

Telling Your Story: The Art and Science of Powerful Presentations

This session includes:

- matching an effective message to a specific type of audience
- examining principles of effective presentations
- articulating a clear, compelling message and story
- preparing for and giving better interviews
- strategies for responding to tough questions

Additional resources available in this section include:

- Telling Your Story to the Media
- Building Media Relations
- Resources for Telling Your Story

Telling Your Story

Your story should be told using:

- Language and symbols.
- Concepts and concrete examples.
- Facts and feelings.

Your story should:

- Speak to self-interest.
- Be told over and over again.
- Highlight accomplishments and challenges.
- Be inspiring and informative.
- Generate feeling of hope and optimism.
- Capture the audience's hearts and minds.
- Convey a sense of power/capacity/capability.
- Be clear and to the point.
- Build bridges and relationships.
- Motivate a response.

Your story should help to:

- Interpret events and convey information.
- Transmit core values and beliefs.
- Define and build relationships.
- Establish status and credibility.
- Recruit and retain volunteers and stakeholders.
- Secure critical resources.
- Generate community support.

The Audience

In telling your story, you need to target your audiences.

Who are the people you are trying to reach?

Who are the individuals and organizations that can help to sustain/advance your initiative?

- Clients/customers
- Potential clients/customers
- Partners
- Funders
- Volunteers
- Staff [current and potential]
- Other stakeholders
- Community leaders
- Community members
- Business leaders
- Potential collaborators
- Local, state, and federal government officials
- Civic leaders
- Media representatives

And, you need to match your story and message to each audience's self interest.

- What is it that you offer to each of the audiences?
- Why would what you offer be of value to them?
- Why would they want to help sustain/advance your project?
- What's their self-interest ... what's in it for them?

You also need to determine ...

Which communication medium would be most effective in delivering your message to each of your key target audiences?

About the Audience

In telling your story, you need to consider...

- Whom do you specifically need to reach?
- What is their self-interest?
- What's in it for them?

Your audience will likely consist of a combination of the following four personality types. As such, you need to balance your methods and approach to appeal to each type. In a one-on-one presentation, you need to tailor your approach to the personality of the person to whom you are speaking.

The Analytical: The Analytical is self-disciplined, neat and orderly and prefers to work alone. The Analytical is also a heavy thinker who needs time to digest everything you present.

The Driver: The Driver is fast-paced, action-oriented with a "my way or the highway" credo. The Driver is a difficult person to convince, because she believes she's almost always right. Drivers are bottom-line thinkers.

The Expressive: The Expressive is highly creative and constantly moving. He typically thinks his ideas are better than anyone else's. Because his mind is constantly churning out new ideas, holding his attention is a challenge. And because he prides himself on his spontaneity and impulsiveness, he may interrupt to ask a lot of questions. He might even offer hints on how to improve your presentation.

The Agreeable: The Agreeable is friendly, polite and supportive. She'll listen with a smile to everything you have to say, and she rarely asks questions or raises objections. Why? Because she hates conflict and wants to have a positive relationship with everyone.

Source: "For one-on-one presentations, know the 4 personality types" by Diana Sibberson, Presentations Magazine

Tips for Making an Effective Presentation About Service-Learning

Before the Presentation

1. **Review information about service-learning to familiarize yourself with its key elements, positive outcomes, and examples of service-learning activities.** Check out www.learnandserve.gov and www.servicelearning.org for information.
2. **Build relationships with people who have compelling service-learning stories to tell.**
3. **Find out if there will be a DVD set up available or if you can bring your own to show a video about service-learning.**
4. **Order the free Bring Learning to Life campaign tools.** You can request a copy of this eight-minute video and brochures that can be customized with your own program information at http://servicelearning.org/lsa/bring_learning/.
5. **Review the materials and video before your presentation.** Try to anticipate the questions your audience may have and find out the answers beforehand.
6. **Practice your presentation in advance and make adjustments to fit into the time you have been allotted.**
7. **Remember to leave time for question and answer.**

During the Presentation

1. **Arrive early to test the DVD equipment and to display your materials.**
2. **Give specific examples of successful service-learning projects to help the audience visualize what service-learning would look like in their community.** If possible, include examples that have already

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occurred in the audience's own community and discuss the specific impacts that resulted from the project.

3. **Share personal service-learning stories.** Beginning and ending your presentation with a personal story are good ways to capture audience attention. Invite a student or teacher to share his or her own personal service-learning experience. If you cannot find someone to attend the presentation with you, ask the individual to write a personal account, which you can read to your audience.
4. **Provide your audience with a clear understanding of the key characteristics of service-learning.** For example, Learn and Serve America has described service-learning in this way:
 - Service-learning is a teaching method that engages young people in solving problems within their schools and communities as part of their academic studies or other type of intentional learning activity.
 - Students master important curriculum content by making meaningful connections between what they are studying and its many applications in the world around them.
 - Service-learning also helps young people develop a range of service skills, from acts of kindness and caring, to community stewardship, to civic engagement and action.
 - Service-learning is an active learning strategy that improves student engagement, which is a key factor in promoting academic achievement.
5. **Show the “Bring Learning to Life” video.**
6. **Provide research findings to support service-learning’s important educational and community outcomes.** Here are links to two websites where you can find specific research outcomes to support your presentation: <http://www.learnandservechallenge.org/cooltools.php> and www.learnandserve.gov/pdf/07_0224_issuebrief_servicelearning.pdf
7. **Emphasize the benefits of service-learning that are most relevant to your audience.** Here are some examples of key messages that may resonate with particular types of audiences.
 - a) **Teachers:** Highlight that service-learning:
 - Improves students’ academic achievement and engagement,

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- Increases student attendance and acceptable school behaviors,
- Promotes civic engagement, and
- Creates a more positive school climate.

b) **School Board and Education Policymakers:**

- Show how service-learning relates to and can help achieve specific school, district or statewide improvement goals.

c) **Local Elected Officials:**

- Use examples to show how service-learning projects can bring together school and community to address unmet needs in the elected official's district.
- Calculate the dollar value of the services to be performed by students and compare it to the cost of the service-learning program to demonstrate the financial value to the community.
- Point out the ways in which service-learning promotes civic engagement.

d) **Funders (including government, foundation, ___ and individual giving):**

- Emphasize the potential return on investment for funders that support service-learning activities. For instance, one study found a 4:1 monetary value of service provided by Learn and Serve participants to their communities, compared to the Learn and Serve dollars spent on these activities.¹

e) **Students:** Emphasize that:

- Service-learning is fun,
- Students get out of the classroom, serve with friends, and have input in creating the experience such as deciding what need to address, how to do so, and being an active part of solving the problem, and
- The hands-on experience and community involvement that students get with service-learning is great for college applications and resumes.

f) **PTAs:** Highlight that service-learning:

- Improves students' academic achievement and engagement,
- Increases student attendance and acceptable school behaviors,

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- Promotes civic engagement,
- Creates a more positive school climate,
- Creates opportunities for more parent involvement, and
- Looks great on college applications and resumes.

- g) **College Professors:** Studies demonstrate that service-learning:
- Increases students' commitment to service and facilitates cultural and racial understanding,
 - Has a positive impact on students' academic learning as measured by outcomes such as problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development, and
 - Contributes to career development and to students' ability to apply what they have learned in the "real world."²

h) **Tribal Councils:**

- Discuss how service-learning can be a means to help young people reconnect with traditional concepts of service in American Indian culture.³

8. Answer questions and keep track of any you can't answer so you can follow up later.

9. Provide your contact information and encourage the audience members to get in touch if they have additional questions or ideas.

After the Presentation

1. Follow up with key participants to answer questions or offer additional information and support after the meeting.

2. Send thank you notes.

¹ See www.nylc.org, *Service-Learning by the Numbers*, excerpted from "Growing to Greatness 2006," National Youth Leadership Council 2006.

² See www.learnandservechallenge.org/research.php for additional research findings and full citations to the research cited here.

³ See www.nylc.org. *American Indian Service Learning*, by Lynn LaPointe. Excerpted from "The Generator," Spring 2004. National Youth Leadership Council.

Testifying Tips

Testifying before a school board, other leadership or policy committees can be intimidating to those not accustomed to speaking before this type of body. Following are some tips about what to expect when testifying and how to make your testimony as meaningful as possible.

Giving public testimony can help you advance your agenda if you are prepared. It may influence the committee's action. It also becomes part of the permanent record and may be used in future considerations.

Listed below are suggestions to help make your presentation successful.

- **Know Your Audience**

Members of the committee usually care that you have taken time out of your day to come and testify before them.

- Be respectful.
- Do not accuse committee members of causing your particular problem.
- Do not scold, put down, blame or insult the decision makers or other witnesses. This tactic will likely alienate them from your cause.
- Contact the committee members a few days before the hearing to provide them with some background on the issue and to determine their positions. This will enable you to prepare remarks that speak to their concerns ... to overcome opposition and solidify support for your cause.
- Remind your supporters and those who directly represent you on the committee that you will be attending the hearing.

- **Know Your Issue**

Support your personal opinions with facts and feelings. In addition to knowing the facts and arguments in support of your position, familiarize yourself with the arguments of your opponents, as you may be asked to discuss the differences.

Tell your story. Relate your own professional or personal experiences to the issue under consideration. Inform the committee of the likely effects of the proposed measure on you, your family, your community, and/or

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your organization's mission. Draw from your own knowledge and experience. Not only will this help you in addressing those points as you draft your statement, this information will assist you in responding to supportive as well as hostile questions from committee members.

Be reasonable. Do not ask for the impossible. Never demand.

- **Know the Process**

- Know the location of the building, the meeting room, meeting time, and number of committee members.
- If possible, attend a committee meeting before you testify to become familiar with the process and room layout.
- Find out if there is a witness sign-in sheet or registration process.
- Once you have been notified that you will be permitted to testify, be sure you comply with committee staff requirements (length of oral testimony, format of written statement, number of copies of statement, etc.).

In Presenting Your Testimony ...

1. You should have copies of your testimony for each member of the committee. Always make a few extra. Committee staff may collect these at the time you sign in or just before you begin your presentation.
2. Begin your presentation by addressing the chairperson first, then members of the committee. **"Chairperson _____ and members of the committee . . ."**
3. For the record, state your name, address, and the organization or group you represent.
4. State whether you support or oppose the measure being heard and briefly explain why.
5. Do not read your testimony to the committee word for word. Prepare an outline and use it to "speak" to the committee instead of "reading" to them.
6. *Be brief and to the point.* Often there are other witnesses present, and the Committee will appreciate your cooperation in allowing everyone to have an opportunity to be heard. Keep in mind you may have a ten minute version of your testimony – but be prepared to summarize it in one minute -- that may be all the time you are allowed!

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7. *Be prepared to adapt your comments to avoid repeating a previously made point.* If the point you want to make is made by a witness before you, think of a new angle from which to make your point, or frame it a little differently from the way those who testify before have done.
8. When a member asks you a question answer it to the best of your ability. If you do not know the answer, say so and tell the Chairperson that you will provide the requested information as soon as possible. Providing follow-up information is an excellent technique for ensuring your testimony is fully considered and also provides you with additional contact with the Committee.
9. Relax! The members understand that this can be an intimidating experience--they don't expect a perfect presentation.
10. Follow up: After the hearing, send a "thank you" letter to the committee members.

Special Needs ...

If you require special accommodation in order to testify before a committee, please contact the committee administrator or support staff **BEFORE** the meeting with your request.

Key Rules of the Road:

1. **Know the purpose and approach for your testimony.** Understand why you are testifying - whether you are there to persuade, dissuade, provide "expert" information, or delay action on a bill. Remember that committees are rarely persuaded on testimony alone. It is possible committee members have decided how they will vote before the hearing. Your testimony may be intended to help avoid losing votes and to justify previously decided positions. You may be advised to address the concerns only of those committee members who are undecided. Coordinate your efforts with those who share your opinion on the issue!
2. **Carefully prepare your testimony.** Know your subject. Have accurate facts or data to support your arguments. Never "wing it". Keep your testimony short and to the point. The best testimony is about three minutes, but certainly less than five minutes. Be sure to notify the sponsor of the proposal that you will be testifying, even if you are not supporting him/her. Decision makers do not like to be surprised by testimony, especially if you are raising new issues/concerns.

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3. **Establish rapport with the committee.** Wait to be acknowledged by the Chair before speaking. Start by saying: "Thank you Madam/Mister Chairperson." When you begin, briefly introduce yourself. If you are a constituent of any committee member, identify where you live, but don't single out the member representing your community.
4. **Present your testimony effectively.** Use a friendly, relaxed tone of voice. Avoid a monologue or a formal speech. Be conversational. Do not read to the committee. Practice several times before the hearing, so you are familiar with your tone, the flow, and your material.
5. **Keep it simple (KIS).** Don't use jargon, acronyms or specific terminology. If the underlying issues are complicated, simplify them before you talk. Use examples to emphasize and illustrate your points.
6. **Answer questions briefly and cautiously.** Be aware that committee members may ask questions to help reinforce their own opinions and possibly to discredit your or previous testimony. Some members' questions are meant to help you make a better case or explain something that was confusing. Prepare yourself for possible questions by finding out what concerns have been raised about the issue you are discussing and the opinions of the committee members. Answer questions briefly and stick to the topic of the question. If you do not know the answer to a question, just say so, but offer to obtain the information requested and provide it to committee members later.

The Message

Telling your story successfully requires a clear, consistent and compelling message.

Having a **single overriding communication objective** – S.O.C.O. – can help you to focus your message and ensure that you get it across.

All of the supporting information should relate to the S.O.C.O. ... and help to clarify or add depth to the S.O.C.O.?

S.O.C.O. – Single Overriding Communication Objective

A S.O.C.O. is a brief statement of the key message you want to get across.

What is the one thing that people should know or understand about your program?

Things to Consider

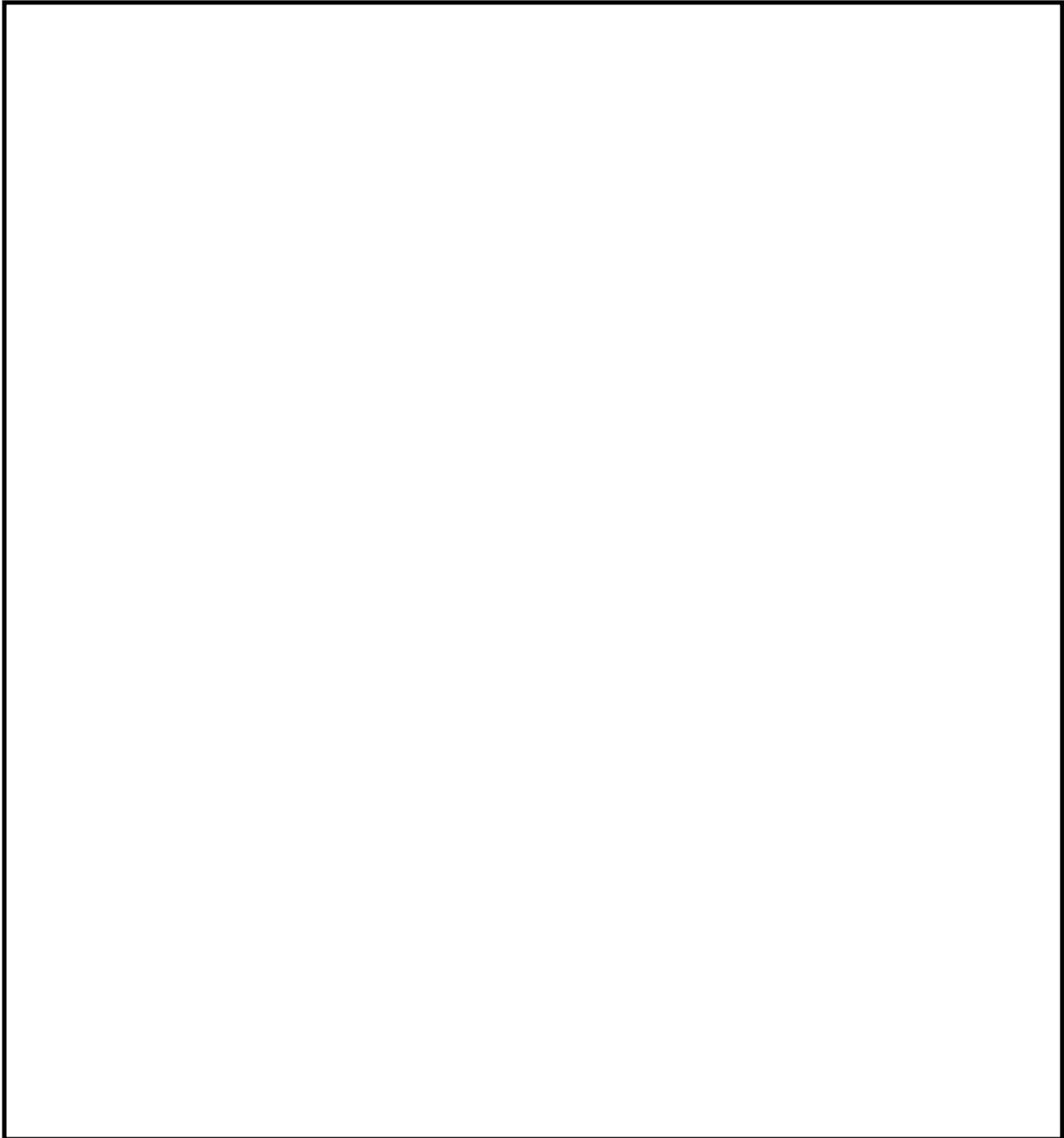
- What is the mission of your organization?
- What condition, issue or social concern does your program address?
- What are its most important programs?
- What are your most significant accomplishments?
- What has been the impact your program has had on the condition, issue or concern it seeks to address?
- What are your most pressing challenges?
- What do you want to accomplish this year?
- What type of image do you project to the audience?
- What does this audience want/need to hear?
- What does your group do best?

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Message, Message, Message

What is your S.O.C.O.?

- NOTE: Tailor your S.O.C.O. and your talking points to the audience and the type of presentation you want/need to make.



Developing a Meaningful & Lasting Message

Powerful, effective and compelling communications require as a foundation a meaningful and lasting message.

In order to make your message meaningful it must highlight the impact your program has/could have on a community issue and/or concern.

And, in order to make it lasting, it needs to be told as a story, with both facts and feelings.

What impact has/could your program have on a specific community/social condition, cause or concern?

Building on your S.O.C.O. and talking points, think about an anecdote to help you illustrate this impact and tell your story.



Five Types of Presentations

Source: Dorothy Leeds, author of Smart Questions and Power Speak

1. Informational

Keep an informative presentation brief and to the point, and stick to the facts without getting too complicated.

2. Instructional

A bit longer than an informational presentation. It covers your topic thoroughly. You may want your listeners to learn a new skill.

3. Inspirational

Stimulates the audience's emotions and intellect to be receptive to a new point of view. Use vivid language. Reach their minds and hearts.

4. Persuasive

Sometimes the purpose is to convince your listeners to embrace your position. It offers a solution, presenting sufficient logic, evidence and emotion to swing the audience to your side.

5. Activating

Maybe you don't want to simply persuade people, but spur them to action. A presentation designed to activate presents ideas, suggestions and arguments strong enough to motivate an audience to overtly carry out your suggestions. You must tell them what to do while stressing the necessity to do it. Naturally, you must be firmly convinced that the course of action you are urging is the right one. The more focused your purpose, the more powerful your presentation.

Body and Soul: The Anatomy of a Presentation

A successful presentation has three parts: the introduction, the body and the conclusion. It also has “soul”—the elements that make the presentation compelling.

The Body: Presentation Tips

The Introduction

- Get the audience’s attention.
- Hook them in 30-60 seconds.
- Craft a powerful or provocative opening to grab them and convince them that what you have to say is crucial.
- Whet the audience’s appetite.
- Give the audience your theme.
- Begin on a positive note - do not apologize, demean or patronize.

The Body

- Speak to the audience’s self-interest.
- Be consistent with your overall vision, mission, accomplishments, objectives, tactics, membership, image.
- Paint powerful pictures with meaningful data ... use “social math.”

The Conclusion

- Make it short.
- Make it conclusive.
- Make an ask – a specific request for action.

The Soul: Presentation Tips

Tell Stories

- Give simple observations.
- Use the power of parables.
- Use short snippets to tell your own personal short story.
- Use the "hook" of the story to transition back to the presentation.

Repeat Yourself

- Once is never enough. Even Coca-Cola advertises!
- Repeating the information presented will do wonders to reinforce a point.

Interact and Develop a Relationship with Your Audience

- Use open-ended questions ... let a member of the audience answer.
- Call on members to explain something to the group.
- Keep them on their toes.
- Ask them for background on themselves.
- Involve the audience in the presentation.

Go Low-Tech and High Touch

- Use a white board or newsprint instead of PowerPoint.
- Use a game or activity to illustrate a point.

Pause

- Give your audience time to reflect and soak up on new information/knowledge.
- Pause at a critical point to help audience retention and involvement.

Respond Positively to Criticism

- Reflect.
- Respect.
- Respond.

Master Non-Verbals... Actions Speak Louder Than Words

- 55% of everything you communicate is what you look like when you speak.
- 38% is in how you actually deliver the information.
- Only 7% is what you say.
- Because 93% of presentation communication is not content based, your actions as a presenter are critical.

Use Visuals

- People take information into their brains in different ways.
- Greater than 50% of the population prefers to receive information visually and just 15% are auditory learners.

Be aware

- of the environment
- yourself
- your organization
- your topic

Common Presentation Mistakes

- Accepting an inappropriate invitation. Never accept an invitation to talk about a subject on which you are not an expert or at least knowledgeable.
- Neglecting to research the audience.
- Procrastinating, then punting by using last month's materials.
- Overestimating the power of PowerPoint.
- Partying like it's 1999/getting a late start.
- Assuming that all projectors/equipment are the same.
- Assuming that everything will work out OK, somehow, some way.
- Telling jokes/using inappropriate images to illustrate a point.
- Relying on an Internet connection.
- Getting lost in the trees, not seeing the forest.
- Over-preparing, having too much to say.
- Under-preparing, having too little to say.
- Not having a back-up.
- Staying in the shadows.

Prep & Practice

Create your own scenario or use the following:

You are scheduled to give a speech at a “roundtable” breakfast for local business leaders, community members and elected officials to promote your service learning program and explain why it is important to the community.

You expect that some members of the audience will not be supportive because they do not believe that your program is/will not be effective in addressing the needs and concerns of the community. You suspect that some of the audience members believe the money spent on your program could be put to better use elsewhere in the community.

Members of the media are there simply to note the dynamics between the organization and the community and to get an interesting story about local conflict.

Preparation and practice are at the heart of a successful presentation. The ability to “stay on message” and connect with your audience is directly related to the clarity of your S.O.C.O. and your degree of preparation and practice. In preparing for your presentation, consider SSPAM:

- Situation
- Subject
- Purpose
- Audience
- Method

The SSPAM Worksheet

(Situation, Subject, Purpose, Audience, Method)

Situation: The time and place you are giving the presentation.

What is the situation, the time and place of where you are giving the presentation?

Subject: The subject/message.

What is the overall topic/theme of your presentation?

Purpose: The goal you hope to achieve with the presentation.

Will you be in front of the audience to...

*Activate? Persuade? Inspire?
Instruct? Inform?*

What is the purpose/goal you hope to achieve with the presentation?

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Audience: The people to whom the speech is directed.

Who are the members of the audience?

What is the personality type of the key influential(s)?

What are their self-interests?

What is your "ask" of the audience?

Method: The methods that will best accomplish the purpose.

What are the best techniques to get your message across to the given audience?

Who	Type	Self Interest	Ask	Method

The Six Principles of Powerful Presentations

Worksheet

1. Give it a purpose:

Are you attempting to activate, persuade, inspire, stimulate, instruct, or inform? What do you hope to accomplish?

Based on your goal(s) craft a 15-30 second S.O.C.O.:

Building from your goals and S.O.C.O. outline your opening remarks:

2. **Make it unconventional:**
Consider each of 4 personality types.

The Analytical is self-disciplined, neat and orderly and prefers to work alone. The Analytical is also a heavy thinker who needs time to digest everything you present.

TIP: Give him time to process. Stop periodically. Maintain 20-30 seconds of silence. The Analytical will use this time to formulate questions and think about what you have just presented. Keep your visuals clean and simple. Make sure you provide accurate data.

What could you say or do to present your information that will make the Analytical type sit up and listen?

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The Driver is fast-paced, action-oriented with a "my way or the highway" credo. The Driver is a difficult person to convince, because she believes she's almost always right. Drivers are bottom-line thinkers.

TIP: Make sure your presentation is crisp and professional, both verbally and visually. Use bold lettering to highlight key points and use arrows to direct the Driver's attention. Do not argue with a Driver during a presentation. Take care not to be cute or manipulative during the presentation.

What could you say or do to present your information that will make the Analytical type sit up and listen?

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The Expressive is highly creative and constantly moving. He typically thinks his ideas are better than anyone else's. Because his mind is constantly churning out new ideas, holding his attention is a challenge. And because he prides himself on his spontaneity and impulsiveness, he may interrupt to ask a lot of questions. He might even offer hints on how to improve your presentation.

TIP: Appeal to this enthusiasm, creativity, nonconformity and positive attitude. Being dry, humorless and dull will make him want to run for the door. Use bold, intense colors, lots of pictures, fancier fonts, and positive images [smiles, thumbs-up] to get your point across.

What could you say or do to present your information that will make the Expressive type sit up and listen?

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The Agreeable is friendly, polite and supportive. She'll listen with a smile to everything you have to say, and she rarely asks questions or raises objections. Why? Because she hates conflict and wants to have a positive relationship with everyone.

TIP: Move through your presentation slowly. Use visuals with people in them. Stop and ask if she has any questions. Explain how a successful outcome to your presentation would affect her and others personally.

What could you say or do to present your information that will make the Agreeable type sit up and listen?

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3. Keep it lucid and organized:

What information should this presentation contain and how should it be structured?

Reason	Tips	Your information
Activate	Present ideas, suggestions, arguments strong enough to motivate an audience. Present a sense of urgency.	
Persuade	Present solutions, logic, evidence and emotion to sway the audience.	
Inspire	Present vivid language and examples to reach hearts and minds. Use facts, figures and feelings.	
Instruct	Present facts with a bit of depth. Allow time to discuss and practice. Personalize the message.	
Inform	Present facts in a clear, simple, uncomplicated way. Get to the point.	

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Framework		Your Structure
Topical	This is when you have several ideas to present and one idea seems naturally to precede the other. This is one of the most common types of patterns. It is especially useful for presenting information and making entertaining speeches.	
Chronological	This uses time sequences for a framework. It is useful in making persuasive speeches requiring background information.	
Spatial	This organizes material according to physical space.	
Classification	This puts things into categories.	
Problem/ Solution	This is used for persuasive/ activation presentations. The first part outlines a problem. The second presents the solution.	
Cause/Effect	This can be used to convince and activate people. The first part describes the cause and the second the effect.	

- 4. Use a variety of approaches/examples:**
What examples or stories can you share with the audience that will make them better understand your position?

Outline Your Presentation

5. Show your passion:

Why are you doing this work?

What motivates you?

Why do you think it's worth the effort?

Why should the audience care?

Now that you have an outline ... where can you add emphasis? ...
make gestures? ... show passion? ... elicit feelings?

Now ... go back and ... insert these elements into your outline.

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6. **Make it Pop!**

Pull out/create from your presentation outline ... one strong quotable quote and 3 key talking points?

Quotable Quote:

Three Talking Points

-

-

-

Self Reflection

Did you engage the audience? How?

Did you read the non-verbals of the audience to determine if they were following you and if you were achieving your goals? How did you alter your presentation to address these non-verbals?

Did you achieve your presentation goal? If so, what evidence do you have of your success? If not, why not and what can you do to overcome this shortfall the next time?

Did you present to all personality types? How?

Did you achieve your S.O.C.O.?

Did you get in your 3 talking points?

What suggestions do you have to improve the presentation?

Telling Your Story to the Media

This segment of the workbook will help you to:

- prepare for an interview
- give better interviews
- respond to tough questions

Interviews – Before, During and After

Before the Interview:

- Do your homework.
- Anticipate tough questions – you know what they might be.
- Stay informed - think about how to link what you are doing to current trends or news.
- If possible, make contact with the reporter ahead of time – send information about your organization or program.
- Know what the reporter is interested in – read stories they have written, watch for by-lines.
- Provide “deep background” if necessary (institutional history).
- Keep your S.O.C.O. in mind while preparing.
- Rehearse.

During the interview:

- Keep it local, but link local information/impact with national news.
- Avoid acronyms and “institutional” jargon - the general public does not speak “our” language.
- If it is radio, take notes as you go so you can remember to respond to things said.
- Remember – with radio you are speaking to every listener – in waiting rooms, in living rooms, in kitchens and in cars.
- Tell the story, over and over, but in different ways.

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- Never say “no comment.”
- Imagine who the listening/reading audience is – speak to them.
- If you are asked a question and you don’t know the answer, say so.
- If you can, provide the interviewer and the listener resources to find the answer. If it is a print interview – tell them you will find the answer and get back to them prior to their deadline. And do.
- Listen to your own voice – use conversational tones. Modulate.
- Pause for effect – it makes people listen to what follows.
- Be aware of “ums” and “ahs,” silence is better.
- If it is electronic media, don’t fidget. It is distracting for an interviewer.
- Nothing is ever “off the record.”
- If you are asked a question that includes negative language - do not repeat it.
- Personalize your response when you can – use examples of impact on real people.
- Utilize restraint – short answers are better, safer and more effective. Use whole sentences.
- If you don’t fully understand the question, ask for clarification.
- Use facts to counter misperceptions or misstatements – don’t become impatient.
- Remember you are the expert – that’s why they are talking to you!
- Make the opportunity count!

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After the Interview

- Leave them with contact information and supporting data.
- Write a handwritten, personal thank you note as soon as you get back to your office.
- Let them know you are happy to serve as a resource in the future, even if it is just to lead them in the right direction on a related subject. Share the spotlight, don't be a news-hog. You will be rewarded by being a resource in the future.
- After the interview airs or is in print – write a note to tell them what a positive impact it had. Again, use stories about people if possible.
- Pay attention to the reporter/cultivate the relationship.

Thanks, in part, to Covering Kids, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

TEN TIPS For People Who are Too Busy for PR

1. Pick two or three media targets and love only them.
2. Piggyback on other people's PR.
3. Get to know at least two people with two great stories about service-learning.
4. When a reporter calls you, be ready to pounce and produce.
5. Make email work for you (lather, hit send, repeat).
6. Offer special guests and field trips.
7. Make it so easy and so complete, any tired reporter will bite.
8. When you can, invest in high-quality photographs and video.
9. Know the power of three to make a trend – any trend – a reality. Repetition-repetition-repetition.
10. Write short and talk fast. Remember KIS(S)= Keep it Simple!

Developed by Stephanie Weiss, Experience Corps (used with permission)

Theory, Tips & Tools for Success

In theory, interviews are just special kinds of presentations, where a journalist or host asks the questions that the audience at home would ask.

In practice, interviews are conversations with two different audiences: the journalist (reporter or host) and the public. To be successful in interviews, you must prepare for both audiences. And you must talk to both audiences.

As a special kind of presentation, many of the important keys to a successful interview are the same for presentations. You need to have:

- A clear message—your S.O.C.O. (Single Overriding Communication Objective)
- A good opening
- A quotable quote
- Three talking points to which you will return throughout the interview
- A powerful closing statement.

The interview should inform, motivate or activate the audience.

The ability to tell “your story” and stay on message is directly related to the clarity of your S.O.C.O. and the amount of your preparation and practice.

Review the following tip sheets and highlight three tips from each that you want to add and better incorporate into your communications tool box.

Preparation Tips

Cultivate media relationships. Make the time to develop a working relationship with editors, producers, publishers, owners, feature/editorial writers, reporters.

You are the expert. Help educate the reporter **before** the interview.

Identify your S.O.C.O. and prepare three key "talking points."

Prepare an opening and closing statement.

Do your homework. Know the facts. Know your position. Practice.

Determine questions you hope won't be asked; then practice answering them.

Find an angle. Identify or create a local hook that links your story to a national one or to other community events/issues/concerns.

Find out who the reporter is – their position and who else is being interviewed.

Know others positions. Find out/identify their key points.

Know the format, theme and audience of the show. Establish ground rules, and find out what will be covered and how much time will be allowed for the program.

Identify the person who can best represent your point of view.

Read/listen to the latest addition of the newspaper/radio/TV news program before you do your program. A late-breaking story could affect your presentation.

Arrive early – check out the setting, your appearance. Talk to the reporter about what will be covered, offer points you'd like to discuss. Do not have any caffeine.

Be available for follow-up. Reporters often need more info.

Relax and be yourself.

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General Tips

- Make sure you get across your S.O.C.O. and three talking points. Use one or two-liners that people will remember. End with a brief recap.
- Inform, motivate and activate audience. Make your issue newsworthy and important.
- Think of ways to humanize your issue. Develop anecdotes.
- Give briefing materials to the interviewer, days before if possible.
- Be honest, positive, to the point. Keep your answers short.
- Use language that is natural. Avoid jargon and acronyms.
- Don't hesitate to say "I don't know; I'll get back to you." Then get back to them in a timely manner.
- Be human. Don't be afraid to show emotion, but never lose your temper.
- Never go off the record, unless you know and trust the reporter [and even then it's not a good idea].
- Never give a "no comment" response. Turn the question into a comment.
- Don't repeat other's terminology or their facts or figures; use your own data.
- Answer only one question at a time. If there are multiple questions, answer the one you want to address . . . then bridge to your key points.
- If the questions do not allow you to project your S.O.C.O., use the questions that are asked to bridge to your talking points.
- Take a second to think about your answer. Rapid responses appear rehearsed. The extra time will also help you to develop a more strategic response.
- Clarify any points that you think may have been misunderstood.

Broadcast Tips

- Know the format, theme and audience of the show. Find out what will be covered and how much time is allowed for your segment. Establish ground rules and suggest topic areas to discuss.
- Arrive early. Check out the setting and your appearance.
- Bring notes, if needed.
- Maximize eye contact with the reporter.
- Pause. The audience will appreciate the time to reflect/digest.
- If you are called by a reporter to give an immediate statement over the phone and you are not prepared, ask if you can call back within 10 minutes—then call back.
- If the program is being taped and you make a weak presentation, ask for the segment to be re-taped.
- Remain still in your chair . . . fidgeting makes your voice inconsistent in a radio interview, and is distracting on television.
- Eliminate “um” and “you know” from your delivery.
- Keep a positive, professional attitude, even if the questioner is hostile.
- Don’t laugh or smile at serious matters.
- Don’t touch the microphone.

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TV Tips

- Arrive early so that you can check your appearance.
- Stand/sit straight with your hands in a relaxed position at your sides.
- Relax your shoulders and keep your body still.
- Ask for make-up, if necessary, to help control perspiration.
- Wear medium-toned clothing, over-the-calf socks/over-the-knee dress. Avoid white shirts, bow ties, and lots of jewelry. Do not wear sunglasses.
- Avoid wearing solid red clothing.
- Assume that the microphone and camera are on from the time the reporter arrives to the time he or she leaves. Act accordingly.
- Show warmth, friendliness, sincerity.
- When appropriate, smile, gesture and pause.
- Keep eye contact with the interviewer, if present, or with the camera/viewing audience.
- Don't rock back and forth. Don't cross your arms. Don't look at your watch.
- If you need to face one way (e.g., hearing problem), make this known.
- Don't sit in between two questioners or members of the opposition - your head movements will make you look guilty.
- Keep your head up – or you will look guilty.
- Avoid looking around the room.
- Don't touch the microphone.

Radio Tips

DO'S

Bring notes, if needed. Cards instead of paper.

Stay approximately 6 inches from microphone.

Remember you are talking to the public and to your target audience.

If you are called by a reporter to give an immediate statement over the phone and you aren't prepared, ask if you can call back within 10 minutes—then call back.

If the program is being taped and you make a weak presentation – ask for the segment to be re-taped.

Get your "talking points" across to the audience.

Clarify any points you think may have been misunderstood.

DON'T'S

Don't be too far away or too close to the microphone.

Don't sway back and forth in your chair. Your voice will be inconsistent.

Don't move your papers around – they make noise.

Don't touch the microphone.

Avoid "ums."

Don't laugh at serious matters.

Don't take the questioner's attitude, even if it's hostile.

On the Spot: Tools for Handling Tough Questions

Before the interview, determine the questions you hope you won't be asked, then practice answering them. Be calm, direct, and brief in answering hostile questions and avoid becoming defensive or argumentative.

The following are some techniques that can help you deal with the tough questions and tough questioners . . . so that you can stay on **your** message ... and achieve your S.O.C.O.

- **Bridge:** A technique that allows you to segue from the interviewer's question to your key message. Examples of bridges:
 - Another question I'm often asked is . . .
 - A more critical issue might be . . .
 - It sounds like what you are really asking is . . .
 - Your readers might also be interested in knowing . . .

There are two primary bridges:

- (1) You use a positive, friendly question to set up a second, related question the answer to which is your key message.
 - (2) You are asked a tough leading question. You answer with one word or a short phrase; then you translate the tough question into one that is positive or neutral, and then answer it.
- **Hook:** A technique in which you provide more to an answer than the interviewer expected.
 - You answer the question by explaining that it requires a lengthy answer, identifying the three or four most important points you want to make, and stating them, uninterrupted. Number each point as you make it: "The first most important point is . . . , the second is ..."

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- **Flag:** In this technique you use words and your voice to indicate the information you are about to share is important; perhaps the most important item to be shared in the interview. Always use this technique when the coming answer is one of your key messages. This helps reporters to prepare their stories.
 - “Your question relates to one of the most important things people need to know . . .” (answer the question by stating your key point).

Handling Tough Questions: Activity

Preparation

You are being interviewed by a member of the press. While the reporter was very friendly on the phone when requesting the interview, you have a feeling that s/he will probably ask some tough questions about your organization.

You believe that this interview will be an important opportunity for you to state your case. You would like to win community members' support.

Take a few minutes to decide:

- What's your S.O.C.O.?

- What are your 3 talking points? Prepare sound bites based on these points, but don't rehearse too much or your remarks will sound canned.
 - 1.

 - 2.

 - 3.

- What is your one quotable quote?

- What issues might the reporter raise?

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What questions might be asked? How should you respond?

Question	Strategy	Response

- What questions/issues do you hope are not asked/raised?
What strategy will you use and how will you respond?

Question	Strategy	Response

Tips for Overcoming the Fear of Frying (on camera)

- Avoid caffeine.
- Be yourself.
- Do something routine before you start.
- Dress so that you look and feel good ... make yourself comfortable.
- Exercise your mouth muscles.
- Hold something.
- Know exactly how you will begin.
- Make the room your own.
- Meet and greet; make friends with audience members.
- Realize that your audience wants you to succeed.
- Realize you are the expert.
- Rehearse, rehearse and rehearse some more.
- Remember the first time is always the worst.
- Remember to breathe.
- Repeat or paraphrase questions.
- Show up early, assess the physical space, check equipment and sight lines.
- Start a conversation before you start your presentation.

Practice

- Have someone interview you using the questions that you anticipate being asked and the ones that you hope you want to be asked.
- Ask colleagues and friends to watch the interview and take notes on things you did well and areas for improvement.
- If possible, video tape the practice interview so that you can replay it for your own analysis.

Reflect

- How did you feel during the interview?
- What worked well?
- What could you have done better?

Feedback & Observation

- Did the person being interviewed stay on message?
- Did they have 3 talking points?
- Did they have a quotable quote?
- Did they keep their cool?
- How did the interviewee handle difficult questions?

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- What was the interviewee's main message?
- Was the message delivered clearly?
- What strategies did they use?
- Did they illustrate the impact of their program?
- Did they co-brand?
- How do you feel about the image and content of their program?

Building Media Relations: Making It Newsworthy

This segment of the workbook will help you to:

- define the newsworthiness of your programs and event to attract news coverage
- cultivate relationships with reporters, editors and publishers
- pitch your story to various media outlets

Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

The last time your organization tried to get media/press coverage ...

The story you wanted told was about?

The headline you wanted was?

- Did you get the type and extent of coverage you desired?
- If so, why? If not, why not?
- Use the following Newsworthy Checklist to assess your story.

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Newsworthy Checklist

Use this checklist to determine if your story is newsworthy.

Yes/No	Your story is newsworthy when it...
	Is timely.
	Is groundbreaking.
	Is unique.
	Impacts the community and the local economy.
	Is new ... it has never been done before (in the area, in this manner).
	Is trendy.
	Ties in with what is going on (the season, current news).
	Expresses emotions.
	Distributes new data.
	Appeals to a mass audience.
	Other:
	Other:
	Other:

Working with the Media

The “Media” are just individual people doing their job – getting news and information out to the public. They are not experts in every field on which they report ... however, they are experts at determining if the public will be interested in a story. And they are good at locating those who are experts in their fields. You can help them make it easier to locate you!

There is a standard hierarchy in most newsrooms, whether they are radio, television or print. It is important to know how it works, who makes the ultimate decisions and what criteria they use at any given time in the news cycle.

You will be a more effective communicator if you:

- Know the deadlines for press releases and advisories
- Know in which form the reporter prefers getting information
- Know the reporters deadline for filing the story
- Know how the news is decided
- Know the best person to contact
- Know how to pitch a story
- Know what individual reporters are interested in – read their stories
- Always get back to them in a timely manner with the answer to a question
- Always get back to them

The News Media

The news media is an intricate system that is used to inform the public of news: new information, timely and current events, unexpected happenings and random information. Television, radio, and newspapers, the Web, and magazines comprise this network of information distribution. This is a general guide. Find out how your market works, and use this as an opportunity to develop relationships with the key stakeholders and decision makers within each of these media outlets.

Who Reports the News?

There are several types of reporters/players working in the media, including:

Editors: prepare, superintend, and revise a newspaper, magazine, news-related web site, or other periodical, for publication.

News director: directs the flow of a television news department. Reporting to this person are the directors, cameramen, editors, producers, assignment desk personnel and technicians.

News producer: responsible for the flow of an entire television or radio newscast, or a segment of the news program.

Reporters: investigate, write and/or present the news. Many outlets will have a reporter who works on specific topics (e.g. consumer information, financial news) while also having some reporters who are general assignment reporters (all topics).

Television anchors: lead reporters on news broadcasts. If they do story reports, the stories are usually of a larger appeal or may be part of a series.

Radio show hosts, music driven format: host shows, usually during the “drive time” as people go to and come from work. News is often reported during these times and interviews are often conducted.

Radio show hosts, talk driven format: host shows that feature a particular topic. Most radio shows of this type have a call-in component.

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The Story: How a Reporter Gets a Story

By researching everything. In order to be a successful reporter, one must do his/her homework and research. They get information from a variety of sources:

- **News wire services** provide up-to-date information as it happens around the world. The most common: United Press International and Associated Press.
- **Other media outlets, including the competition.** Reporters read newspapers and publications and watch television to receive as much information as possible from as many as possible.
- **The public.** Through calls, letters, press/news releases, media advisories, events, meetings, wire services and more, reporters get much information and many ideas from the general public.

How Newsrooms Operate

A newsroom is the hub for any media outlet. It is a constant buzz of energy, activity and information dissemination. It gets even busier as deadlines, newscasts and show times approach. Most newsrooms operate in similar ways:

- **Assignment desk:** This is the pulse of the newsroom. Most calls are directed here: as people call in with information and as people call in to find out information. Reporters, photographers and others get their assignments here. The assignment desk editor shapes what news gets covered that day and in the future.
- **Morning (afternoon) meetings:** These meetings schedule the newscasts and determine the layout of the newspaper. A group of people - including, reporters, editors, news directors, producers and assignment desk editors, depending on the medium – meet daily to set the course of what will be news. During these meetings, everything from story placement of front page cover stories to the lead-in story (the first story of a newscast) is decided. These decisions are made based on the news – what is hot at the moment – as it is currently known at the time.

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Find a Hook *To Get Your Story Covered*

- Take a look through the newspaper, note topic stories, trends and ads.
- Identify a story which you could use as a “hook” – a link between what you read and a story about your project/initiative that presents another angle. It should:
 - Localize a national/state story.
 - Show how the original story impacts/relates to your community and what your project is doing to solve/address this situation.
 - Provide local human interest.
- Write your story idea and headline below, as well as the hook and how you might pitch it to the media in your area.

Headline	
Story Idea	Hook/Pitch

Communicating with the News Media

You have a story ... you know [think] it is newsworthy ... and you have a hook and strategy for pitching it. What do you do now?

There are a variety of ways to communicate with members of the news media:

- Pitch a story, via letter or phone.
- Send a media advisory.
- Send a news release.
- Host a news conference or briefing.
- Organize a media event.
- Conduct a media tour.

You can do all of those things without knowing a single reporter or editor. However, you will be more successful when you cultivate a relationship with news staffers and decision makers.

Cultivating a Relationship with Editors, Reporters, Producers

Begin by being a news-watcher

Watch. Listen. Read. Take note of how issues are being dealt with, by whom, and in what media. Identify the reporters and media outlets most likely to respond to your news. Become familiar with their approach and style.

This background information is vital to successful contact with members of the media. It provides the basis for building your media list.

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Create a Media List

A media list is essential. Putting it together takes some attention, but you need it to make your work with media successful.

It is very important for your organization to have an up-to-date media list. This is a list that contains the contact information of the media outlets in your area. Your lists should be updated constantly as people often change jobs.

Start by gathering names from by-lines and mastheads in the newspaper (news editors, reporters, photo editors, calendar editors) and credits during newscasts (news directors, producers and assignment editors). Call local stations and publications and ask who would be most interested in the news you have to offer; include regional publications, stations and wire services.

Organize the list by categories of news outlet (and if you cover a large geographic area, by media market). Suggested categories: daily newspapers; weekly newspapers or magazines; monthly or quarterly newspapers or magazines; television news; television public affairs (talk shows and news magazines); news and talk radio; music radio; news services (AP & UPI); and freelance journalists.

Your media list should include:

- Name and type of media outlet (TV station, newspaper, radio station, etc.).
- General contact information: address, telephone, fax number.
- Specific contact information: contact names, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail addresses) of various people such as
 - newspaper editors
 - assignment desk directors
 - public affairs directors at radio and television stations
 - reporters that cover a specific beat (Example: If your organization works to save trees, put the environmental reporter on your list.)

Update your list regularly from the records you keep of media contacts: every telephone call, meeting, conference or interview. (Use the form on the following page to keep such records.)

Media Contact List: Profile Page

Sample

Name:

Title:

Organization:

Type of outlet: Newspaper [] Radio [] TV [] Other: _____

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Deadline:

Preferred mode of contact: Mail [] Fax [] E-mail []

Comments: *If your contact has an administrative assistant, or other gatekeeper, their name, etc. is important.*

History of coverage of our organization/program:

Build Relationships with Individual Reporters

Know the media source you are trying to contact. Treat this relationship as you would any business relationship. Be prepared. Do your homework.

Here are a few tips:

- Watch, read and listen to the news media you are trying to get to cover your organization. Know how they operate.
Notice the types of:
 - Letters to the editor they print.
 - Stories they cover.
 - Items on community calendars.
 - Organizations and events mentioned in the morning drive of radio stations.
- Remember that the news reporters are regular people. When you have an opportunity to speak with them, do not just bombard them with your story. Engage them in a conversation that can be beneficial to you. Your person-to-person relationships with members of the news media are what can help you get the kind of coverage you want.
- Respect reporters' time as they are constantly bombarded with information through mail, e-mail and the phone. Know deadlines *before* you call.
- Do not call (or send a release) unless the information is newsworthy.
- Get copies of their editorial calendars to get an idea of what they want to write about and when it is due.
- Know how they want to receive the information and send it that way (fax, e-mail, snail mail).
- Be an expert in your field when talking to a reporter, not a salesman.

Make the Pitch

Pitching a story is what it sounds like – “throwing” story ideas to the media. It is a way to engage the media and get their interest to do a story. There are two ways to pitch a story: in writing or through a phone call.

Pitch Phone Call

A pitch phone call can be a quick method of pitching a story but beware - you may have less than a minute to speak with someone. Some tips are:

- Practice what you are going to say. Be clear and concise.
- Immediately identify yourself, your organization and the reason for the call.
- Make sure it is a good time to talk. DO NOT CALL near deadlines.
- Describe the idea in about two sentences and the potential interest of the readers/viewers.
- Let the person know that you are familiar with the publication/news station. (Do your homework.)
- Pause to ask if the reporter is interested.
- Regardless of the outcome, always thank the person for their time.
- Set up a definite time to follow-up on the conversation.

A Pitch Letter/E-mail

A letter/e-mail is an effective way of pitching a story to a reporter; it allows you to clearly get your message across without interruptions. It allows the reporter to review the information on his/her own time and will allow for a follow-up phone call. The letter/e-mail:

- Should be brief, one page maximum.
- Does not need to tell the entire story, but should attract interest.
- Should request exactly what it is that you want (e.g., a public service announcement, story coverage, a radio interview).
- Can include an invitation to an upcoming event.
- Can include promotional materials, such as a brochure.
- Should highlight the organization's expertise.

Sample Pitch Phone Conversation

Bob: “Newsroom, Bob Johnson speaking.”

Michelle: “Good afternoon Bob, this is Michelle Jones calling from Good Works to suggest a story idea. Is this a good time to talk?”

Bob: “Yes, but I only have about a minute. Can you make it quick?”

Michelle: “Sure. Bob, I know you cover the metro section and the education community here in Anytown. Good Works is collaborating with Greater Anytown Network in the 3rd ward area to help children improve their reading skills. Children and their parents are working together on neighborhood projects, and the children also get to take part in a fun, engaging reading program. We have teamed with local literacy groups to develop a curriculum that raises children’s skills by one grade in one semester. Your readers might want to know about this unique project that helps kids, their parents and neighborhoods at the same time.”

Bob: “That’s interesting. I’d like to talk about this when I have more time.”

Michelle: When would you like me to call back?

Bob: Can you call back tomorrow morning? I have a window of time between 9:30 and 11:30.”

Michelle: “Sure, I’d be glad to. Thanks for your time.”

Pitch the Story

Using the hook and story idea generated earlier, write some notes below about the potential story and then pair with another person to practice making a brief phone pitch. After the pitch, solicit and receive feedback on what was effective and what you could do to improve the pitch. Then reverse roles.

Brief description of the story idea:

What makes it newsworthy?

Why would the story be of interest to the audience of this particular news outlet?

Pitch Partner Feedback

Did the pitcher...

- Identify himself/herself and the organization?
- Quickly tell you the reason for the call?
- Ask if this was a good time to talk?
- Briefly and clearly describe the idea and its interest to the audience?
- Make the case for the story being news/newsworthy?

The News Release

A news release (also known as a press or media release) is an important tool to communicate your story to the media. It is an effective means of getting your message to reporters, of gaining positive publicity and of providing the public with information.

Some questions to consider to help you evaluate your planned news release:

- Is the story of interest to at least 10 percent of the media outlet's audience?
- Is it timely?
- Does it have a local angle?
- Does it have a human interest angle?

When writing a news release for the media, keep the language simple and direct. Use short, clear sentences, devoid of jargon and hype. Remember to use quotable "bites" of information or short summaries of issues that are easy for both print and electronic reporters to use. Make your most important points first and then emphasize them. Your release needs to grab the reader.

A well written news release:

- Is short, single-sided, one to two pages - no more than 500 words.
- Is on company letterhead.
- Is concise, well written, factual and timely.
- Includes the location and date of the news release.
- Places media contact information in the upper right-hand corner below the company letterhead (name, telephone number, e-mail).
- Contains summary information about your organization.
- Contains one or two quotes.
- Provides a clear description of the news you are trying to communicate, using details and specifics.

Tips for Sending a News Release

- Send to only one person per media outlet. Who is the “sorter?”
- Know the best way to send the information - fax, e-mail, or regular mail.
- Know deadlines.
- Be clear on what you want the reader to know.
- Include a human-interest angle.
- Get the reader to see why “this” is important and why he/she should care.
- Send the release early. Do not send a release the day before an event and expect coverage. Call to find out when the news outlet likes to receive the information.
- Write in a professional manner. Using a journalistic stylebook can be helpful.
- If you have photos/videos available, state that at the bottom of your release.
- You may also want to put a brief background paragraph about your organization at the bottom of the release.
- Check the facts, figures, spelling and grammar in your release. Proofread and edit your release to check that you have kept it short, and written a good headline and lead paragraph.
- Call to follow-up, do not just send.

News Release Guidelines

1. Type the release, double-spaced, with wide margins, on 8 ½ by 11” paper, single sided on organizational letterhead.
2. At the top of the first page, place the name, telephone number and e-mail address of your group’s contact person.
3. List the release date/time in the upper left corner.
The release may be for:
 - IMMEDIATE RELEASE: This is used most of the time, and means that it can be run immediately.
 - FOR RELEASE AFTER (TIME, DATE): This is called an *embargoed* release. It is used when a news conference/event has been planned and the release provides details or information that will be provided at the conference. Time the delivery so that the release will not be received until the morning of your news conference or event.
4. Write a brief headline that tells what your story is about; center it on the page. The headline needs to tell the person reading what the story is about.
5. Put the most important information in the first paragraph – called the lead. It should grab the reader’s attention and cover the 5 Ws and H: Who, What, Where, When, Why and How. It should not be longer than 25 to 30 words.
6. Write the rest of the story in “inverted pyramid” style. The most important information is placed first, followed by information of less importance. Try to make the story precise, clear and interesting to the reader. Include facts, not opinions, and quotations. Avoid jargon. Emphasize what is unique.

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7. Try to keep the release to one page. If it is longer:
 - Type “-MORE-” at the bottom of each page to ensure that the entire release is read. Includes page numbers at the top left of each page.
 - Do not split paragraphs between pages.
 - End with “###” or “-END-” centered at the bottom of the final page.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, October 03, 2008

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Learn & Serve Challenge Spotlights Students As Solutions to Community Problems

Washington, D.C. -- From serving meals and cleaning rivers to tutoring and raising money for cancer research, students across the country will show how they make a difference through service-learning during the National Learn & Serve Challenge the week of October 6 through 12.



Joining under the banner of "Be a Solution," more than 85,000 young people, educators, business leaders, and community partners nationwide will come together to spotlight the ways youth are translating what they learn in the classroom into action to improve their own lives and communities.

The National Learn & Serve Challenge is a concentrated week of activities designed to increase public understanding of service-learning, the federal Learn and Serve America program, and to inspire more communities to launch their own service-learning programs. Nearly 200 events are planned, ranging from service projects and community presentations to service-learning fairs and celebrations. Last month the U.S House [passed a resolution](#) recognizing the benefits of service learning and supporting the National Learn & Serve Challenge, and 14 governors or chief state school officers have issued proclamations.

Service-learning is a hands-on teaching method that engages young people in solving problems within their schools and communities as part of academic work and other out-of-school time activities. Research has demonstrated that service-learning increases academic achievement and student engagement, improves civic attitudes and community involvement, and decreases risky behaviors.

"We know that students who become involved in their communities through organized, intentional service-learning activities experience a range of benefits, from improved academic achievement to the development of a lifelong ethic of civic involvement," said David Eisner, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, which oversees Learn and Serve America. "By shining a spotlight on the great results that these programs have, we hope to inspire more schools and universities to embrace this powerful and proven teaching method."

Nelda Brown, executive director of the National Service-Learning Partnership, commented, "Every day in schools and communities nationwide, young people are daring to make a difference by using the knowledge and skills they learn in school and community-based programs to help solve important community problems. And while serving others, they learn for themselves."

Learn and Serve America is the nation's largest source of support for service-learning. Last year the program supported 1,700 grantees across the country that engaged more than 1.4 million students who served 27.9 million hours with more than 124,000 community partners. The Corporation for National and Community Service also supports service-learning through its other core programs and special initiatives, including the [National Service-Learning Clearinghouse](#) training and curriculum website, the [President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll](#) that recognizes outstanding colleges for their service commitments, and the [Bring Learning to Life](#) television PSA campaign.

The Challenge supports the federal goal to engage 5 million college students serving and ensure that 50 percent of America's K-12 schools incorporate service-learning into their curricula by 2010. For more information and to find local Challenge events and activities, visit: <http://www.learnandservechallenge.org>.

The Learn & Serve Challenge is a signature event of the National Service-Learning Partnership, made possible with support from the State Farm® Companies Foundation. Lead Organizing Partners include: SEANet - the State Education Agency K-12 Service-Learning Network, America's Promise Alliance, Camp Fire USA, Campus Compact, the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, National Youth Leadership Council, and Youth Service America.

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For a list of activities during the week, visit <http://www.learnandservechallenge.org>. Among the events are:

- **St. John the Baptist Elementary (St. Louis, MO):** In October students will begin a year-long partnership with the naturalists at Forest Park Forever to restore an area to native prairie grasses. Students are planting and weeding as they learn about native prairie grasses and their impact on the environment. In addition, students are participating in a pollination study where they gather data on the different kinds of pollinators, particularly bees, in this restored prairie area.
- **State Farm - Austin, Texas Operations Center:** State Farm is hosting two Learn & Serve Challenge week events: An employee Lunch & Learn workshop to teach employees what service-learning is and how to apply for service-learning grants. There is also an exhibit style event showcasing service-learning winners and participants from local schools for employees to see and learn from as well as announce new grant winners.
- **University of Maine at Farmington:** Environmental sustainability is part of the mission statement for University of Maine at Farmington. Pre-service teachers are doing a service-learning project that focuses on sustainability. They work with the Department of Environmental Protection and Agriculture in the Schools Consortium. With the information and activities that students receive from these partners and their own creativity, they develop lessons and activities to share in the local elementary and middle schools. The visit to the elementary and middle school classrooms is followed by students providing a guided tour of the LEEDS Certified Education Center.
- **Annual Convening of Service-Learning Leaders (Baltimore, MD):** At the invitation of state school superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick, local service-learning leaders, including central office staff and teachers, are meeting for the Annual Convening of Service-Learning Leaders to explore and share new and effective strategies for service-learning implementation. Maryland requires public school students to engage in service-learning as a condition of graduation.
- **Gonzaga University (Spokane, WA):** Gonzaga University students will participate in the October 4th Annual Spokane River Clean-up. They will be picking up trash on a section of the river adjacent to campus. Over 500 Spokane citizens help with the Clean-up every year. Staff and some student volunteers will act as group leaders during this event. During the week that follows, we will offer Gonzaga student volunteers an opportunity to reflect on their experience and tie it back to the University's selected theme of the year "Water."

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Each year, the Corporation engages four million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs. For more information, visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

###

Checklist for News Releases

Yes or No

- _____ Is the contact person's (at your organization) name/phone number listed at the top of the release?
- _____ Is the release dated and marked "For Immediate Release" or "Embargoed Until (Specific date)?"
- _____ Is the topic newsworthy?
- _____ Does it answer the questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
- _____ Does it have a headline that catches the reader's attention and summarizes the story?
- _____ Is it double-spaced?
- _____ Have you quoted your organization's spokesperson and cleared the quote in advance?
- _____ Have you checked the grammar and the spelling [including names]?
- _____ If you did not know about this event/topic, would reading this release interest you? If not, re-write it.
- _____ If photo opportunities or special visuals are available, are they mentioned?

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The Media Advisory

Sometimes a news release is too much or too formal; a news release should only be used to announce something newsworthy. For other types of information, it is better to write a media advisory or calendar notice. The media advisory is similar to a release in its purpose - to communicate your story. It is sent to inform the media of an event. It not only covers the basic questions of journalism, it is written in a fashion to clearly convey the information.

Sample Media Advisory

Media Advisory
April 1, 2001
Contact: P.R. Person
123.456.7890
prperson@goodworks.com

SUMMER DAY CAMP OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEENS

What: Teen GoodWorks Summer Day Camp

Where: GoodWorks Station
123 East Lane
(123) 456-7890

When: Two-week sessions beginning June 1
Full day sessions run 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Cost: No cost; qualifying teens will be paid a stipend

GoodWorks, Inc. and the Greater Anytown Network present Teen GoodWorks, a hands-on summer day camp now in its 5th year. Teen GoodWorks offers teens, ages 13-18, an opportunity to work with other teens to improve Anytown neighborhoods, and have fun while doing it.

Participants learn about themselves and their neighborhood, through activities, learning games, arts and crafts and visits to area museums. The group then completes a community works project in their neighborhood. Teens are paid a stipend at the end of the completed project.

Teams of teens are forming now. For more information, call GoodWorks at 123-456-7890.

Your neighborhood. Your chance to make it better .

News Conferences and Briefings

When many people think of getting publicity, what they think of is having a news conference.

Most times, a news conference is not the most appropriate way to get media attention – it's often better to pitch a story, send news release, or stage another kind of event. News conferences should be held only when your organization is putting forth its most newsworthy information which requires an exchange between your organization and more than one media contact/outlet.

A news conference may be the right approach if you expect significant coverage, if you have a breaking announcement or information to present, if you need to respond to a fast-breaking story, or when you want to take advantage of the presence of a celebrity.

The most important questions to answer before scheduling a news conference:

- Can you offer something in person that can't be offered in a news release?
- Do you have a real news story?
- Is the news value sufficient to not waste journalists' time?
- Is the time and effort required for you to organize the conference worth it?

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Here are some tips for holding a news conference:

- Send a news release about one week in advance, if there is time. If it is breaking news, call media contacts, fax or hand deliver an announcement. The announcement should describe what the event is about, where and when it is to be held, who the speakers will be and who the contact person is.
- Keep it brief. Plan for a maximum of four speakers.
- Schedule it at a convenient time – early in the day to meet the deadlines of afternoon papers and evening news.
- Make sure other similar events are not being held on the same day.
- Have a media kit available (news releases, fact sheets, speaker bios and statements and other background material).
- Select a location that is convenient to members of the media that is equipped to accommodate television camera crews and photographers that has good story related visuals and that is large enough for expected attendance.
- Plan an attractive visual scene. Use posters, banners or project t-shirts if available.
- Select credible, competent spokespersons. Each should understand the major political and social aspects of your program.
- Formalize the order of speakers and their “talking points.” Put the most important speakers first. Walk through the media conference and practice. Anticipate the questions that reporters will have.
- Contact friends and supporters in order to have the seats filled in the room.
- Have someone serve as event host/MC.

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The morning of the news conference:

- Call all media contacts to remind them of the event.
- Double check the room, and walk through the conference with the speakers.
- Make certain the room location is clearly marked by signs.

The conference:

- Start on time and end on time. The event should not last more than 45 minutes.
- At the news conference, ask members of the media to sign in. If important newspapers or broadcast stations are not represented, hand deliver media kits later that day.
- Give each media representative a media kit.
- Remember that photographers often arrive early to shoot candid photos.

Advising the Media

Review the following scenarios to decide whether you should send just a news release, a media advisory or hold a press conference.

An independent research group has just finished a report that shows that the Good Works projects in the Midtown Neighborhood had a significant impact, leveraging an average of \$10 million dollars in new development or construction. Because of Good Works, new businesses located, jobs were created and a new branch of the Anytown Library was constructed in Midtown.

- Would you send a news release or a media advisory?
- Would you call a press conference?
- Why?

The Good Works project is sponsoring a luncheon for businesses in and surrounding the Pietown Neighborhood in Anytown. Good Works is just beginning to work in the neighborhood and is hosting the luncheon to familiarize area businesses with the project.

- Would you send a news release or a media advisory?
- Would you call a press conference?
- Why?

Denzel Washington and rapper LL Cool J – both of whom were born and raised in Anytown – will be visiting the Teen Good Works Summer Day Camp, to kick off the summer program.

- Would you send a news release or a media advisory?
- Would you call a press conference?
- Why?

Ways to Get the Word Out *At No Cost to You*

Letter to the Editor

A short response from a reader is a very low cost method of getting your message across to your audience while building your public profile. Your letter to the editor should:

- Be short and specific - generally a maximum of 250 words, 150 words ideal.
- Be timely - respond in 2-3 days from when the article appeared or the event occurred.
- Be about a single subject.
- Not be mean or abusive, although it may be passionate.
- Start with a statement about your specific position, followed by evidence using facts and figures when possible.
- Include contact information.
- Make reference to the newspaper. (List the name of the article and the date published.) Note: while some papers print general comments, others will only print letters that refer to a specific article in its publication.

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Public Speaking and Article Writing

Have staff, board members or volunteers speak at various community events, or write articles; these are great ways of spreading your message, while establishing your organization as an expert in the field.

Guest opinions

Commonly known as Op/Ed pieces, these articles can be submitted by the public to give an opinion “opposite of the editorial page.” These articles can be longer than letters to the editor. Op/Ed articles should:

- Not exceed 750 words.
- Show local angle.
- Be written on a controversial topic.
- Not be sent to multiple newspapers in the same market.
- Use the same style recommendations as a letter to the editor.

Community calendars

Community calendars are a great tool to publicize upcoming events or specific needs (i.e., a call for volunteers). Calendars can be found on television and radio, in the newspapers and on the Internet. Calendar submissions should include specifics of the event/request - time, date, cost, location, type of volunteers needed, items to be donated. You can use media advisory format, changing the title of the page to “Event Notice” or “Calendar Listing.”

Get to know reporters

By being active in the community, responsible in your communications, concise in your message delivery and persistent (not pesky), establish relationships with reporters to set yourself up as an expert when an opinion or insight is needed in your field. They will then come to you seeking stories. Remember: they need stories as much as you need to get your story out.

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Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

PSAs are free “commercials” for non-profits offered by television and radio stations. PSAs can be used to bring awareness to an organization’s work or to an upcoming special event. As always, contact the station for specific requirements, but generally PSAs should:

- Be brief, concise and catchy.
- Be submitted as a written script in the form of 10, 15, or 30-second spots.
- Be typed, double-spaced in CAPS.
- Be in correct format. Check to see if a pre-recorded spot is necessary or if the station will accept a live-copy script which they will then produce.

Sample PSA

Service Learning: Bringing Learning to Life :60 second script

ACROSS AMERICA, SERVICE-LEARNING IS HELPING STUDENTS IMPROVE THEIR GRADES, AND THEIR COMMUNITIES.

SERVICE-LEARNING MAKES SCHOOL EXCITING BY CONNECTING THE CLASSROOM WITH COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS.

BEFORE SERVICE-LEARNING I WAS JUST AN ORDINARY STUDENT SERVICE-LEARNING ABSOLUTELY DRIVES ACADEMIC SUCCESS.

WORKING TOGETHER, STUDENTS SOLVE REAL PROBLEMS AND APPLY THEIR KNOWLEDGE IN A WHOLE NEW WAY.

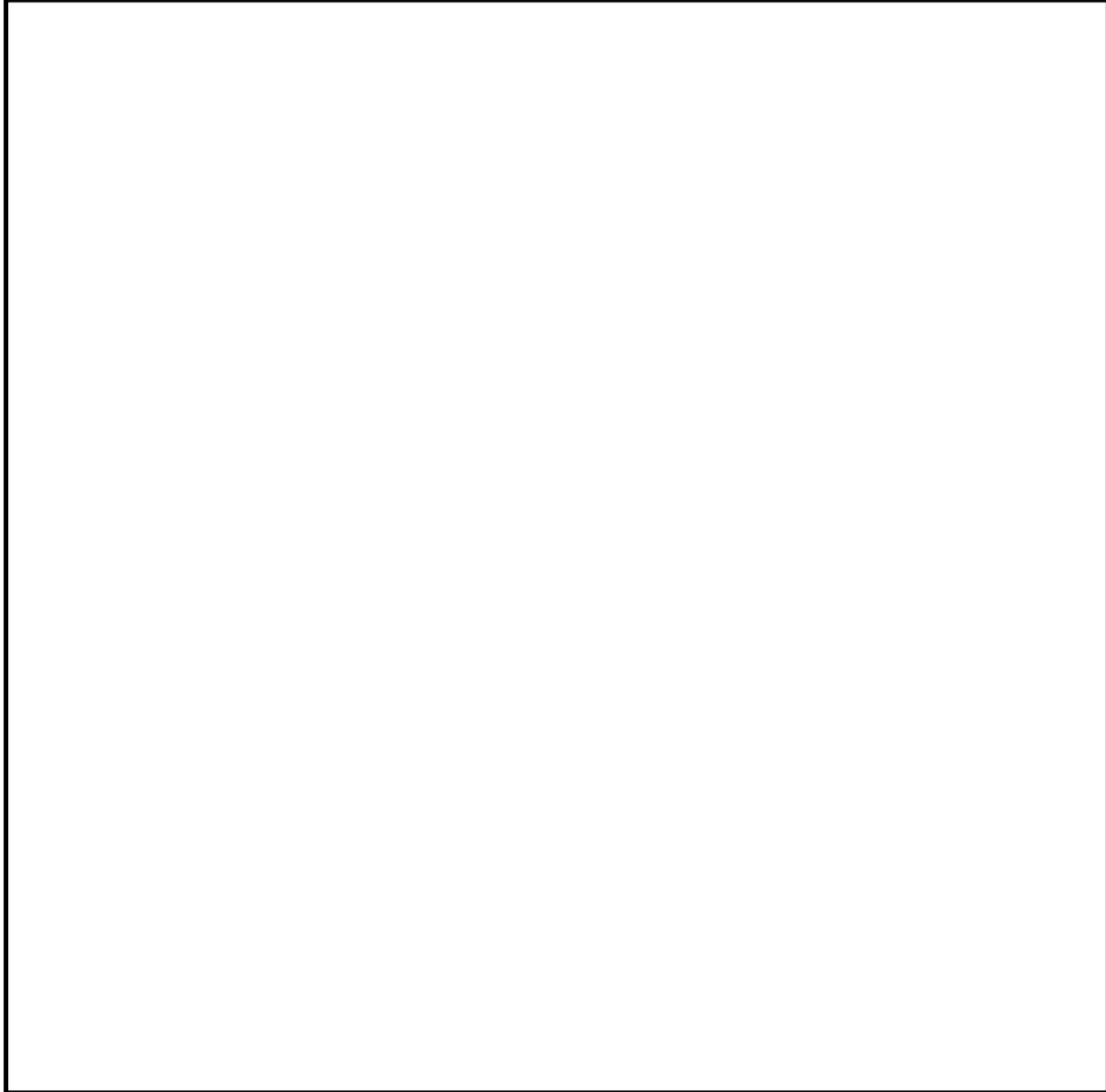
THE GREAT THING ABOUT SERVICE-LEARNING IS, IT GIVES YOU THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GO OUT INTO THE WORLD AND DO THINGS HANDS ON.

INSIDE THE CLASSROOM AND OUT SERVICE-LEARNING CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR SCHOOL.

###

Get Writing

Draft a letter to the editor to promote your project ... using the newspaper article you identified earlier as the bridge. Share your letter with another participant and solicit feedback.



Other Ways to Get the Word Out *That Cost You*

Advertising

- Traditional method of getting your message to others.
- Can be costly.
- Best when research is done to make sure you are using the most cost effective method and most compelling message to reach your audience.

Use of television, radio and newspaper advertising

- Television
 - Can reach a large mass of people.
 - Allows your message to leave an active, visual impression.
 - Can be costly — most organizations will only be able to afford time slots when viewing is low (i.e., overnight).
 - Costs are also associated with the production of the commercial.
- Radio
 - Can reach a large mass of people.
(*Statistically, talk shows during drive-time reach the most.*)
 - Allows your message to be heard in the manner of your choosing.
 - Airtime can be costly, but not as expensive as television.
- Newspaper
 - Can reach a large mass of people.
 - Potentially has a longer life span in the minds of the audience in that they can clip an advertisement.
 - Can be affordable depending on the type of newspaper publication and the placement of the ad (i.e., the back page of section 1 of a major newspaper will exceed the budgets of almost all organizations, while a small ad in a neighborhood journal can be affordable).

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Promotional Materials

Promotional materials can be an effective means of getting your message across and in the hands of your audience. With today's technology, many of these items can be produced in-house to keep cost down.

- **Brochures:** Great for passing out useful information in a succinct and portable manner.
- **E-newsletter:** Keeps stakeholders informed, links well to updating your "ask" for volunteers and in-kind resources.
- **Posters:** Attention grabbing. Can be used to draw attention to the organization, especially a special event.
- **Annual reports:** A wonderful tool to highlight the organization's accomplishment over the past year while acknowledging donors.
- **Direct mail:** Gets your message in the homes of the audience. Large direct mailings can be costly and can run the risk of being lumped with "junk mail."
- **T-shirts:** Serve as a walking billboard to get your message across.
- **Magnets, pens, mugs, and more:** Can be a very cheap method to get a specific item or idea across to the reader such as a slogan or a phone number. These items are effective because they can actually be used in the day-to-day lives of the audience.

Working with the Media: Points to Remember

- Although busy, reporters are people just like you. Don't be intimidated.
- Focus on your organization and your goals.
- Before contacting the media, make sure what you have to share is newsworthy.
- **PROOFREAD!!!!!!** You want to make a good impression for your organization, setting the tone that it is an expert in its field.
- Do your homework and research. Know ...
 - Deadlines.
 - The stories which are covered by particular stations/publications.
 - The proper person to contact.
 - The guidelines and format in which information needs to be received.
 - How the person wishes to receive the information (snail mail, fax, e-mail).
- Be pro-active. Offer story ideas.
- Call to follow-up. Be persistent, but not pesky. One call can be enough.
- Be able to clearly and succinctly articulate your message in the event you call a reporter or an interested reporter calls you.
- When writing or calling, include the important facts first. Exclude superfluous information, jargon and hype.
- Become a supplier of well-prepared releases and of information backed by quick and accurate service.
- Say "thank you," write thank you notes. Cultivate and appreciate!

Resources for Telling Your Story

- Learn and Serve Youth Speaker's Bureau
- Preparing Young People for Public Speaking
- Preparing Youth Who Speak to the Media
- Bringing Learning to Life: Service Learning in Action
- Bringing Learning to Life: Guide for parents (also available in Spanish)
- K-12 Research
- Higher Education Research
- Making the Case for Service Learning
- Bringing Learning to Life PSAs (1 min/30 sec.)
- Bringing Learning to Life material brochure

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Youth Speakers Bureaus

In 2007, Learn and Serve America established a National Youth Speakers Bureau to support youth who speak publicly about the positive effects service-learning can have on youth, institutions, and communities.

All Learn and Serve America Grantees are encouraged to support youth as leaders and speakers to help get the word out about your successful service-learning activities through authentic youth voice!

WHAT IS A YOUTH SPEAKERS BUREAU?

A cadre of committed and articulate young people, aged 13-25, who are able to make strong and effective presentations to business, governmental, school and other community groups.

WHY A YOUTH SPEAKERS BUREAU?

- The community gains awareness of the contributions young people are making towards the well-being of the community.
- Young people gain skills and confidence in public speaking, presenting, writing, organizing, use of technology, researching, project planning, teamwork, etc.
- Learn and Serve America, grantees, sub-grantees, partnering organizations, and service-learning in general gain increased visibility and a broader base of support.

- "What and Why" adapted from *Community Matters* www.commmatters.org/youth/speakbu.htm

HOW CAN STAFF AND TEACHERS SUPPORT YOUTH SPEAKERS?

It is very important for youth to be supported, encouraged and mentored by adults. It is equally important for youth to have a truly active role so they don't feel tokenized. Staff and teachers can support youth speakers by:

- Providing any needed training related to speaking and working with the media, etc.
- Supporting youth in planning and documenting appropriate speaking engagements, including introducing youth to community leaders and "brokering" any speaking invitations and media interviews
- Providing youth with resource materials and information as needed and venues (meetings, calls, social networking sites) to exchange ideas, brainstorm and reflect
- When possible, providing the funding and chaperoning for youth to travel to conferences and events

ARE THERE EXISTING YOUTH SPEAKERS BUREAUS?

Yes! Several Learn and Serve America Grantees and sub-grantees already operate Youth Speakers Bureaus or other youth leadership programs, often called Youth Advisory Councils. For example:

- The Michigan Community Service Commission operates the Service-Learning Youth Council (SLYC). SLYC members work with the Learn and Serve team at the MCSC to further public support for service-learning in schools and communities across Michigan.
- CalServe (Learn and Serve CA) and its sub-grantee, Youth Service California sponsor CATALYST (California Taking Action for Learning through Youth Service Teams) a statewide network of high school leaders who promote youth service at the local, regional, and state level.
- The Richland School District (a sub-grantee of the South Carolina Dept of Ed Learn and Serve) operates the Richland Two Youth Action Council to promote youth-directed civic engagement through a service learning framework.
- To learn more about Learn and Serve America's National Youth Speakers Bureau, flip the page!

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFO ABOUT YOUTH SPEAKERS BUREAUS?

- To learn more about the programs listed above and to gain ideas and resources for establishing your own Youth Speakers Bureau, visit the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse's webpage: Hot Topic: Youth Speakers Bureaus and Youth Advisory Councils http://www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/hot_topics/ysb/index.php

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The Learn and Serve America National Youth Speakers Bureau

PURPOSE

The national Learn and Serve America Youth Speakers Bureau (YSB) promotes youth voice within Learn and Serve and provides youth with an opportunity to speak publicly about the positive effects service-learning can have on youth, institutions, and communities.

BACKGROUND

An Affinity Group of interested Learn and Serve America staff, grantee Program Directors and students was formed at the 2006 National Grantee Meeting. During the 2006-2007 program year, this Affinity Group developed all aspects of the YSB and identified the first cohort of 11 YSB participants.

Beginning with an orientation conference call, the YSB commenced in September 2007. Throughout the school year, the 11 youth communicated via monthly conference calls, via email and through the Ning social networking site established solely for the YSB. With support from their "Grantee Mentors," youth participants logged their local speaking engagements and occasional media interviews on the Ning site and had the opportunity to present a workshop together at the 2008 National Service Learning Conference in Minneapolis.

2007-2008 LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA YSB PARTICIPANTS

NOTE: Some participants have graduated and are now attending new schools



Koral Heinzman, 16 Eureka High School, Eureka, CA



Emily Henderson, 14 Raymond School, Raymond, WI



Chelsea Merriman, 21, Otterbein College, Westerville, OH



Erica Nance, 17, Memorial High School, Eau Claire, WI



Doris Rodriguez, 17, McDermitt Combined School, McDermitt, NV



Mason Waldvogel, 16, Inola High School, Inola, OK



Kadi Walusay, 14, Raymond School, Raymond, WI



Brady Walker, 22, University of Maryland, Baltimore County



Ella Kate Wagner, 16, Belding High School, Belding, MI



Hanna Poffenbarger, 19, University of Maryland, College Park



Joe Ramirez, 19, Campfire USA Heartland Council, Kansas City, KS

EXAMPLES OF YSB PARTICIPANTS' SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS IN 2007-2008

These are just a few examples out of more than 30 speaking engagements logged by the YSB!

- **Doris Rodriguez** presented information about Learn and Serve and her service-learning involvement to 50 members of the Fort McDermitt Reservation's Tribal Council.
- **Mason Waldvogel** was interviewed by the local news station about Inola High School's Outdoor Classroom Learn and Serve project.
- **Kadi Walusay and Emily Henderson** presented information about the Raymond School's service-learning projects at a K-12 School Administrators' Meeting in Kenosha, WI.

If you know a youth who would like to be a part of the Learn and Serve America National Youth Speakers Bureau, please contact Emily Samose Esamose@cns.gov



Preparing Young People for Public Speaking

FROM THE
YOUTH SERVICE
AMERICA
TOOLBOX

5
4
3
2
1

When asked, adults often mention that developing strong public speaking skills was the most important skill that they gained from being involved as a young person in a service organization. Engaging youth as spokespeople for your event or your organization is a great way to encourage young people within your organization to practice their public speaking skills and promote the benefits of youth service to the media. To support this young person's involvement as a spokesperson and to insure that their public speaking experience is a positive one, YSA has compiled a variety of resources that you can use to educate your youth spokesperson about their role in your organization as well as provide them advice about how to speak clearly and overcome the nerves that they often experience when speaking in public.

Many of these resources come from our National Youth Service Day National Partners, and we encourage you to contact them directly for more information about their materials.

Michigan 4-H – The Communications Toolkit: The Communications Toolkit is designed for individuals who work with young people ages 12 and up and who want fun, easy and meaningful communication activities to use with clubs, classrooms, camps, after-school programs and other settings where kids come together. In the toolkit you will find background information for group leaders, skill sheets with tips and basic information, group icebreakers, hands-on activities, handouts and other resources that will help kids build on their skills in several key areas. <http://www.msue.msu.edu/cyf/youth/toolkit.html#Written>

Houghton Mifflin's Communication Resource Center for Students: They have a great set of Public Speaking quizzes that could aid in preparing your young person for their media relations role. www.college.hmco.com/communication/resources/students/public/ace.html

YMCA - California YMCA Youth & Government: http://www.calymca.org/y&g/delegateguide/howto_speak.shtml

Youth Ambassadors for Peace: <http://www.freethechildren.org/peace/resources/speaking.html>

Youth Leadership Institute: Based out of San Francisco, YLI offers workshops and information on Public Policy and Advocacy. www.yli.org

Youth Activism Project: They have a great resource list of books and other publications that infuse youth into community. www.youthactivism.com

Student PIRGS: Contact your Student PIRG group in their state/community a part of their work is to go through public speaking trainings, and someone may be willing to help train your youth representatives. <http://www.studentpirgs.org/>

There is no better way to promote how valuable youth are to your organization and your service project than by encouraging them to speak up when approached by the press. With a little preparation, their public speaking experiences will enhance their confidence and will create a youth with a passion for promoting the importance of youth voice within your organization and across America.



Preparing Youth who Speak to the Media

Speaking to the media for the first time can be a scary experience. This tip sheet should help you feel well prepared for your first conversation with a reporter covering your involvement and your organization's activities for National Youth Service Day. Reporters are most interested in learning more about you and why you are involved in service, so they can highlight your efforts and the activities of your organization in their newspaper, website, TV, or radio broadcast.

BE PREPARED:

Often media will ask you a variety of questions that you will want to be prepared to answer. Those questions often are:

1. What you have learned from your volunteer experience?
2. When did you first get involved in (x activity, x organization)?
3. How does it feel when you are involved in service to your community?

You might want to visit our website (www.ysa.org/nysd) so that you are prepared to answer the reporter's questions about National Youth Service Day. You'll find a lot of information that will be helpful in our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

REMEMBER TO:

1. Make your description of the event colorful and visual
2. Talk about how you recruited volunteers from different communities within your city
3. Make sure you have the important details about your event ready to add to the conversation (such as location of kickoff, how people can get involved, VIPs invited or attending, etc.)
4. Make sure to mention that **the year of the National Youth Service Day celebration** and nationally it is a chance to encourage youth to identify and address their community needs through service, recruit the next generation of volunteers, and celebrate the great contributions that youth make to their communities year round and the national movement of youth engaged in service projects across the country.
5. Keep it positive. If a member of the media asks you a negative question, respond briefly and politely and then continue to explain why you are excited about your project.
6. Be excited. Speak with enthusiasm about your project, your organization, your ongoing volunteer work and the issues you care about.

Talking to the media can be fun if you are prepared with the type of questions they normally ask and with a mental list of the things you want to remember to tell the reporter (even if they don't ask). Most importantly, SMILE, *relax* and have a good time talking to the reporter. By the end of National Youth Service Day celebrations, you will be an old pro at talking to the media!

NOTE: See Tip Sheet "What is National Youth Service Day?" for additional information

TIP SHEET



BRING LEARNING TO LIFE: SERVICE-LEARNING IN ACTION

SERVICE-LEARNING IN ACTION is designed for teachers who are integrating service-learning into their classrooms to strengthen and enhance academic development. This resource may also be helpful for the application of service-learning in less formal educational environments such as after-school programs and youth groups. In these settings, staff find meaningful opportunities to infuse the experience of helping in the community with an acknowledgment of what is also being learned.

Simply put, service-learning connects the academic curriculum with the inherent caring and concern young people have for their world—whether on their school campus, at a local food bank, or in a distant rainforest. Results are memorable lifelong lessons for students that foster a stronger society for us all. When this becomes part of a school culture repeated in a variety of classes affording a range of experiences and opportunities, students gain the intrinsic motivation to participate in community. With service-learning, students become emerging leaders, as teachers engage and involve them in developing plans and ideas that they transform into action.

Can teachers meet academic standards through service-learning? Absolutely. Academics become relevant as students develop and practice skills through research, social analysis, reading fiction and nonfiction, interviewing, documenting, and otherwise applying content knowledge in a real life context. Along with the external change made by reading aloud to children, assembling food packages for hurricane evacuees, restoring a wetland – students change. They collaborate with others, experience persistence, learn responsibility, and participate in civic life. This occurs when learning and service connect, and the teacher is the model of this process.



When service-learning is applied with structured intent that connects classroom content, literature, and skills to community needs, students:

- apply academic, social, and personal skills to improve the community
- make decisions that have real, not hypothetical, results
- grow as individuals, gain respect for peers, and increase civic participation
- Develop an appreciation of school and the value of an education
- experience success no matter what their academic ability level
- gain a deeper understanding of themselves, their community, and society
- develop as leaders who take initiative, solve problems, work as a team, and demonstrate their abilities while and through helping others.

These important and documented academic and social results have helped validate service-learning as valuable, respected, and widely employed in K-12 classrooms. Service-learning can be

defined as a teaching method where guided or classroom learning is deepened through service to others in a process that provides structured time for reflection on the service experience and demonstration of the skills and knowledge required. As John Dewey said, “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”



RESOURCES: This guide to the basics of service-learning for K-12 practitioners is a companion piece to the Learn and Serve America video, *Bring Learning to Life*. Across America, service-learning is helping students perform better in school while improving their communities through service. By connecting classroom lessons with community service projects, service-learning engages students and brings learning to life! Learn and Serve America is a program of the federal agency the Corporation for National and Community Service. Created by Congress and the President to promote service-learning, Learn and Serve America engages more than one million young people from kindergarten through college and is the largest supporter of service-learning in the United States. To obtain a copy of the video, *Bring Learning to Life*, or to find out more about service-learning, contact Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse toll-free at 1-866-245-SERV (7378) or visit www.servicelearning.org.

THE FOUR STAGES OF SERVICE-LEARNING

PREPARATION

With guidance from their teacher, students:

- ⊙ identify a need.
- ⊙ draw upon previously acquired skills and knowledge.
- ⊙ acquire new information through a variety of means and methods.
- ⊙ analyze the underlying problem.
- ⊙ collaborate with community partners.
- ⊙ develop a plan that encourages responsibility.
- ⊙ recognize the integration of service and learning.
- ⊙ become ready to provide meaningful service.
- ⊙ define realistic parameters for implementation.

ACTION

Through direct service, indirect service, research, or advocacy, students take action that:

- ⊙ has value, purpose, and meaning.
- ⊙ uses previously learned and newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.
- ⊙ offers unique learning experiences.
- ⊙ has real consequences.
- ⊙ offers a safe environment to learn, to make mistakes, and to succeed.

REFLECTION

During systematic reflection, the teacher or students guide the process using various modalities, such as role play, discussion, and journal writing. Participating students:

- ⊙ describe what happened.
- ⊙ examine the difference it made.
- ⊙ discuss thoughts and feelings.
- ⊙ place experience in a larger context.
- ⊙ consider project improvements.
- ⊙ generate ideas.
- ⊙ identify questions.
- ⊙ receive feedback.

DEMONSTRATION

Students demonstrate skills, insights, and outcomes to an outside group. Methods used might include:

- ⊙ reporting to peers, faculty, parents, and/or community members.
- ⊙ writing articles or letters to local newspapers regarding issues of public concern.
- ⊙ creating a publication or Web site that helps others to learn from the students' experiences.
- ⊙ making presentations and performances.
- ⊙ creating visual art forms, such as murals.



For more information, contact Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.servicelearning.org

SERVICE-LEARNING: KNOWING THE TERMS

Service to others takes many forms and has many names and connotations. In a school context, examining different types of service helps to clarify and define service-learning as a teaching method.

- ⊙ **Volunteer:** One who contributes time without pay.
- ⊙ **Community service:** Helping the community by choice or through court requirement; may or may not be associated with academics, curriculum, or reflection.
- ⊙ **Service-learning:** A teaching method that:
 - enables students to learn and apply academic, social, and personal skills to improve the community, continue individual growth, and develop a lifelong ethic of service.
 - focuses on both the service and the learning.
 - is appropriate for all students and all curricular areas.
 - encourages cross-curricular integration.
 - helps foster civic responsibility.
 - provides students with structured time to reflect on the service experience.

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING

INTEGRATED LEARNING

Students **learn** skills and content through varied modalities; the service informs the content, and the content informs the service.

MEETING GENUINE NEEDS

Students **identify** and **learn about a recognized community need**. Student actions are **valued** by the community and have **real consequences** while offering opportunities to **apply** newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.

YOUTH VOICE AND CHOICE

Students experience **significant age-appropriate challenges** involving tasks that require thinking, initiative, and problem solving as they demonstrate **responsibility** and **decision making** in an environment safe enough to allow them to make mistakes and to succeed.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Students participate in the development of **partnerships** and **share responsibility** with community members, parents, organizations, and other students. These relationships afford **opportunities to interact** with people of diverse backgrounds and experience, resulting in mutual respect, understanding, and appreciation.

RECIPROCITY

Student benefits evolve through **mutual teaching and learning, action, or influence** between all participants in the learning and service experience; this reciprocity extends to relationships between institutions as well as relationships between people.

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

When young people have a role in improving society, working for social justice, and caring for the environment, then they truly understand the **concept of democracy**. Students recognize how participation and the ability to respond to authentic needs improves the quality of life in the community, which may lead to a lifelong **ethic of service and civic engagement**.



For more information, contact Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.servicelearning.org

BENEFITS OF SERVICE-LEARNING

Who benefits from service-learning? Students, teachers, the school population as a whole, and the community benefit from well-designed service-learning programs. Benefits vary depending on program implementation and on what occurs through preparation, action, reflection, and demonstration. These lists have been compiled by school and community stakeholders based on their service-learning experiences.

THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMS:

STUDENTS MAY:

- ⊙ increase motivation and desire to learn.
- ⊙ think critically, make decisions, and solve problems.
- ⊙ improve academic knowledge and performance, including writing and communication skills.
- ⊙ cultivate responsibility and self-perception.
- ⊙ develop ability to work well with others.
- ⊙ experience reciprocity.
- ⊙ replace stereotypes with respect for others.
- ⊙ interact with adults who have different roles in society.
- ⊙ be exposed to careers options including public service.
- ⊙ become more knowledgeable about community re-sources available for them and their families.
- ⊙ experience civic responsibility.
- ⊙ begin to develop a lifelong commitment to public service and learning.

TEACHERS MAY:

- ⊙ observe students' enthusiasm for learning.
- ⊙ improve communication and understanding among students.
- ⊙ increase the relevancy of education for students.
- ⊙ develop curriculum through collaboration with other teachers and community partners.
- ⊙ learn about many different community organizations and how they serve the populace.
- ⊙ identify resources to enhance educational opportunities for students.
- ⊙ bring the classroom and community together.
- ⊙ feel inspired professionally and personally.
- ⊙ participate in professional development and become mentors for other teachers.

SCHOOLS CAN:

- ⊙ combine academic development with civic and social responsibility.
- ⊙ strengthen career outreach programs.
- ⊙ develop community partnerships.
- ⊙ publicize educational opportunities available for students.
- ⊙ involve more parents.
- ⊙ give students a sense of the practical importance of what they are learning.
- ⊙ develop a more inclusive, cooperative school climate and culture.
- ⊙ invite students to become active community members.
- ⊙ increase confidence in the school system.
- ⊙ improve public relations.

COMMUNITIES CAN:

- ⊙ increase resources to address problems and concerns.
- ⊙ lend expertise in a particular issue area.
- ⊙ become more knowledgeable about school programs and needs.
- ⊙ collaborate in planning service-learning projects.
- ⊙ participate in student learning.
- ⊙ publicly acknowledge the contributions of young people.



For more information, contact Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.servicelearning.org

ESTABLISHING CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS: POINTS OF ENTRY

1. IDENTIFY AN EXISTING PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY TO TRANSFORM INTO AUTHENTIC SERVICE-LEARNING.

- ⊙ Select an activity or project already existing on campus.
- ⊙ Examine it for cross-curricular learning opportunities that meet or enhance academic standards.
- ⊙ Exchange resources and ideas with teachers, students, and community partners.

Example, Canned Food Drive: Before students brought in cans of food, classroom activities included studying nutrition, visiting the receiving agency to identify needed foods, and reading related literature. Students led peer discussions of social issues, replacing stereotypes with an understanding of hunger in their community. Graphs of food collected and articles on impact and continued need were printed in school and community newspapers.

2. BEGIN WITH STANDARD CURRICULUM, CONTENT, AND SKILLS, AND FIND THE NATURAL EXTENSION INTO SERVICE.

- ⊙ Identify the specific content and skill areas to be addressed.
- ⊙ Select an area of emphasis that supports or adds to classroom learning and addresses learning standards.
- ⊙ Look for additional learning opportunities in other subject areas.

Example, Learning History through Discussion with Elder Partners: To be better informed about current events and improve listening and communication skills, students met weekly with elders at a senior center. Shared experiences included studying news events, learning about aging, interviewing, collaborating on oral histories and photo essays, and displaying results in the school and public library.

3. FROM A THEME OR UNIT OF STUDY, IDENTIFY CONTENT AND SKILL CONNECTIONS.

- ⊙ Begin with a broad theme or topic, often with obvious service implications.
- ⊙ Identify specific content and skill areas.
- ⊙ Select a service application.

Example, The Individual's Role in Society: While learning about the individual's role in society, teachers encouraged students to consider options for civic participation. Curriculum included reading nonfiction stories of adults and young people contributing to their communities, researching local agency needs, providing regular assistance to an agency, and publishing an informative pamphlet on the agency for young people.

4. START WITH A STUDENT-IDENTIFIED NEED.

- ⊙ Identify student skills, talents, and interests.
- ⊙ Students define a problem, a need, and solutions.
- ⊙ Students lead implementation as teacher facilitates, adding learning opportunities.

Example, Transform an Empty Lot into a Community Garden: A student initiated a conversation about starting a community garden in an empty lot near school. With teacher guidance, academic standards were met as students communicated with a government agency regarding property use, conducted Internet research to find funding sources, partnered with special needs youth to maintain the garden, and donated the harvest to a local shelter.

5. START WITH A COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED NEED.

- ⊙ Community requests assistance, perhaps through an agency that has worked with the school before.
- ⊙ Teacher, students, and community partners identify learning opportunities.

Example, Tutoring/Literacy: Responding to a request to participate in a city-wide book collection to benefit local youth, teachers in several grades collaborated on cross-age projects: older students helped younger children write and illustrate bilingual books on mutually agreed upon themes. Books were donated to youth clubs, hospitals, and day-care facilities. Student representatives served on a city committee to plan future literacy activities.

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For more information, contact Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.servicelearning.org

TAKING ACTION IN OUR COMMUNITY

STEP 1: THINK ABOUT THE NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY. MAKE A LIST.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY WHAT YOU KNOW.

- ⊙ Select one community need:

- ⊙ What is the cause?

- ⊙ Who is helping?

- ⊙ What are some ways we can help?

STEP 3: FIND OUT MORE.

- ⊙ What do we need to know about this community need and who is helping?

- ⊙ How can we find out?

STEP 4: PLAN FOR ACTION.

- ⊙ To help our community, we will:

- ⊙ To make this happen, we will take on these responsibilities:

Who	Will Do What	By When	Resources Needed



THE IMPACTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING ON YOUTH, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES: RESEARCH ON K-12 SCHOOL-BASED SERVICE-LEARNING, 1990–1999

Service-learning is a teaching strategy that links community problem-solving experiences to classroom instruction or other intentional learning activities.

Prevalence of Service-Learning

According to a 1999 survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, 64% of all public schools and 83% of all public high schools organize some form of community service for their students. Nearly a third of all schools and half of public high schools provide service-learning programs, where the service that is being provided is linked with the school curriculum (National Center for Education Statistics, 1999).

I. The Impact on Student Personal and Social Development

Service-learning has a positive effect on the personal development of public school youth.

- Middle and high school students who engaged in quality service-learning programs showed increases in measures of personal and social responsibility, communication and sense of educational competence (Weiler, et. al., 1998).
- Students who engaged in service-learning ranked responsibility as a more important value and reported a higher sense of responsibility to their school than comparison groups (Leming, 1998).
- Students perceive themselves to be more socially competent after engaging in service-learning (Scales and Blyth, 1997; O'Bannon, 1999; Morgan and Streb, 1999).
- Students who engaged in service-learning were more likely to treat each other kindly, help each other and care about doing their best (Berkas, 1997).
- Students who engaged in service-learning were more likely to increase their sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy (Shaffer, 1993).
- Middle school male students reported increased self-esteem and fewer behavioral problems after engaging in service-learning (Switzer, et. al., 1995).

Students who participate in service-learning are less likely to engage in "risk" behaviors.

- Students in elementary and middle school service-learning programs showed reduced levels of alienation and behavioral problems (Stephens, 1995; Yates and Youniss, 1996).
- Students who engaged in service-learning were less likely to be referred to the office for disciplinary measures (Follman, 1997; 1998).
- High school and middle school students who were engaged in service-learning were less likely to engage in behaviors that lead to pregnancy or arrest (Melchior, 1999; Allen, et. al., 1994; Shaffer, 1993).
- Middle school students who engaged in service-learning and experienced a structured health curriculum were less likely to engage in unprotected sexual activity or violent behavior (O'Donnell, et. al., 1999).



THE IMPACTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING ON YOUTH, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES: RESEARCH ON K-12 SCHOOL-BASED SERVICE-LEARNING, 1990–1999 (CONT'D)

Service-learning has a positive effect on students' interpersonal development and the ability to relate to culturally diverse groups.

- Middle and elementary school students who participated in service-learning were better able to trust and be trusted by others, be reliable and accept responsibility (Stephens, 1995).
- High school students who participated in high quality service-learning programs were more likely to develop bonds with more adults, agreed that they could learn from and work with the elderly and disabled and felt that they trusted others besides parents and teachers to whom they could turn for help (Morgan and Streb, 1999).
- Students who engaged in service-learning showed greater empathy and cognitive complexity than comparison groups (Courneya, 1994).
- Students who engaged in quality service-learning programs reported greater acceptance of cultural diversity (Melchior, 1999; Berkas, 1997).
- Students who engaged in service-learning showed increases over time in their awareness of cultural differences and attitudes toward helping others (Shaffer, 1993; Stephens, 1995).
- Students who participated in service-learning enjoyed helping others with projects, became more dependable for others and felt more comfortable communicating with ethnically diverse groups (Loesch-Griffin, et. al., 1995).

II. The Impact on Civic Responsibility

Service-learning helps to develop students' sense of civic and social responsibility and their citizenship skills.

- Students who engaged in high quality service-learning programs showed an increase in the degree to which they felt aware of community needs, believed that they could make a difference and were committed to service now and later in life (Melchior, 1999; Berkas, 1997).
- High school students who participated in high quality service-learning programs developed more sophisticated understandings of socio-historical contexts, were likely to think about politics and morality in society and were likely to consider how to effect social change (Yates and Youniss, 1996; 1998).
- Elementary and middle schools students who participated in service-learning developed a greater sense of civic responsibility and ethic of service (Stephens, 1995).
- Students who engaged in service-learning increased their understanding of how government works (Berkas, 1997).



THE IMPACTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING ON YOUTH, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES: RESEARCH ON K-12 SCHOOL-BASED SERVICE-LEARNING, 1990–1999 (CONT'D)

Service-learning provides opportunities for students to become active, positive contributors to society.

- High school students who participated in service-learning and service are more likely to be engaged in a community organization and to vote 15 years after their participation in the program than those who did not participate (Youniss, et. al., 1997; Yates and Youniss, 1998).
- High school students from five states who participated in high quality service-learning programs increased their political attentiveness, political knowledge and desire to become more politically active (Morgan and Streb, 1999).
- Students who engage in service-learning feel that they can “make a difference” (O’Bannon, 1999; Cairn, 1999).
- Over 80 percent of participants in high quality service-learning programs felt that they had made a positive contribution to the community (Melchior, 1999; Billig and Conrad, 1997; Scales and Blyth, 1997).

III. The Impact on Student Academic Learning

Service-learning helps students acquire academic skills and knowledge.

- Students in over half of the high quality service-learning schools studied showed moderate to strong positive gains on student achievement tests in language arts and/or reading, engagement in school, sense of educational accomplishment and homework completion (Weiler, et. al., 1998).
- Service-learning participation was associated with higher scores on the state test of basic skills (Anderson, et. al., 1991) and higher grades (Shumer, 1994; Shaffer, 1993; Dean and Murdock, 1992; O’Bannon, 1999).
- Eighty-three percent of schools with service-learning programs reported that grade point averages of participating service-learning students improved 76 percent of the time (Follman, 1999).
- Middle and high school students who participated in service-learning tutoring programs increased their grade point averages and test scores in reading/language arts and math and were less likely to drop out of school (Supik, 1996; Rolzinski, 1990).
- Elementary and middle school students who participated in service-learning had improved problem-solving skills and increased interest in academics (Stephens, 1995).

Students who participate in service-learning are more engaged in their studies and more motivated to learn.

- Students who participated in high quality service-learning programs showed an increase in measures of school engagement and achievement in mathematics than control groups (Melchior, 1999).
- Students who engaged in service-learning came to class on time more often, completed more classroom tasks and took the initiative to ask questions more often (Loesch-Griffin, et. al., 1995).



THE IMPACTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING ON YOUTH, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES: RESEARCH ON K-12 SCHOOL-BASED SERVICE-LEARNING, 1990–1999 (CONT'D)

Service-learning is associated with increased student attendance.

- Schools that sponsor service-learning programs reported that attendance increased every year over a three-year period of time (Follman, 1998; 1999; O'Bannon, 1999).
- Students engaged in service-learning had higher attendance rates than control group peers (Shaffer, 1993; Supik, 1996; Shumer, 1994).

IV. The Impact on Career Exploration and Aspirations

Service-learning helps students to become more knowledgeable and realistic about careers.

- Students who participated in service-learning reported gaining career skills, communication skills and positive increases in career exploration knowledge (Berkas, 1997; Billig, et. al., 1999).
- Students who engaged in high quality service-learning programs developed positive work orientation attitudes and skills (Weiler, LaGoy, Crane and Rovner, 1998).
- Teachers believed that participation in service-learning increases career awareness (Melchior, 1999; Billig and Conrad, 1997).

V. The Impact on Schools

Service-learning results in greater mutual respect of teachers and students.

- Teachers and students in schools with quality service-learning programs reported an increase in mutual respect (Weiler, et. al., 1998).
- Service-learning builds cohesiveness and more positive peer relations among students, among teachers and between students and teachers in a school (Weiler, et. al., 1998).

Service-learning improves the overall school climate.

- Educators and students in schools with strong service-learning programs reported more positive school climate through a feeling of greater connectedness to the school (Billig and Conrad, 1997; Weiler, et. al., 1999) and through decreased teacher turnover and increased teacher collegiality (Weiler, et. al., 1999).

VI. The Impact on Communities

Service-learning leads to more positive perceptions of school and youth by community members.

- Community members who participate in service-learning as partners with the school see youth as valued resources and positive contributors to the community (Billig and Conrad, 1997; 1999; Weiler, et. al., 1999; Melchior, 1999; Kingland, et. al., 1995; Kinsley, 1997).

This research brief was developed by Shelley H. Billig, Ph.D., RMC Research Corporation, Denver, CO, as part of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Learning In Deed Initiative. A full bibliography of all sources cited here is available:

www.learningindeed.org/research/bib.html



RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF SERVICE-LEARNING ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Impact on Students

- Service-learning has a positive effect on students' personal and interpersonal development, including a sense of personal identity, spiritual growth, moral development, the ability to work well with others, and leadership and communication skills.
- Service-learning increases students' commitment to service and facilitates cultural and racial understanding.
- Service-learning has a positive impact on students' academic learning as measured by outcomes such as problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development.
- Service-learning contributes to career development and to students' ability to apply what they have learned in the "real world."

(From Eyler, J.S., Giles, D.E., Stenson, C.M., & Gray, C.J. (2001). *At a glance: What we know about the effects of service-learning on college students, faculty, institutions, and their communities, 1993-2000*. Funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, Learn and Serve America subgrant through the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse. Available at <http://www.compact.org/resources/downloads/aag.pdf>.)

Long-Term Impact

- Participation in service-learning during college is associated with increased civic leadership, charitable giving, and political engagement after graduation.

(From Astin, A.W., Vogelgesang, L.J., Misa, K., Anderson, J., Denson, N., Jayakumar, U., Saenz, V., & Yamamura, E. (2006). *Understanding the effects of service-learning: A study of students and faculty*. Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute. Available at <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri/publications-brp.php>.)

Impact on Communities

- Students at Campus Compact member colleges and universities—approximately one-quarter of all U.S. higher education institutions—contribute more than \$7 billion in service each year through campus-organized service and service-learning initiatives. In 2006, these students contributed 377 million hours of service in their communities.
- The most common issues addressed by student service and service-learning work are poverty, reading/writing, housing/homelessness, hunger, the environment, health care, multicultural understanding, and senior services.

(From *Service statistics: Highlights and trends of Campus Compact's annual membership survey*. (2007). Providence, RI: Campus Compact. Available at <http://www.compact.org/about/statistics/>.)

Learn & Serve

Communicators Institute

Making the Case for Service Learning

(http://www.nylc.org/pages-resourcecenter-toolboxes-Making_the_Case?emoid=16:585)

Practitioners see the results of service-learning first hand, but that's often not enough. Policy-makers, administrators, and parents want and deserve proof that service-learning is an effective learning and community development model. Here, we've gathered key resource to help you "make the case" for service-learning.

Articles

[New Research: Service-Learning and the Transition to Adulthood](#)

July 6, 2006

Downloads

[American Indian Service Learning \(PDF, 656 KB\)](#)

Rationale and support for integration of service-learning into American Indian education. Includes a historical perspective on service contributions by indigenous people and analysis of the boarding school movements' effect on American Indians' commitment to and concept of community. (The Generator, Spring 2004)

Authors: Lynn LaPointe

Topics: Standards & Curriculum Integration, Diversity, Best Practices, Benefits of Service-Learning

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Youths, Researchers & Policy-Makers

Publication Year: 2004

[Bridging from High School to College \(PDF, 139 KB\)](#)

Findings From the 2004 CIRP Freshman Survey

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program at UCLA reports the percentage of college freshmen who were required to participate in service or service-learning to graduate high school. Some correlations are drawn between high school academic achievement, service-learning, and college success and lifelong service. (Growing to Greatness 2005)

Authors: Lori Vogelgesang

Topics: Assessment & Evaluation, Research & Policy

Recommended for: Researchers & Policy-Makers

Publication Year: 2005

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[Building a Framework for Service-Learning \(PDF, 2 MB\)](#)

The South Carolina Experience

Written by a state superintendent of education, this article outlines the ways that service-learning has been an initiative for positive change in South Carolina. There, service-learning has been integrated into teacher preparation programs and used in conjunction with state academic standards. (Phi Delta Kappan, May 2000)

Authors: Inez Tenenbaum

Topics: Standards & Curriculum Integration, Best Practices, Reflection, Research & Policy

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Researchers & Policy-Makers

Publication Year: 2000

[Civics, Service-Learning, and Society \(PDF, 444 KB\)](#)

A Recipe for Democracy

Makes the case for service-learning as the basis for citizenship education and civics curriculum. Highlights voter education programs that use service-learning to counteract civic apathy. (The Generator, Spring 2002)

Authors: Rob Shumer

Topics: Standards & Curriculum Integration, Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning, Youth Voice & Leadership

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Community-Based Organizations, Parents

Publication Year: 2002

[Freedom Writers Prove That the "Pen is \[Still\] Mightier Than the Sword" \(PDF, 82 KB\)](#)

Description of urban teens who improved their writing skills with service-learning and a teacher who "played to their strengths." Ideas for student engagement in language arts and the power of student letter-writing. (The Generator, Winter 2004/2005)

Authors: Maddy Wegner

Topics: Standards & Curriculum Integration, Reflection, Youth Voice & Leadership

Recommended for: Educators, Youths

Publication Year: 2004

Learn & Serve Communicators Institute

[The Impact of Service-Learning on Educational Excellence \(PDF, 530 KB\)](#)

Addresses the benefits of high-quality service-learning for individual learners, schools, and the broader community. (Learning By Giving)

Authors: NYLC

Topics: Assessment & Evaluation, Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Researchers & Policy-Makers, Parents

Publication Year: 1993

[The Impact of Service-Learning on the Transition to Adulthood \(PDF, 557 KB\)](#)

Highlights findings from the NYLC-Harris Interactive National Survey on Service-Learning and Transitioning to Adulthood. Focus is on the relationship between the factors that support a healthy transition to adulthood and the positive attributes gained by high school students engaged in service-learning. Useful statistics, graphs, and evidence from this nationally representative study are included. (Growing to Greatness 2006)

Authors: Suzanne Martin, Marybeth Neal, Jim Kielsmeier, Alison Crossley

Topics: Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning, Youth Voice & Leadership

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Youths, Researchers & Policy-Makers, Parents

Publication Year: 2006

[K-12 Service Learning Impacts \(PDF, 170 KB\)](#)

A Review of State-Level Studies of Service-Learning

Description of state-level service-learning research project including three-page matrix and results. Information about promising research models and areas of need for future research studies. (Growing to Greatness 2005)

Authors: Richard Bradley, The John Glenn Institute

Topics: Assessment & Evaluation, Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Community-Based Organizations, Researchers & Policy-Makers, Parents

Publication Year: 2005

Learn & Serve

Communicators Institute

[National Service and Education for Citizenship \(PDF, 1 MB\)](#)

An early advocate for service-learning, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy wrote this article about the power and promise of service-learning to address issues of concern for all citizens. Highlights pivotal legislation (National and Community Service Act of 1990) in support of service-learning, and historic examples of citizens called to service. (Phi Delta Kappan, June 1991)

Authors: Sen. Edward Kennedy

Topics: Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Researchers & Policy-Makers, Parents

Publication Year: 1991

[The National Survey on Service-Learning and Transitioning to Adulthood \(PDF, 734 KB\)](#)

Final Report

The final report from "The National Survey on Service-Learning and Transitioning to Adulthood," conducted by Harris Interactive for the National Youth Leadership Council. The nationally representative survey included 3,123 U.S. residents ages 18-28, with a wide range of direct and indirect service experiences. Among the key findings in this 129-page document are: Adults who engaged in service-learning in their teenaged years are more likely than their peers to be politically and socially connected to their communities, serve as role models for young adults, engage in service, and attain a higher level of education. **Note:** This is a research report, rich with graphs, statistics, and figures, intended for those in need of extensive data.

Authors: Harris Interactive

Topics: Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Community-Based Organizations, Researchers & Policy-Makers

Publication Year: 2006

Learn & Serve

Communicators Institute

[A Rationale for Service-Learning \(ZIP, 6 MB\)](#)

Outcomes for Students, School and Community

Primer for understanding the educational philosophy and rationale behind service-learning. Thorough explanation of the beneficial outcomes of service-learning for students, teachers, schools, and communities.

(Growing Hope)

Authors: Faye Caskey, Rich Cairn, Jim Kielsmeier, Kate McPherson

Topics: Standards & Curriculum Integration, Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning, Youth Voice & Leadership

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators

Publication Year: 1995

[Service to Others \(PDF, 179 KB\)](#)

A "Gateway Asset" for School Success and Healthy Development

New analysis of the Search Institute's study of adolescent development trends reveals service-learning as a "gateway asset" for 14 out of the 40 identified developmental assets. Developmental assets have been identified in the past as indicators for building resilience, and predictive factors for school success and academic achievement in young people.

(Growing to Greatness 2004)

Authors: Peter Scales, Eugene Roehlkepartain

Topics: Standards & Curriculum Integration, Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Researchers & Policy-Makers, Parents

Publication Year: 2004

[Service-Learning Research \(PDF, 116 KB\)](#)

What Have We Learned from the Past

Five of the most influential service-learning research reviews and studies are summarized. They also suggest direction for future study. (Growing to Greatness 2005)

Authors: Rob Shumer

Topics: Best Practices, Research & Policy

Recommended for: Educators, Researchers & Policy-Makers

Publication Year: 2005

Learn & Serve

Communicators Institute

[Service-Learning and Transitioning to Adulthood \(PDF, 614 KB\)](#)

Article analyzing data from the NYLC-Harris Interactive National Survey on Service-Learning and Transitioning to Adulthood. Among the key findings the author highlights: Adults who engaged in service-learning in their teenaged years are more likely than their peers to be politically and socially connected to their communities, serve as role models for young adults, engage in service, and attain a higher level of education. (Harris Interactive's Trends and Tudes, April 2006).br />

Authors: Suzanne Martin

Topics: Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning, Youth Voice & Leadership

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Youths, Community-Based Organizations, Researchers & Policy-Makers, Parents

Publication Year: 2006

[Service-Learning by the Numbers \(PDF, 40 KB\)](#)

Statistics current for 2006 illustrate the widespread interest in and benefits of service-learning. (Growing to Greatness 2006)

Authors: NYLC

Topics: Assessment & Evaluation, Standards & Curriculum Integration, Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Youths, Researchers & Policy-Makers

Publication Year: 2006

[A Time to Serve, a Time to Learn \(PDF, 4 MB\)](#)

Service-Learning and the Promise of Democracy

The rationale for service-learning and the history of the movement are included in this seminal article. Written by NYLC's founder, it shows the growth, change, and future challenges of the service-learning movement. Highlights include the Alabama cemetery project, higher-education data, and statistics of high school student service hours. (Phi Delta Kappan, May 2000)

Authors: Jim Kielsmeier

Topics: Standards & Curriculum Integration, Research & Policy, Benefits of Service-Learning, Youth Voice & Leadership

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Researchers & Policy-Makers

Publication Year: 2000

Learn & Serve

Communicators Institute

[We Know Kids Like It, But Does It Work? \(PDF, 1 MB\)](#)

Assessing Service-Learning Through Classroom Action Research

Two action research vignettes highlight the impact of service-learning on building resilience and academic success in high school students. Specific examples from a cross-age teaching project demonstrate the effectiveness of service-learning within an alternative high school over a two-year time period. (The Generator, Fall 1997/Winter 1998)

Authors: Jane Hammatt Kavaloski

Topics: Assessment & Evaluation, Standards & Curriculum Integration, Reflection, Research & Policy, Youth Voice & Leadership

Recommended for: Educators, Administrators, Researchers & Policy-Makers

Publication Year: 1997

WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-learning is a method of teaching and learning that connects classroom lessons with meaningful service to the community.

Integrated into the academic curriculum, service-learning helps students and schools meet academic goals. Service-learning enables young people to apply their knowledge in support of their neighbors and community, even as they gain knowledge and skills from meeting real community needs. Students build character and become active citizens as they work with others in their school or community to create service projects in areas like education, public safety, and the environment.

Service-learning can be applied across all subjects and grade levels – from kindergarten through college – and can involve a single student or group of students, a classroom, or an entire school.

For example: one student may serve at a local food pantry while studying the roots of poverty; a science class may clean-up a local streambed while analyzing water samples; and an entire school may adopt a service-learning curriculum focused on community health. Whatever the focus, service-learning benefits the school, community, and the students.



“I know that what I’m learning matters.”



Mina Cha
High School Student

Service-learning projects have helped me see how the skills I’m learning in school – like research, organization, and teamwork – apply to real life.

As part of my American History class, we’re restoring a house that was built in the 1790s and now serves as a youth hostel for students and community groups. Together we researched the history of the house, calculated a budget for supplies, and partnered with local businesses and experts. While we’re helping to preserve an important community meeting place, we’re digging into research and learning about history in a hands-on way.

“I’m applying concepts in a unique and concrete way.”



Chris Percopo
College Student

In my management class last semester, I worked on a strategic analysis for a local hunger agency. Instead of just turning in a paper at the end of the semester, my project group created a manual to assist the agency with its fundraising efforts.

Service-learning has helped me understand how I can use my academic learning to improve my community, and has also given me confidence that a lot of students don’t have. I realize I have valuable skills to contribute to any organization, and I’m on my way to a career I find meaningful.

WHAT IS LEARN AND SERVE AMERICA?

Learn and Serve America, a program of the federal agency the Corporation for National and Community Service, supports service-learning in schools, higher education institutions, community-based organizations across country through:

● Grants

Learn and Serve America grants are available to higher education institutions, Indian tribes, community-based organizations, and others to assist in the planning and implementation of service-learning programs.

● Training and Technical Assistance

Learn and Serve America grantees and others have access to training, technical assistance, and other resources. The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse provides a library of lesson plans, research, project examples, and much more to support service-learning programs.

● Recognition Programs

Learn and Serve America recognizes outstanding youth service through programs such as the Presidential Freedom Scholarships and the President’s Volunteer Service Award.

ACCESS THESE RESOURCES AND MORE AT

www.LearnAndServe.gov

or call 877-873-7835

or TTY 202-565-2799

“By engaging students in the world beyond the classroom, service-learning opens new doors and brings learning to life.”



Janice Steinberg
Teacher

As an educator, I’m constantly challenged to approach academic lessons in a way that will engage students and connect their learning to the world beyond the classroom.

For me, service-learning is a teaching strategy that does just that.

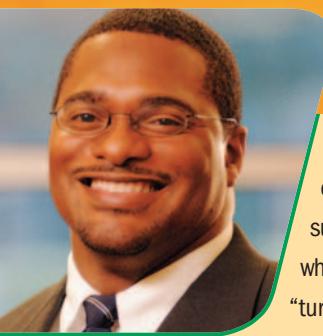
I have seen so many positive results through service-learning. I have seen student attendance soar. I have seen grades improve. And I have seen students break through barriers and realize their ability to make a difference.

Whether students are tutoring youth, serving at a local shelter or clinic, or working to make a community safer, they’re addressing social issues and making academic connections first-hand. They’re connecting with each other and the community, and realizing their roles and responsibilities as citizens.



Service-learning is a tool for every teacher – the possibilities are endless! Look to your students for ideas and to your community for resources. By providing opportunities for youth to explore their world and make decisions, we’re creating lifelong learners and strong citizens.

“Service-learning creates an environment for success.”



Ernest Johnson
Guidance Counselor

Service-learning creates an environment where every student can succeed. As an educator, I see students who struggle in a traditional classroom “turn on” in a service-learning setting.

By encouraging them to apply their interests, knowledge, and skills in new ways, service-learning opens new doors for students to show what they know and can do.

In our school, service-learning began with a single class. Today, every student participates in service-learning projects. As a result, we’ve seen student engagement increase, standardized test scores increase, improved student attendance, decreased student violence, and more. The best thing – students want to come to school. They’re thinking critically about the next step in their lives and making the connection between academics and future success.

In addition, the response we’ve seen in the community – from parents, businesses and local organizations – has been tremendous. These students will stay involved in their communities for years to come.



SERVICE-LEARNING WORKS!

Service-learning helps students build academic skills while strengthening communities through service. A growing body of research recognizes the benefits of service-learning as an effective strategy to:

- Improve Academic Achievement**
 When explicitly tied to academic standards and learning objectives, service-learning positively impacts student outcomes on measures of academic achievement, including standardized test scores.
- Increase Student Engagement**
 Service-learning engages students by helping them make critical connections between classroom lessons and real-world applications.
- Improve Social Behavior**
 Service-learning participants are less likely to engage in risky behavior, and more likely to build social skills like communication, teamwork, and problem solving.
- Build Civic Skills**
 By giving students the responsibility to identify and meet pressing needs, service-learning builds civic skills and commitment in young people that last a lifetime.
- Strengthen Community Partnerships**
 Service-learning brings students into the community, and the community into schools. In this way, students develop a sense of belonging and responsibility, and communities view youth as valuable assets.



Learn more about service-learning and Learn and Serve America at www.LearnAndServe.gov or call 877-873-7835 or TTY 202-565-2799.

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BRING LEARNING TO LIFE

Learn and Serve America is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service. Together with the USA Freedom Corps, the Corporation is working to build a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America.

Upon request, this material will be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities.

What can I do to be sure service-learning is a part of my child's education?

Is service-learning happening at your child's school? Talk to teachers and administrators to find out whether service-learning is already taking place at your child's school.

Yes! What now?

1. Let your support be known! Talk to your child's teachers and/or school administrators to find out how you might be able to help.
2. Make sure that those in charge of service-learning at your child's school are aware of all the great resources available through the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.
3. Consider working with the PTA—the parent, teacher, student association—or another parent/teacher organization to develop a plan for parents to be of support to teachers. The PTA recognizes that collaboration with the community strengthens schools, families, and student learning. Service-learning is an excellent way to foster partnerships with the community. Support your child in helping the community! Visit www.pta.org for more information.

No. What now?

1. Take copies of *Bring Learning to Life* materials to your child's school to inform teachers and administrators of the benefits of service-learning.
2. School administrators may welcome articles on the impacts of service-learning in education. Resources on this and other service-learning topics can be found on the last page of this publication and by visiting www.servicelearning.org.
3. State Education Agencies receive funding from Learn and Serve America to help build networks of teachers and school administrators, parents, and community agency partners who are knowledgeable about service-learning and can work to get programs started. Visit www.learnandserve.gov/about/contact/sea.asp to find contact information for someone in your State Education Agency who can help connect you to this larger community of service-learning supporters.

Get involved in other service-learning opportunities. Service-learning doesn't just happen in schools! Inquire at local youth, community, or faith-based organizations to find existing service-learning programs where your child can be involved. If they're not involved in service-learning, introduce them to its benefits with *Bring Learning to Life* materials.

Visit the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse "Resources for Parents" page for additional information on service-learning and a list of organization websites you can search for volunteering and/or service-learning opportunities in your area. www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/parents/index.php.

For more information, contact Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.servicelearning.org.

Find out more

Resources

This guide to the basics of service-learning for parents is a companion piece to the Learn and Serve America video, *Bring Learning to Life*. This eight-minute video offers insights from teachers, principals, and students who have experienced the benefits of service-learning, and provides an introduction to service-learning as an effective strategy to improve academic achievement, increase student engagement, improve social behavior, build civic skills, and strengthen community partnerships. The video, available in VHS, CD-Rom, and DVD formats, also includes two television public service announcements (60-second PSA and 30-second PSA).

Visit www.servicelearning.org or call 1-866-245-7378, ext. 130 to order free copies of *Bring Learning to Life* DVDs, posters, and the teachers' getting started guide *Service-Learning in Action* to share with your school. Across America, service-learning is helping students perform better in school while improving their communities through service. By connecting classroom lessons with community service projects, service-learning engages students and brings learning to life!

For more about service opportunities in your area and additional resources, visit Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse "Resources for Parents" page at www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/parents/index.php.

Books can help you learn more, see examples of service-learning projects, and promote service-learning in the community.

■ *The Busy Family's Guide to Volunteering: Do good, have fun, make a difference as a family!* by Jenny Lynn Friedman, Robins Lane Press, 2003. An informative compilation of ideas and resources to involve every family member in collaborative projects.

■ *The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, & Social Action*, by Cathryn Berger Kaye, Free Spirit Publishing, 2004.

A comprehensive resource for teachers, youth workers, and parents that covers service-learning planning and implementation, with over 300 examples of service-learning scenarios.

■ *The Kid's Guide to Social Action*, by Barbara Lewis, Free Spirit Publishing, 1998. A useful resource packed with information for helping kids transform their ideas into results, with many stories of accomplishments.

■ *Parent Involvement in Service Learning*, by Cathryn Berger Kaye, National Dropout Prevention Center, 1998. Part of the Linking Learning with Life series, this publication offers ideas to involve parents in supporting service-learning in schools and engaging in service-learning as a family.



Written by Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A. © 2007 Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse. Photocopying for nonprofit educational purposes is permitted. Portions of this brochure adapted from *The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum & Social Action* by Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A., © 2004. Used with permission of Free Spirit Publishing Inc., Minneapolis, MN; 1-866-703-7322; www.freespirit.com. All rights reserved. For more information, contact Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.servicelearning.org.

What Is Service-Learning?

A Guide for Parents

What Is Service-Learning?

A Guide for Parents provides information about your role in participating in and promoting this effective way of teaching. Service-learning takes place in schools and youth groups across America. Your involvement can make a difference!

Simply put, service-learning connects classroom studies with the natural caring and concern young people have for their world. Service-learning allows young people to contribute to solving problems by helping others in their school community, their neighborhood, or around the world. When students apply what they are learning in ways that help others, the results are memorable. Students gain lessons that last a lifetime. While learning, they develop the ability to contribute to a better society and we all benefit.

Learn and Serve America is a program of the federal agency the Corporation for National and Community Service. Created by Congress and the President to promote service-learning, Learn and Serve America engages more than one million young people from kindergarten through college and is the largest supporter of service-learning in the United States. Visit www.learnandserve.gov to find out more. To obtain a copy of the video, *Bring Learning to Life*, or to find out more about service-learning, contact Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse toll-free at 1-866-245-SERV (7378) or visit www.servicelearning.org.



What does service-learning look like?

Here are a few examples.



Elementary children in Florida studied the consequences of natural disasters through books and newspaper articles and by interviewing city officials. They determined that families need a place to gather their important papers in case of evacuation. So the children

designed a large envelope with a checklist for this purpose. They added tips about rescuing pets and other advice to make a difficult situation easier. Students distributed the envelopes to families through school and community organizations.

Middle school students in Pennsylvania

learned about the health consequences of poor nutrition and lack of exercise. They wanted to do something to change those habits for themselves and their families. So students conducted health fairs to educate their neighbors and worked with their English teachers and families to create a cookbook with healthy versions of family recipes. Then, because it was difficult to find fresh produce, students worked with their math, social studies, and shop teachers to open a fruit and vegetable stand for the school and community.



High school students in Oklahoma investigated how a local creek became polluted. In social studies, they researched the history of mining that led to the problem. They learned which government agencies help clean toxic waterways. Science students

continued on next page

delivering meals
tutoring

interviewing veterans
visiting with elders

assisting immigrants

tree-planting

community gardens

stocking food pantries

writing books

building homes

recycling



What does service-learning look like?

continued from front page



tested water. In English classes, students interviewed residents. Now, students have authored two books of research, memoirs, and poetry about Tar Creek. These activities helped make officials aware of the pollution and now the creek is being cleaned and restored. Every year, students sponsor a conference to involve and teach others.

With service-learning, students apply knowledge, skills, and talents as they show leadership and contribute to their communities in many ways. Every student can succeed. Classroom participation increases as students recognize that learning is relevant and that they have a role to play in their communities.

How is service-learning different from community service or volunteer work?

Service-learning differs from community service or volunteer work because the education of students and young people is always at its core. Students are actively participating in the process of understanding, integrating, and applying knowledge from various subjects as they work to improve their communities. The question "Why am I learning this?" disappears as they see what they have learned in action.

For more information, contact Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.servicelearning.org.

Service-learning can be defined

as a teaching method that includes service to others. With service-learning, students:

- n connect academic subjects,
- n meet real community needs,
- n become leaders who contribute ideas, make decisions, and solve problems,
- n discover benefits for everyone involved,
- n get to work with community partners, and
- n develop as active members of society.

Four stages of service-learning

Preparation – Students acquire new information as they read, research, interview, and visit places, all leading to a better understanding of real community.

Action – Students develop and implement a plan of action, transforming their ideas into practical ways to contribute to the common good.

Reflection – Students consider how their actions made an impact on themselves and others, and ways to improve as they continue to learn and serve.

Demonstration – Students show or tell others what they have learned and contributed; they may write articles, make presentations, or create a website.

How do students benefit from service-learning?

Studies show that service-learning can develop students' knowledge and abilities in many ways. **Through service-learning programs and experiences, students may:**

- n increase motivation and desire to learn;
- n develop responsibility, make decisions, and solve problems;
- n improve in many academic areas;
- n have a better sense of self;
- n develop the ability to work well with others;
- n experience positive relationships with peers and community members;
- n replace stereotypes with respect for others;
- n be exposed to career options;
- n be better prepared for college and the workplace;
- n learn about community resources for themselves and their families;
- n make a positive contribution to their community; and
- n begin to develop a lifelong commitment to public service and to learning.



As educator John Dewey said, **"Education is not preparation for life. It is life itself."**

For more information, contact Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.servicelearning.org.

Research shows that service-learning positively affects youth in three general areas: academic engagement and achievement, civic attitudes and behaviors, and social and personal skills. To read more about this research, information is provided by Learn and Serve America at this website: www.learnandserve.gov/pdf/07_0224_issuebrief_servicelearning.pdf.

For example: A Philadelphia study found that 6th grade students participating in service-learning programs had **higher scores** than non-participants in tests for language arts and science. (Billig 2004)

Civic engagement activities **raised the odds of graduation and improved high school students' progress** in reading, math, science, and history. (Dávila, A. and Mora, M. 2007)

Students in service-learning had a **stronger set of job and career related skills and aspirations** than students who did not participate. (Yamauchi, et.al. 2006)

Students **classified as "at risk" made significant progress** in reading and writing, and in school adjustment and general resiliency. Attendance and participation rates increased, as did grade point averages and positive attitude toward themselves and school. (Kraft and Wheeler 2003)

Is there a role for parents with service-learning?

Absolutely! Parents play a key role in the success of service-learning in a variety of ways.

Parent involvement in schools

Parents bring valuable resources, information, and ideas to service-learning. Consider these ways parents have been partners.

- n Parents inform administrators and teachers about service-learning and available state and national resources.
- n Parents educate other parents about service-learning so they can assist teachers in and out of the classroom.
- n Parents attend service-learning conferences to stay informed and involved.
- n Parents promote awareness about service-learning by:
 - n placing service-learning on parent meeting agendas,
 - n helping teachers and students showcase service-learning at Back-to-School night,
 - n writing an article for the school newspaper,
 - n assisting students to create service-learning displays, and
 - n incorporating or showing *Bring Learning to Life* materials at parent-teacher meetings.

Being involved in your child's education sends a direct message to your child that learning matters. When supporting service-learning, you also teach your children that at every age we can be contributing members of society.

Parent encouragement of their child's involvement in service-learning

If your child is participating in a service-learning experience, express support to your child, your child's teacher, and school administrators. Ask how you can be helpful. Have conversations with your child about community issues. Read books and newspaper articles on the topics with your child for shared experiences and to learn together.

Parent participation in non-school settings

Wherever youth gather, service-learning is a way to engage in meaningful activities that benefit everyone. A service-learning approach may include leadership development, surveys of community needs, and plans that allow youth to transform ideas into action. Discuss with program staff ways parents can be helpful throughout the process.

For more information, contact Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.servicelearning.org.



"Service-learning is a natural extension of the civic mission of schools—giving students from all backgrounds a better education while giving our society better citizens. It's a win-win, a bridge between the classroom and the community that brings passion and energy to both."

Elizabeth Burmaster
Wisconsin State Superintendent

"We know that service-learning benefits young people in a variety of ways. As individuals, service-learning improves self-esteem and self-confidence, and reduces involvement in risky behavior. As citizens, service-learning gives young people an increased sense of civic responsibility and a commitment to community involvement. As students, service-learning helps improve school performance and academic engagement."

Dr. William Richardson
*Former President & CEO
W.K. Kellogg Foundation*

"Schools and college campuses are rediscovering their role in citizenship education, including through a great idea called service-learning—an approach that weaves academic study with real-world problem-solving through community service. We can all join in as mentors, partners, and supporters..."

Angus King
Former Maine Governor