

**ENHANCING CITIZENSHIP
THROUGH SERVICE LEARNING**

**BUILDING COMMUNITY:
A BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION**

Service Learning Workbook

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What Is Service Learning?

Service Learning is a type of learning experience that connects meaningful community action/service with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility (National Service Learning Cooperative definition).

How Does Service Learning Differ From Community Service?

Unlike community service opportunities, which often consist of short-term projects decided on and planned by someone else, Service Learning is much “fuller” and offers you and other youth opportunities to work as a team to study community issues in-depth, plan and initiate appropriate action to tackle issues and ultimately, to make a *real* difference in your communities.

What Are The Benefits?

As you participate in Service Learning activities, you acquire valuable academic skills which will help in school. For instance, you may survey your community and tabulate the results (math), write letters and proposals (language arts), petition local leaders (civics), and conduct experiments (science). You will also build skills in teamwork, leadership and communication – very important for college and employment. Service Learning can provide you with opportunities to become an active participant in your community along with a team of other youth and adults. *Service Learning participants are seen and heard!!*

About This Book . . .

This workbook is designed to help you and your team better plan your Service Learning Citizenship Project. We have found that a successful project requires a sound plan or “blueprint”. This first requires that you research your community to find out who is doing what and if there is a need for your project. Although this may sound tough, it is actually a very fun part of the project – you will get to meet many people who will be excited about your ideas for community action (okay, we admit you will run into a few grumps but don’t let them bring you down). It then requires that you make a plan of action or “blueprint” so you can carry out your project.

Some worksheets we included were adapted from Barbara Lewis’s book, *The Kids Guide to Social Action*. It has some additional information you might find helpful especially if you need to get political support for your project.

Moving from Community Service to Service Learning . . .

As explained earlier, Service Learning is much fuller than Community Service and offers you and your team an opportunity to study community issues in-depth while gaining valuable academic learning AND providing a service.

But what if you already have a Community Service project you enjoy and don't want to abandon? Can this project be transformed into Service Learning? **YES!!** Service Learning doesn't require that you give up a favorite community project but instead allows you to add increased learning and increased service to your previous project.

On the following two pages are *examples* of common service projects and how they might be transformed into Service Learning. A blank worksheet follows. Use this blank sheet to practice transforming a project you enjoy.

Here's How:

At the bottom of the worksheet write down a current or popular project in the space titled, "Low Service/Low Learning". Then think of additional service activities that would increase the value of the project to the community. Making a short-term project on-going, serving more people and/or pulling in others to provide help in the project are examples. Write these ideas in the space titled, "Low Learning/High Service".

Then think of activities that would increase your learning in the project. Learning more about the needs of the people being served, finding out about the root causes of a community problem and/or finding out what else is being done in a community to address a problem are examples. Write these ideas in the space titled, "Low Service/High Learning".

Then think of ways that all these ideas can be merged into one project. For example, you might find out about a community issue and think of on-going efforts to address it. You could think of other teens and community people who might want to work on the issue. Write down all these ideas for the project in the top space titled, "High Service/High Learning".

Now compare this project with the original project in the bottom space:

- ✓ how are the projects alike? how are they different?
- ✓ which project seems like one which will make the most difference?
- ✓ which project will help you understand your community better?

If you find that it is too overwhelming to leap from your original project to this new Service Learning project, take it a step at a time. Begin by adding one or two ideas from the middle boxes. If these ideas prove successful, add one or two more. Soon you will have successfully moved from Community Service to Service Learning.

Helping Pets

HIGH SERVICE/HIGH LEARNING

- After talking with vets, shelter people you found out dogs & cats in shelters because of overpopulation. Organize campaign to educate people about spaying neutering. Get pet store to donate food to give as incentives for neutering. Work on campaign. Get others involved

LOW LEARNING/HIGH SERVICE

- Talk to pet stores. Get a pet store to help sponsor food drive. Hold drives on regular basis.

LOW SERVICE/HIGH LEARNING

- Talk with vet. Find out dietary needs of cats and dogs
- Talk with shelter staff. Find out why so many cats and dogs are in shelters.

LOW SERVICE/LOW LEARNING

- Hold a pet food drive. Collect bags of dog and cat food and donate to local shelter.

Helping the Elderly

HIGH SERVICE/HIGH LEARNING

- Adopt a convalescent hospital after learning about the needs and interests of the residents. Work with the activity director to plan and present activities, such as games to improve mobility & memory. Start a pet visitation program or a program to record personal histories.

LOW LEARNING/HIGH SERVICE

- Visit the home on a regular basis
- Plan and conduct activities for ambulatory residents (such as 'walks' + 'field trips')

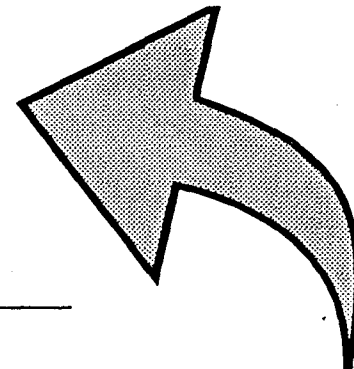
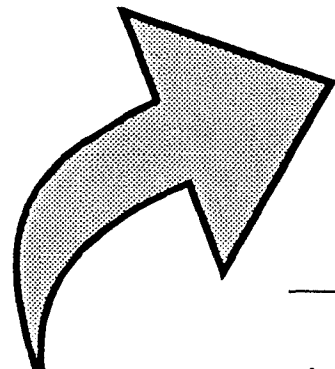
LOW SERVICE/HIGH LEARNING

- Talk with convalescent staff; office of Aging Staff; Learn about elderly issues
- Find about interests and likes of residents including liked games and activities

LOW SERVICE/LOW LEARNING

- Make decorative tray favors to put on meal trays.
- Deliver to convalescent home prior to Christmas

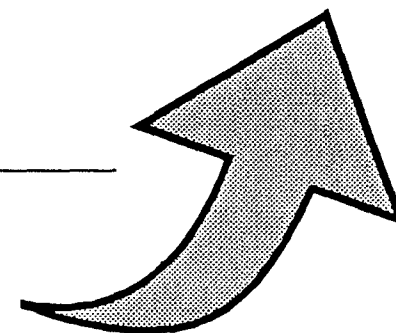
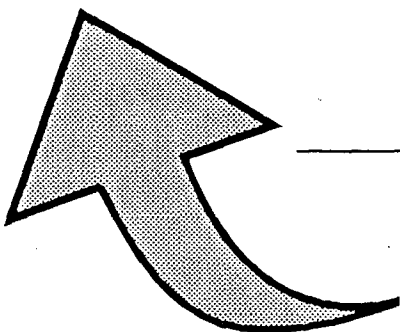
HIGH SERVICE/HIGH LEARNING



LOW LEARNING/HIGH SERVICE

LOW SERVICE/HIGH LEARNING

LOW SERVICE/LOW LEARNING



ADAPTED FROM MODEL DEVELOPED BY
SERVICE LEARNING 2000 CENTER

Service Learning Process

Brainstorm: Identify problems and issues in your community.
Develop project ideas that would address these issues.



Gather information: who is doing what, where, when?
Conduct interviews and surveys.



Choose and plan your project.



Getting the word out: contact the media, local city
officials, family and friends.



Have fun implementing your
service learning project.



Evaluate and celebrate success!!

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Gathering Information

Before planning and carrying out a Service Learning project, it is important to gather information about what is already happening in your community and who can help you carry out your project. You may be tempted to skip over this step if you already have a great idea in mind. This is what a class did who wanted to get rid of graffiti in their city – imagine their surprise (!) when they found out by accident that the *student council in their own school* was already working on the graffiti problem AND their city had a program to supply paint, brushes and other materials for graffiti clean-up projects (good news! - they teamed up with schoolmates and the city – the project was successful).

Gathering information is also a necessary step if you plan to apply for grant money or ask for donations. You must be able to show that there is a need for your project in order to get money.

This section includes ideas for how to get started gathering information and forms to capture your findings. We put them in an order that often works well. That is, you begin by thinking of potential projects of interest to you; then gather information about your community and what is happening related to your project of interest; narrow your project choices; and so forth. However, it works equally well to study the community first; find out about issues and service "gaps"; and then plan a project to fill a gap. The important point is to know what is already going on and if there is a need AND desire for your proposed project.

Here are additional tips to help you gather information:

- ✓ be respectful of those you may be trying to help: as you go about gathering information always keep in mind that *you are trying to make a difference – not a judgment*. For example, it is **not** respectful to say, "The park is a real dump and we think it needs to be cleaned up." It is respectful to ask residents and officials, "What improvements would you like to see in your neighborhood park?"
- ✓ use the phone book to find names and phone numbers of agencies: there are sections for government, associations, clubs and businesses.
- ✓ call the local newspaper: in addition to printing information on clubs and agencies, they may also have a city editor or staff person who knows a lot about what is going on in the community.
- ✓ visit your library: there are often special sections on foundations and businesses that give grants, directories of local officials, bulletin boards of special community events and even Internet access.
- ✓ call upon local officials: it is great to seek help from Congressional representatives and County Supervisors. However, local officials such as City Council members are often more accessible and willing to help.

BRAINSTORMING I: COME UP WITH IDEAS

IDEA — IDEAS

THAT MAKES ME
THINK OF:

MORE WILD & CRAZY
IDEAS — KEEP GOING:

Pet overpopulation
Pets Destroyed
Homeless Pets

dogs not neutered

wild cats

not enough homes

expensive to neuter

"funny" ideas about neutering
can't catch them

eat song birds

pets not allowed in apartments

people working: no time

01

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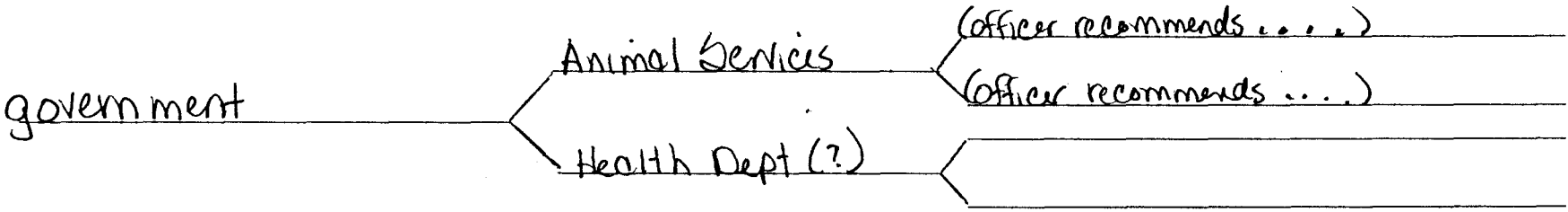
sample

INFORMATION GATHERING PLAN II

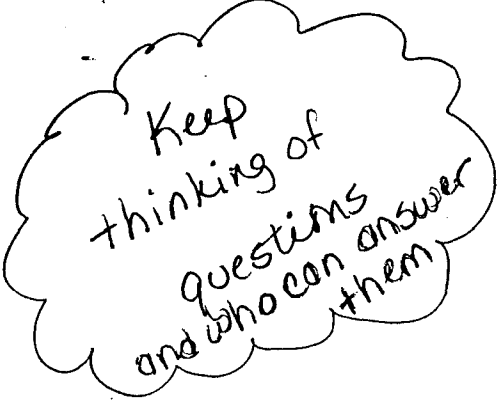
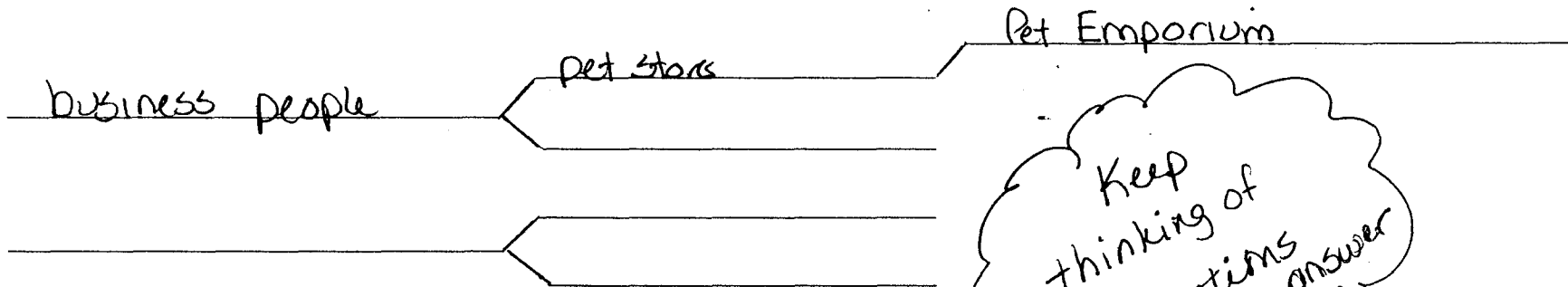
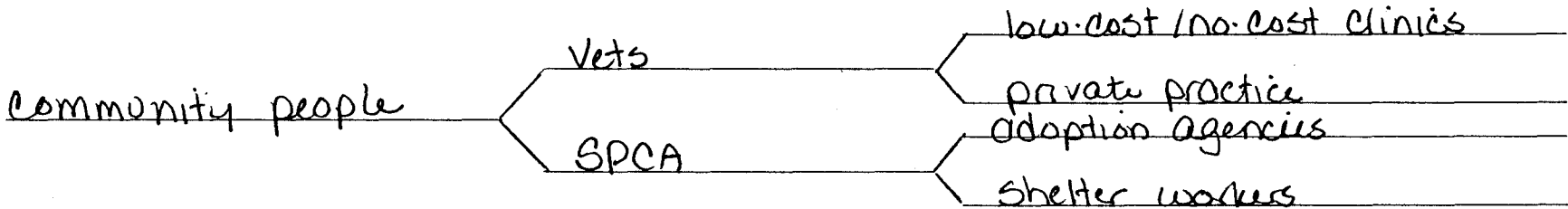


Now think about WHO might be able to answer your questions. Go through the phone book, resource directories, newspapers, etc. (and jot down ideas). As you phone, interview or survey people, be sure and ask them WHO else you should talk with about the issue. People to include might come from government, community organizations, business and the general population.

WHO CAN TELL ME:



#1



INTERVIEW FORM

Never Go to An Interview Alone

In Person
By Phone _____
By Letter _____

Sunny Doggone
NAME OF PERSON INTERVIEWED

Animal Services Officer
TITLE

555-1000
PHONE NUMBER

City Government
COMPANY/ORGANIZATION NAME

K-9 Street
STREET ADDRESS

Dogville, CA
CITY, STATE, ZIP

Aug 5, 1994
DATE OF INTERVIEW

From: 10:00 AM To: 11:15 AM
TIME

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

- 1) How many animals are put to sleep each week?
- 2) How many find homes each week?
- 3) What is the biggest problem (why so many put to sleep?)
- 4) What percentage of animals in the city are neutered?
- 5) Why do you think animals aren't neutered?
- 6) Are there low/no-cost clinics available?
- 7) How are clinics advertised?
- 8) What needs to be done to get people to neuter pets?
- 9) Who else should I talk with
(Attach more paper if you need it.)

Cat Stevens / Three Dog Night
YOUR NAMES

4-H Dog Project
YOUR SCHOOL/GRADE/ORGANIZATION

Sample

Sample

SURVEY FORM

never do a neighborhood survey alone

This survey form can be used for many people's responses to the same questions.

QUESTIONS - These are possible questions to find out about feelings and beliefs

- 1. Female dogs are better pets if they have a litter of puppies
- 2. Neutering/spaying is painful
- 3. Neutering/spaying will reduce aggression in dogs
- 4. Neutered/spayed pets will get fat
- 5. Male dogs won't be "masculine" if they are neutered

RESPONSES

SA-STRONGLY AGREE A-AGREE D-DISAGREE SD-STRONGLY DISAGREE

	SA	A	D	SD	UNDECIDED	
1.				⊖		10
2.	I					10
3.		I				10
4.					I	10
5.			I			10

* Mark a line for each response (||||).

get an adult to go with you

Planning and Conducting Your Project

Once you have gathered information about community needs, you need to decide what project you will pursue and create a project plan. Think of your plan like an itinerary for travel. When traveling, there are many places to go and routes to get there so it is up to you to choose your final destination, the route to follow, stops along the way, and an estimated time of arrival. Your project plan will be similar and will include what you want to accomplish (final destination); tasks you will perform to complete the project (planned route and possible stops) and an ending time (time of arrival). For a trip you would factor in enough time for unexpected events such as detours, lost baggage, getting "bumped" and extra time for fun. The same "cushion" needs to be built into your project plan.

Just as there are many options for travel itineraries, there are also many options for putting together your plan of action. This section has many ideas and supporting forms to help you create a plan. You will probably use many but not all of the ideas. But no matter how you choose to proceed, it is essential that you have some sort of written plan, agreed upon by all team members, before you begin your project. This will help all team members know where you are headed and when you expect to reach your goal. After all, you don't want some team members arriving in Chattanooga in December while others land in Kalamazoo in January!

Evaluation should also be a part of your plan. By evaluation we mean that you think about what you want to accomplish and then determine if you did indeed accomplish it. This is usually a requirement of funders and donors and will be written into a grant proposal. But even if it is not a requirement, you will want to assess the success of your project. Your coach can help you with this.

Here are some additional tips to help you create your plan and put it into action:

- ✓ after figuring the time you think a task will take, pad it a bit. Almost everything takes longer than you think it will.
- ✓ if you plan to write for grant money you will have to do your homework and find out which foundations or businesses are a good "match" for your project. Foundations welcome calls of inquiry and can tell you if your idea is something they might fund. However, they get very cranky with groups who send them proposals for projects they have no interest in funding.
Follow the guidelines!
- ✓ before sending out letters have another teen or your leader read them. Wording that makes perfect sense to you may be unclear to others.
- ✓ call your paper and find out their policy on news releases. If the paper won't print an article about your project, try a different route -- club information, community happenings or even a letter to the Editor. Even big papers seem to print letters, especially those from students who want the community to know that teens are contributing in a positive way.