-risk kids, the elderly, or the homeless, to use just a few examples. Prepare a fact sheet explaining the action for the reporter's voice-over. There are many television programs that are potentially good bets for National & Global Youth Service Day coverage; plan ahead with the station. Here are some opportunities to explore.

- Public Affairs Programs
- Talk Shows
- Editorials (usually part of news programs, but planned in advance)
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
- Feature Segments of the News (usually planned in advance)

TV news has special requirements. In addition to visual appeal, the story must happen in time for that day's newscasts. Hold your event early in the day if possible. Plan brief and informative comments in advance. Keep answers to questions short. Try to speak in sound bytes—short but substantive phrases of no more than 15-20 seconds. Remember you are trying to make a positive impression about something you believe in deeply. Do not ramble on with unnecessary information. The interviewer will find a way to ask for more information if it is needed or wanted. If you are asked a negative question, respond briefly with a polite attitude and message, and then go on to the story you want to tell. For example, if the interviewer asks, "How do you deal with the high percentage of youth that are on drugs?" You can respond, "While we recognize that some youth are involved in problem behaviors, it is important to also. . ."

## 10. Radio

More and more radio stations provide air-time for call-in, news, and talk shows. They are also a great venue to air public service announcements.

- Call in your story as it is taking place and give a live interview over the phone
- Write press releases for on-the-air delivery
- Offer to participate in talk shows
- Distribute public service announcements and ask to participate in community affairs programs.

### *Public Service Announcements*

Federal law requires television and radio stations to provide free air time for public service organizations. Here is what to do to get your share:

1. Contact the public service directors (or station managers) at your area's TV and radio stations. Meet with them personally, if possible, to find out their PSA specifications (preferred length and format).
2. Ask the station to help you produce your spot
3. Write your PSA, using the following guidelines:
  - Use short, upbeat sentences in a conversational tone
  - Tell how your information can help the listener/viewer
  - Ask for action on their part
  - Tell the audience exactly where to go or what to do (like visiting your website or calling a specific phone number)
  - Tell the listener/viewer to contact your program for more information
  - Include your telephone number/website
4. Use this length guideline:
  - 10 seconds=25 words
  - 30 seconds=75 words
  - 60 seconds=150 words

## Media Advisories

The Media Advisory contains the message you want to convey to the media. It is not a news release, but a memo or an outline written in simple who, what, where, when, why, and how format that alerts the media to National & Global Youth Service Day and F.I.L.M. Include a description of your planning committee, its relationship to National & Global Youth Service Day and F.I.L.M., the time, location, participants, and a contact name and phone number. Distribute a week before N&GYSD. Do not forget to include your state wire services, such as Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI). The wires send information directly to newsrooms throughout your area, so they are important resources for spreading your message. Visit [www.YSA.org](http://www.YSA.org) and click on Advocate for Youth Service Now! to access contact information for wires in your area. See the Appendix for a sample Media Advisory.

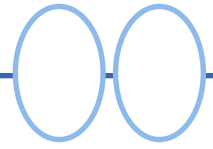
## Media Releases

The Media Release is your basic tool for generating coverage. It expands on your media advisory and fills in the details. Use it to supply background information about your program and explain your connection to the national celebration of National & Global Youth Service Day and F.I.L.M. Follow these suggestions for your news release:

- Type double-spaced with wide margins (for editor's notes)
- Use your organization's letterhead (8 1/2 x 11)
- Include home and office phone numbers and available hours at the top of the page.
- Note the date and release-time for the story, (i.e. 9 a.m.- April 10, 2006) or "For Immediate Release"
- Write a short headline that indicates the contents at a glance
- Use a dateline to begin the first paragraph (i.e. Sacramento, California)
- If there is more than one page, type -more- at the bottom. Use only one side of each page
- Number each page, but try to keep the overall length to two pages
- End your release with hash marks ### or -end-

See *Appendix for Sample News Release*; you may choose to follow its general outline or write your own using these tips:

- The lead paragraph has the famous five W's and an H—Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?
- Structure the information in the body in order of importance, so the editor can cut where needed without losing the most important facts.



## Other Things to Consider

### I. Photos

A good photo can make the difference between getting covered and not. Action shots are best because they communicate the energy and enthusiasm in youth in service. Media increasingly prefer receiving photos electronically, but they must be of high quality. Jpg files are best, and should be at least 300 dpi (dots per inch). Black and white glossies (8x10 or 5x7) are preferred for print media; use color photos for television. Always include a cutline, or short typed caption with each photo. The cutline should identify the main figures, left to right, and should describe the action, e.g. San Francisco Conservation Corps Crew Rehabs Housing for Elderly.

Be sensitive to the feelings and rights of those who are being photographed.

Do not press if a subject is uncomfortable and be sure to carry plenty of release forms with you on National & Global Youth Service Day. You will find sample release forms in the Appendix. Secure permission from everyone photographed! If someone is willing to be photographed, but wishes to remain anonymous, note that fact on the back of the photograph.

#### Tips to remember:

- Select a focal point in order to avoid unclear subject matter.
- Pay attention to the background and how it affects the focal point.
- Capture the energy and action involved in the activity.
- Capture the interaction of volunteer and service members with each other and community members without staging scenes.
- Try different distances and perspectives. The more experimental, the more choices.
- Try to capture more than one person in each photograph.
- Keep the scene as natural as possible—even if artificial lighting needs to be used.
- Shoot for good, clean detail.

#### What works to create great photos:

- Close-ups
- Photos in-focus and properly lit
- Faces & smiles
- Event or program-related caps and shirts
- Action: getting things done
- Before and after shots of projects

#### What doesn't work to create great photos:

- Distant shots
- Dim, overexposed, or blurred shots
- Backs & frowns
- People standing around
- Shots of parked trucks, piles of lumber

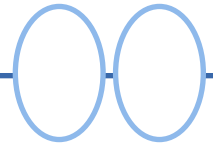
#### The media is particularly interested in photos that show:

- Elected officials engaged in service with youth
- Members of the media engaged in service with youth
- Youth with disabilities engaged in service with non-disabled youth
- Older youth serving younger youth, or youth of different ages serving together.

#### Final notes:

- Remember to label all photos with captions and names on the back.
- Avoid using ballpoint and felt-tip ink, for it has a tendency to come through or rub off.

*F.I.L.M. would love to receive copies of photos for the website and newsletters! Send them to [liza@nassembly.org](mailto:liza@nassembly.org).*



## *2. Broadcast News*

Triple-space your releases and spell difficult names phonetically for pronunciation. Write for reading aloud, and keep it short. Practice your broadcast release, preferably before an audience.

## *3. Media Follow-up*

Make a follow-up call within a week of mailing your media materials. This call ensures receipt of the information and gives you the opportunity to answer any questions, determine their interest in the story, and provide them with additional information, interviews, or contacts. Reporters operate in hectic environments and often are pressured with constant deadlines. Always ask them if it's a good time to talk, and get your point across quickly. Start off with the most interesting part of your event and suggest a story for them. If they don't like the initial idea, be prepared with a second suggestion.

## *4. Monitor Results*

Once you've persuaded the media to cover your story, watch for the fruits of your labor. Ask the reporter or editor when they think the story will appear. Request copies of radio or television broadcasts. If copies are not available, assign someone to monitor the television, radio, or newspapers for your story or hire a local video monitoring or clipping service. Once you have actual stories in hand, please send copies and samples of all photos, news clips, radio tapes, and video news segments to Youth Service America for their permanent N&GYSD archive and to F.I.L.M. for their website and newsletters.

## *5. Take the Mystery Out of Public Relations*

Like any skill, PR can be mastered and made to work for you. Many of you already have the basics. Take time to learn those things that you do not know. Remember, persistence DOES pay! Your Media Coordinator should be outgoing and, above all, enthusiastic about the program and National & Global Youth Service Day. Finally, be sure to send YSA and F.I.L.M. information on your plans!

### ENGAGING ELECTED OFFICIALS IN NATIONAL & GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY

It is important to cultivate champions for service and service-learning, especially among elected 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 an elected or agency 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.

Involving elected and agency officials in your project can also be a great learning experience for youth. By researching who their elected officials are, youth learn about the political process. By contacting them, they have the opportunity to practice writing professional communication. By engaging elected officials in a long-term strategy, they learn about civic engagement, advocacy, building professional relationships, and how government can work together with groups and citizens to solve problems.

Contacting elected or agency officials can be intimidating because they are leaders with busy schedules, but it doesn't have to be. Keep in mind that elected officials are there to serve their constituents, and you are their constituent. Most officials will welcome the opportunity to support community leaders and youth who are doing something positive for the community.

#### **THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES TIPS ON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:**

- Determining who your elected and agency officials are and how to contact them
- Contacting officials
- Engaging officials in your service project
- Working with officials

## ELECTED AND AGENCY OFFICIALS: WHO THEY ARE AND HOW TO CONTACT THEM

Elected officials are those individuals who have gone through a public election process, and who are selected by registered voters, for a specific term. Agency officials include heads of local, state, and federal agencies or administrative units of government. They also serve for a specific term, but are selected for their position by an elected official to implement policies and assist in running the government. For example, your state's governor is an elected official, but if you're doing a service-learning project, you should also consider inviting a member of your State or local board of education, as they are elected officials as well. All U.S. Cabinet officials (such as the Secretary of Defense) are appointed by the President of the United States, and must be confirmed by members of the U.S. Senate. If you're doing an environmental project, you could invite the director of your State Department of Environmental Quality, who is usually appointed by the governor.

Below are examples of elected officials at the local, state, and national level:

### *National*

- Members of Congress (U.S. Representatives and U.S. Senators)
- State
- State Senators and Representatives
- Governor
- Secretary of State
- Attorney General
- Secretary
- Treasurer

### *City/County*

- Mayor/Supervisor
- City Council/County Board members
- School Board members
- City/County Manager
- Police Chief/Sheriff
- City/County Clerk

Agency officials include directors of the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Youth Services, the Department of Aging, etc.

To identify and contact elected, appointed, and agency officials, please visit [www.YSA.org](http://www.YSA.org) and click on the red Advocate for Youth Service Now! button. There, you can input your ZIP code, find out who your officials are at the local, state, and federal level, as well as members of the media, candidates for election, and you can send personalized invitations to any of them, as well as taking action on various issues highlighted in the alerts section.

Use the worksheet in this chapter to help you plan your outreach to elected officials and track your success.

## *Engaging Elected and Agency Officials in Your Service Project*

Before you contact officials, you should decide how you would like them to be involved in your event. The more specific a request you make, the more likely the official is to accept. Also, having multiple options for the official to consider makes it more likely that you will receive his or her support in some way. In addition to attending your project, remember that officials have considerable influence and communications channels at their disposal that they can use to spread the word about your event.

*Here are some things you can ask officials to do:*

1. Volunteer at your National & Global Youth Service Day (N&GYSD) project, leading youth by example.
2. Address volunteers at the kick-off rally or closing celebration.
3. Proclaim April 21-23, 2006 to be National & Global Youth Service Day in your state or city (see Appendix for a sample proclamation).
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 Appendix for sample press release.)
5. Write an op-ed or letter to the editor encouraging youth participation in F.I.L.M., National & Global Youth Service Day, and year-round service.
6. Invite your state's congressional delegation, legislators, mayors and local elected officials, judges and their staff to participate in and/or organize activities related to National & Global Youth Service Day.
7. Hold a recognition ceremony at City Hall or the State Capitol for participants after National & Global Youth Service Day.
8. Ask the mayor, city managers, and/or town/county executives to issue a proclamation recognizing National & Global Youth Service Day in cities across your state. A sample proclamation is attached and can also be found in the Appendix of this guide.
9. Create state or local Youth Advisory Councils. Youth have earned a place at the decision-making table. With a tremendous amount of energy, commitment, and creativity, it is only fitting that youth in America play a lead role in addressing the needs of their peers and community. Youth Advisory Councils can build on the positive impact of National & Global Youth Service Day throughout the entire year.
10. Ask youth to assess your community's needs that can be addressed through youth service, and present a service plan to your city council, session of state legislature, etc.

## *How Youth Service America Can Help*

Youth Service America has developed a two-way, interdependent, local and national government relations plan. They combine their efforts and relationships at the federal and gubernatorial level with your local, state, and regional efforts to effectively communicate the message of National & Global Youth Service Day to elected, appointed, and agency officials at every level. To do this, they provide online tools for you to identify and invite officials at the local, state, and federal level so those officials learn about your efforts and hear from their constituent in YOU!

They need you to provide specific details about your plans to them so they can highlight your service project in their outreach to members of Congress, the Administration, and governors. Please register your event online at [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd) to ensure your inclusion in their government relations outreach. By working together, they hope to have officials participate in some way at every project for National & Global Youth Service Day 2006.

## *Contacting U.S. Senators or Representatives*

Due to the anthrax situation in 2001, the mail to congressional offices in Washington is often delayed so it can be irradiated. Our recommendation is to e-mail a letter to your representative or senator's office in Washington. If you want to mail a letter, send it to the nearest district office within your state. You can find this information by clicking on Advocate for Youth Service Now! It is also helpful to call the legislator's Washington, DC office and ask for the name and fax number of the scheduler. The scheduler will almost always require a faxed invitation with event details before confirming the legislator's attendance.

In an effort to ensure that your letter is as effective as possible, provided is a draft letter that can be tailored to your specific project on Advocate for Youth Service Now! Below are a few helpful hints. When addressing correspondence, the following model is appropriate:

*The Honorable (full name)*

*Address*

*City, State, ZIP Code +4*

*Dear Senator (or Representative) (Last Name):*

Regardless of how you send your letter (whether by mail, fax, or e-mail) be sure to include your name and address, including city, state, and ZIP code + 4. Your purpose for writing should be stated in the first paragraph. For example, I am writing on behalf of the (name of your organization) to invite you to be the speaker at our kick-off event for National & Global Youth Service Day. Describe your service project including the date(s) and times, specific location, the number of youth and adults involved, how it serves the community, how it is related to F.I.L.M., etc. This information is similar to the press release that you have already completed. Be as specific as possible about how you would like to have their participation, whether as an emcee, speaker, person on-hand to deliver cards, books, serve food to the homeless, etc. Also include a specific timeframe that they would need to be there or if you're flexible and able to accommodate their schedule.

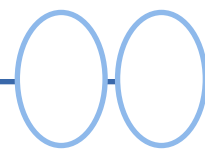
If other officials or media have already agreed to attend your project or activity, that would be useful information to include. As always, you'll want to be courteous, to the point and keep the letter to one page (even if you're sending it by e-mail). Make sure to thank them for considering your invitation, and provide them a contact name and phone number for additional information. A few days after you send your invitation, follow up with the office to make sure they received your correspondence and to respond to any questions. You may want to encourage the office to let you know whether or not the representative or senator can attend by a certain date so you can include their participation in your future press releases. Be sure to explain that the legislator is welcome at the event if his or her schedule changes at the last minute.

This information is easily adapted and can be used in your invitations to other elected officials from your state including the governor, mayor, city council members, state legislators, etc. As you learn which elected officials are planning to participate in your events, please let Youth Service America know so they can track those officials who are supporting youth and youth service in their communities and to thank them for their participation. Contact Youth Service America's Director of Government Relations, Ross Wilson, at 202-296-2992 x25 or [rwilson@ysa.org](mailto:rwilson@ysa.org).

If you have any questions or have problems finding the contact information for your senator or representative, Ross will be happy to assist you.

### *Tips to Remember When Contacting/Engaging Elected and Agency Officials*

- Invite them early! Most officials have very busy schedules so make sure to start early and follow up until they let you know if they can or cannot attend.
- Provide them with a variety of ways to get involved.
- Make sure to have date, time, location, and specific activity information available before you make contact with their staff.
- Most officials can't make a commitment to attend an event without knowing all the details.
- Follow up!
- Make sure to follow up with their staff until you receive a confirmation of their attendance or a decline. If their staff tells you that your official is too busy to attend your event, be prepared to let them know about other ways that he/she can show their support of your efforts.
- Make sure to thank them for their involvement.



## ELECTED OFFICIALS WORKSHEET

Elected Official

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- Role Requested (speaker, volunteer, etc)

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- Person Responsible for Contacting

---

- Date to Contact

---

- Participating?

---

- Notified YSA if participating?

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- Sent Thank You

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Governor

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U.S. Senators

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U.S. Representatives

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State Senator(s) and Representative(s)

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Mayor/Supervisor

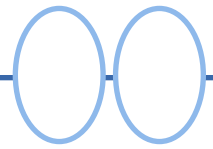
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Other State Official

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Other Local Officials

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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, elected and/or agency officials, VIPs, 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 volunteers in reflection. This is best done on the day of the service project, and is important to maximizing volunteers' learning from the experience. The simplest way is to ask volunteers 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 volunteers, team leaders, site leaders and VIP's. They will help you plan future F.I.L.M. 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 a great time to hand out awards, delegate remaining tasks to be done, and celebrate your accomplishments together.
- Complete the online N&GYSD evaluation at [www.YSA.org/nysd](http://www.YSA.org/nysd). Your input will help YSA make N&GYSD even better in future years! This evaluation will also help you summarize the impact of your project. Look for information on their web site about grants that are available for ongoing service. Also, check out grant listings on F.I.L.M.'s website, [www.youthfilmproject.org](http://www.youthfilmproject.org).

## *Continued Service*

Encourage youth to become civically engaged. If volunteers had 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, see Chapters 3 and 8, take action by visiting [www.YSA.org](http://www.YSA.org) and clicking on “Advocate for Youth Service Now!”

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 F.I.L.M. service projects, and publicize one another’s ongoing service opportunities.

## *Recognition*

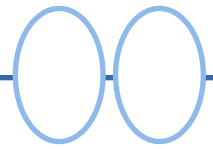
Award volunteers with the President’s Volunteer Service Award. This White House Initiative recognizes youth who have performed between 50 and 100 hours of service in any 12-month period. F.I.L.M. is a “certifying” organization and is able to give their own “President’s Volunteer Service Awards” to those youth and/or organizations who log enough hours to qualify. Have youth follow the steps below to start logging service hours:

1. Go to [www.presidentialserviceawards.gov](http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov)
2. Create a volunteer account (Click under the “Not Yet Registered” tab to the right)
3. Under the “Profile” tab, fill in “TBZ-16075” in the “Your Certifying Organization” space

When youth log onto President’s Volunteer Service Award website, they can track and add service hours when needed. There is also the option of creating a group account, in which your youths’ hours can be tracked under one account. The F.I.L.M. project will keep track of all volunteers and their hours. Awards will be given to those individuals and organizations with enough hours to qualify!

For more information, visit [www.presidentialserviceawards.gov](http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov)





**SAMPLE PROCLAMATION**

A proclamation can be used by an elected official for a variety of purposes, including declaring a state of emergency, calling a special session of the legislature, or for ceremonial purposes, such as congratulating an organization or individual on an achievement. Its main purpose is to highlight certain activities and raise awareness or recognition among the public. A great way to recognize the important contributions of youth in your area on National & Global Youth Service Day is to ask your mayor, governor, or other elected official to "proclaim" National & Global Youth Service Day.

You can adapt the following sample proclamation and approach your official with it. Be sure to start the process early and be persistent but polite in your follow-up. A public signing and/or presentation of the proclamation provides another good way to publicize and promote National & Global Youth Service Day.

City of Seattle, Office of the Mayor

**PROCLAMATION**

WHEREAS, Seattle's youth make important contributions to the city's welfare every day of the year; and

WHEREAS, most young people who volunteer as youth continue serving throughout a lifetime; and

WHEREAS, the City of Seattle depends on youth as vital community assets; and

WHEREAS, the 18th annual National & Global Youth Service Day, a program of Youth Service America, in partnership with the National Leadership Council, PARADE Magazine, and the State Farm Companies Foundation, takes place on April 21-23, 2006

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Greg Nickels, Mayor of Seattle, do hereby proclaim April 21-23, 2006 to be National & Global Youth Service Day in Seattle.

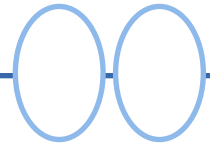
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I HAVE HEREUNTO SET MY HAND, THIS DAY, AND HAVE CAUSED THE SEAL TO BE AFFIXED HERETO:

(SEAL)

Mayor \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY  
(INSERT LOGO OR PRINT ON YOU LETTERHEAD)**



### **(CITY) YOUTH JOIN MILLIONS OF VOLUNTEERS FOR 18TH ANNUAL NATIONAL & GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY, APRIL 21-23**

**WHAT:** *(ORGANIZATION)*, the city's main resource for supporting and strengthening community service, will mobilize more than *(#)* young people to participate in the 18th Annual National & Global Youth Service Day, Friday, April 21 through Sunday, April 23, in the *(CITY)*. *(INSERT INFO ABOUT ORGANIZATION AND N&GYSD PROJECT)*

On National & Global Youth Service Day, a public awareness and education campaign that highlights the amazing contributions that youth make to their communities 365 days a year, youth will design and lead service-learning projects in areas ranging from literacy and the environment, to healthcare, hunger, and help for the elderly. As the largest service event in the world, engaging millions of young people, National & Global Youth Service Day draws together a remarkable consortium of local, regional, and national partners, while supporting youth on a life-long path of service and civic engagement. The Presenting Sponsor of National & Global Youth Service Day is the State Farm Companies Foundation.

**WHO:** *(#)* youth and their families, along with *(INCLUDE ELECTED OFFICIALS, VIP'S)*

**WHEN:** *(DATE, BEGINNING AND END TIME)*

**WHERE:** *(NAME OF LOCATION, PHYSICAL ADDRESS, CROSS STREET AND PHONE NUMBER OF LOCATION)*

**WEB:** For more information about National & Global Youth Service Day and to see a comprehensive project list, visit *(YOUR WEB SITE)*, F.I.L.M.'s website [www.youthfilmproject.org](http://www.youthfilmproject.org) or [www.YSA.org/NYSD](http://www.YSA.org/NYSD)

**ON SITE CONTACT:** *(NAME, OFFICE PHONE, CELL PHONE, EMAIL)* Christina Wessell, Youth Service America, 202-296-2992 x 28, [Cwessell@YSA.org](mailto:Cwessell@YSA.org)

**SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASE  
(INSERT LOGO OR PRINT ON YOU LETTERHEAD)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** *(Release date)*

**CONTACT:** *(Organization Contact Name)* Christina Wessell

*(Name of Organization)* Youth Service America

*(Contact Phone)* 202-296-2992 x 28

*(Contact Email)* CWessell@ysa.org

*(Organization)* mobilizes (City or State) youth for 18th Annual National & Global Youth Service Day, APRIL 21-23

## **YOUNG PEOPLE SPAN AMERICA, WORLD IN CREATING SERVICE PROJECTS**

*(ORGANIZATION CITY, STATE) AND WASHINGTON (DATE) (ORGANIZATION), (ONE SENTENCE DESCRIPTION ABOUT THE ORG),* will mobilize more than (#) young people to participate in the 18th Annual National & Global Youth Service Day, Friday, April 21 through Sunday, April 23, in the *(CITY/STATE.)* Volunteers will conduct service-learning projects addressing literacy, hunger, public safety, the environment, and other important issues in their communities. The Presenting Sponsor of National & Global Youth Service Day is the State Farm Companies Foundation.

*(1-2 PARAGRAPHS ABOUT LOCAL NATIONAL & GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY PROJECT PLANS. MAKE THE DESCRIPTION AS SPECIFIC AND COLORFUL AS POSSIBLE. EMPHASIZE ROLE OF YOUTH IN DESIGNING AND LEADING PROJECTS. MAY HIGHLIGHT A SPECIFIC YOUNG PERSON PARTICIPATING IN THE PLANNING EFFORT.)*

“We’re very excited about organizing National & Global Youth Service Day and we want to make a difference. We want our voices to be heard and we hope to demonstrate our ability to be responsible, participating citizens whose opinions and ideas matter, even though most of us are not yet able to vote,” says *(YOUTH NAME, AGE, ORGANIZATION)*

At the *(SPONSOR ORGANIZATION NAME),* we are committed to opening doors of hope and opportunity for youth. Volunteerism is a wonderful way to strengthen our community while teaching valuable skills and life lessons,” explained *(NAME, TITLE, COMPANY).* As a proud sponsor of National & Global Youth Service Day, we look forward to watching young people reap the rich rewards that can result from giving back to others.

It is a distinct honor to work with such amazing organizations. Their leadership increases the scale and visibility of youth service year-round, and helps youth in America play a lead role in learning about community needs, while giving their time, energy, commitment, and idealism,” said Steve Culbertson, president and CEO of Youth Service America. “Millions of young people serving together on National & Global Youth Service Day creates a tidal wave of good and sends a powerful message of hope and healing around the globe,” Culbertson added.

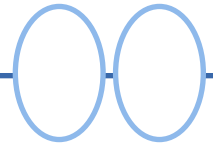
On National & Global Youth Service Day, a public awareness and education campaign that highlights the amazing contributions that young people make to their communities 365 days a year, young people will design and lead service-learning projects in areas ranging from literacy and the environment, to healthcare, hunger, and help for the elderly. As the largest service event in the world, engaging millions of young people, National & Global Youth Service Day draws together a remarkable consortium of local, regional, and national partners, while supporting youth on a life-long path of service and civic engagement.

National & Global Youth Service Day is coordinated by Youth Service America, in partnership with the National Youth Leadership Council and PARADE Magazine. Youth Service America is joined by a consortium that includes more than 100 of the nation’s largest nonprofit and youth development organizations, including America’s Promise; Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America; Campfire USA; Habitat for Humanity; National Education Association; the US Conference of Mayors; and YMCA of the USA.

For more information about local events or to get involved, please contact: *(ORGANIZATION NAME, PERSON IN CHARGE OF N&GYSD VOLUNTEERS, PHONE, EMAIL)*

*(INSERT ORGANIZATION BOILERPLATE, CONTACT INFO, WEB SITE)*

*Youth Service America is a national nonprofit resource center that partners with thousands of other organizations committed to strengthening the youth service movement. YSA’s programs and services help to strengthen the effectiveness, sustainability, and scale of the youth service and service-learning fields on a local, national, and global level. In addition to National & Global Youth Service Day and Global Youth Service Day, which take place concurrently each April, YSA also hosts SERVENet ([www.SERVENet.org](http://www.SERVENet.org)), providing the largest database of volunteer opportunities in America. For more information, visit [www.YSA.org](http://www.YSA.org).*



**SAMPLE PHOTO RELEASE FORM FOR ADULTS  
(PRINT ON YOU LETTERHEAD)**

I hereby give (name of organization) permission to take photographs of me or photographs in which I may be involved with others for the purpose of promoting National & Global Youth Service Day. I hereby release and discharge

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of photographer)

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of organization),  
F.I.L.M. and Youth Service America from any and all claims arising out of use of the photos. I am 18 or older. I have read the above statement and fully understand its contents.

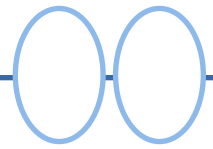
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name *(Please Print)* \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_



**SAMPLE PHOTO RELEASE FORM FOR MINORS  
(PRINT ON YOU LETTERHEAD)**

I hereby give (name of photographer) permission to take photographs of the minor named below or photographs in which the minor may be involved with others for the purpose of promoting National & Global Youth Service Day.

I hereby release and discharge (name of photographer), (name of organization), F.I.L.M., and Youth Service America from any and all claims arising out of the use of the photos, or any right that I or the minor may have.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ am 18 or older, and am able to contract for the minor in the above regard. I have read the above statement and fully understand its contents.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name *(Please Print)* \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Minor \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Minor \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship of Minor \_\_\_\_\_