



4-H Organizational Skills

Service to Community

VRKC: Volunteer Research Knowledge Competency Taxonomy

Intended Audience:

4-H volunteers

Learning Outcomes:

- Volunteers will describe why community service is important to the 4-H experience.
- Volunteers will identify key elements for an effective community service project.
- Volunteers will develop a community service project plan.

Time:

20 – 30 minutes

Supplies Needed:

- Pencils, Markers and Flip Chart
- Power Point, Computer and LCD Projector
- Handouts and Evaluations

Do Ahead:

Copy handouts

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Volunteerism for the Next Generation:

<http://nextgeneration.4-h.org/volunteerism/>

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<http://www.national4-h-headquarters.gov/>

INTRODUCTION

“I pledge...my hands to larger service...” We should all be familiar with this phrase. Most likely you hear it every month at your 4-H meetings and all of your 4-H members know it as part of the 4-H pledge. Through community service, youth practice skills to become helpful citizens and develop a sense of pride and ownership for the community in which they live. Community service projects also teach the value of giving back and allow youth and adults to work together to help others. (Power Point Slides 1, 2)

According to the Campus Outreach Opportunity League a nonprofit organization for college students that engage in community service and social action, five key elements need to be in place for community service to work effectively. These elements include: (Power Point Slide 3)

- 1. Meeting community needs.** The community service performed by youth must be seen as relevant and timely for the youth. They should learn about the real needs in their community and what they can do to help with those needs. To facilitate this element, youth and adults may want to survey community members, leaders, agencies, or organizations to learn about real community needs. This will help them build on existing community assets.
- 2. Careful planning and preparation.** Youth should be a part of the planning of the project and each person should be prepared for their part in the project. The youth need to help prioritize activities, involve and inform parents and other adults, and keep safety and risk management procedures in mind.
- 3. Meaningful action.** The activity needs to be necessary and valuable to the community. Participants need to feel like they made a difference in a meaningful way and the community needs to value their contribution. Most importantly, adults need to make sure all members are involved.
- 4. Time for Reflection.** Structured time needs to be provided at a 4-H meeting for the members to reflect on their community service project. Reflection gives the youth the opportunity to think about what they did and what it meant to them, to others, and to their community.
- 5. Evaluation of project.** Members should be involved in discussing the impact of their service and what they learned from completing the project. Evaluation gives the group direction for improvement, growth, and change. It also allows them to think about what else they might do because of this experience. Members need the opportunity to share what they learned individually and discuss what impact they felt they had on the community.



VRKC: Volunteer Research Knowledge Competency Taxonomy for 4-H Youth Development:

<http://www.national4-h.org/headquarters.gov/comm/vrkc.pdf>

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References for this lesson:

- Berenstain, Stan & Jan. *The Berenstain Bears: Think of Those in Need*. Random House. New York. 1999.
- Ellis, Susan J. *Children as Volunteers: Preparing for Community Service*. Energize Inc. 1991.
- Logan, Suzanne. *The Kids Can Help Book*. Putnam Publishing Group. New York. 1992.

Nine Steps to Performing a Successful Community Service Project

Now that you know the key elements of an effective community service project, you can work with youth to make it a success. Using Handout 1, let's examine the nine steps needed to perform a successful community service project. (Power Point Slide 4) (Distribute Handout 1)

Activity 1: Interview Questions

The first step is to determine what the needs are in your community. By using simple interview forms, youth and adults in your 4-H club can start the process of identifying community needs.

Divide participants into groups of 4 or 5 people. Give each group either an adult or youth interview questions sheet (Handout 2 or 3). If your group receives a youth interview sheet, please answer the questions from a youth perspective. Each group should designate an interviewer to conduct the interviews. When finished, have the large group come back together and compile their responses on flip chart paper, identifying adult and "youth" responses. Analyze the compiled results to identify key community issues. Since this is a mock demonstration, it will be more difficult to do than it will be for a 4-H club. Doing this activity with the youth and adults in your 4-H club will help the group discover community needs that can be addressed with a community service project?

Continue by reading and discussing steps 2-4 from Handout 1.

Activity 2: Developing the Community Service Plan

In small groups, ask participants to brainstorm options to address the identified community needs from Activity 1. Have each group use Handout 4 to develop a draft plan to conduct a community service project. Come back together and ask each group to briefly describe their plan. Why is having a plan important? What were the easiest and most difficult parts of developing the plan? What can we do to make sure the plan is followed?

Continue by reading steps 5-9 from Handout 1. (Power Point Slide 5)

Activity 3: Bubbles Celebration

Distribute Handout 5 and have the group stand in a circle. The Bubbles Celebration provides a creative and memorable way for participants of the community service project to identify and celebrate the outcomes and results of their work. Ask volunteers to take turns reading sections of the handout out loud.

Conclusion:

Planning, conducting, and evaluating a community service project is a great opportunity for 4-H members to "learn by doing" and develop leadership and citizenship skills. Encourage your 4-H members to get involved in all phases of the project. (Power Point Slide 6)



TALK IT OVER

Reflect:

- What do young people gain from being involved in community service projects?
- Why is it important that community service projects meet a community need that is identified by the 4-H members?
- How have you used the nine steps in planning and carrying out a community service project?

Apply:

- How can your 4-H club or group have greater success in your community service projects?

EVALUATION

Ask each participant to complete the evaluation tool (Handout 6).

ENHANCE or SIMPLIFY

Explore additional activities from the 4-H National Curriculum, *Citizenship Adventures Kit*.

<http://www.4-hmall.org/detail.aspx?ID=736855>

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Volunteerism for the Next Generation



Nine Steps to Performing a Successful Community Service Project

This fact sheet provides steps and critical information to guide 4-H clubs and groups as they begin to think about and plan community service projects. 4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills. Community service projects are one way to help youth learn those life skills and become productive and contributing members of their communities.

- 1. Determine what the needs are in your community.**
 - Ask members and parents to identify needs they see.
 - Ask other community groups.
 - Ask community leaders.
 - Ask Extension staff what other clubs/groups have done.

- 2. Determine what type of activities your members have an interest in or ability to do.**
 - Consider size of your group and the age of the members.
 - Consider the skills and interests of members.
 - Determine how much time you want to devote to the community service project.
 - Determine how much parental support you have for the project.

- 3. List all of the activities/projects/needs that have been suggested.**
 - With the help of parents, older youth, or a committee, narrow the list down to 2 or 3 ideas.
 - Present the ideas to your group with an explanation of the need and/or project.
 - Based on the presentations, the group can then choose a project to conduct.

- 4. Develop a plan to conduct your project.**

Review the risk management information provided to you by 4-H and use the resources available to you throughout this step. Your plan should include: goals of the project, tasks involved, time commitment, permissions that need to be obtained, budget (if necessary), insurance (if necessary), equipment and supplies, publicity, additional adult help, and a process for evaluation and reflection.

- 5. Prepare the youth for the community service project and the tasks to be accomplished.**

Go over the tasks to be accomplished in a positive manner. Review safety precautions and provide any specific training that may be needed. This may be the first time that some of your members are doing a task. Ensure them that it's okay to ask questions or for assistance. This is a good opportunity to talk about societal needs and issues.

- 6. Carry out the project.**

The project should be hands-on, if possible. Involve members in following through with the project. For example, rather than donating money to buy toys for a child care center, take the members shopping to purchase the toys themselves and deliver them to the center.



7. Document your group's efforts with pictures, video, or written articles.

Take pictures of youth involved in the project. You could incorporate these into certificates that you present to the 4-H members at the end of the project to celebrate their accomplishments. Write an article and submit it along with a picture to local media.

8. Plan for a reflection and application period.

This can either be at the end of the community service activity or at your next group meeting. Let members share their thoughts about their experience. You may need to ask questions to get them talking. Some sample questions might include:

Reflect:

- Describe what happened at our community service project.
- What did you like about this community service project?
- How did you feel about this project?
- What did you notice about the people who were helped from this project?

Apply:

- What might we do differently if we do this project again?
- How else might we help in the future?
- How can we use what we learned from this project?

9. Summarize your group's efforts.

Share a brief project description with the Extension office to go into the county newsletter, submit an article with a picture to your local newspaper, or send a letter with a picture to your local town, township, county, or state official to highlight your efforts. You may even want to plan a group celebration upon successful completion of the project.



Adult Interview Questions

1. What is most important about our community?

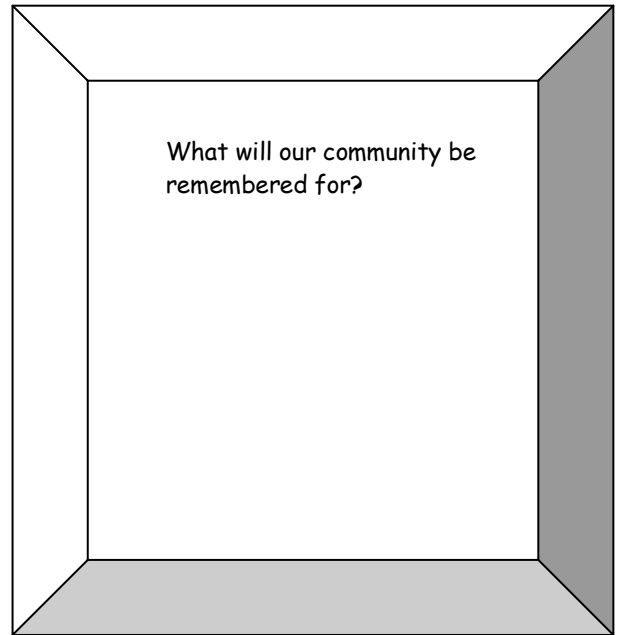
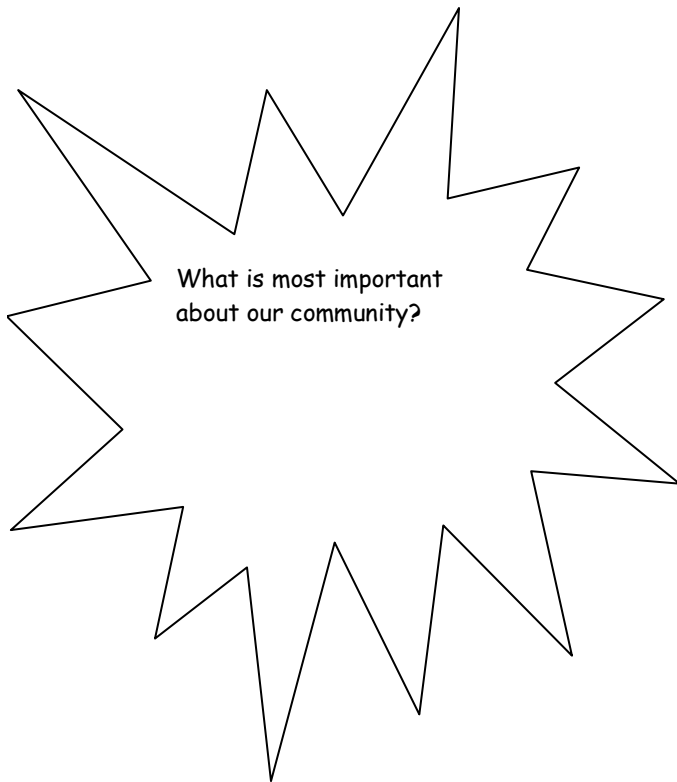
2. What will our community be remembered for?

3. What can be done to improve our community?

4. How do you feel youth can be more involved in our community?



Youth Interview Questions



Handout 4

Community Service Project Planning Sheet

Club: Youth Coordinator:

Adult Volunteer Support:

Project: Date:

Goal:

Tasks:	Who?	When?

Permission:

Budget:

Funding:

Insurance and Risk Management:

Equipment and Supplies:

Time:

Publicity:

Follow Up Evaluation:



Handout 5

Bubbles Celebration

Closure for a 4-H Club Community Service Project

Time: 10-15 minutes

Supplies: Bottles of bubble solution (May be individual bottles or shared bottles. If shared, use a bottle for each 3 or 4 people participating.)

To start: Form a circle of all group members. Introduce the ceremony by summarizing the community service project conducted by the members, including the final results. (The ceremony is more meaningful, if you can relate your group's results throughout the ceremony also.) During this ceremony, the group will recognize what the project meant to each individual.

Group leader blows bubbles so they spread out into the circle. They will float down and break at different rates. As they do so, start the ceremony:

"Our community service project has common properties with these bubbles: Our learning has come in several parts. We studied our community to find its strengths and suggested ways to improve it. We then chose a community service project that would better our community. As a group, we planned, organized, and completed a _____ service project to _____."

"As bubbles spread, some seem to get bigger; others burst quickly. Because of our community service project, we have been able to help our community by _____. And, some of our efforts will grow like the bubbles, but if we do not keep working to help our community grow, it also will fade, just like the bubbles that burst quickly." (Blow more bubbles)

"When the bubbles touch you, they feel cool and fresh. We feel better and refreshed when we are able to help others. I hope you feel this way too. Our community service project has helped each of us to grow and encouraged us to do and learn more."

"Now, we will pass the bubbles around the circle. When they come to you, please blow your own bubbles and share one thing you learned or felt good about when doing this community service project. Start with this phrase: 'Doing this community service project helped me to _____'."

"I will start the circle with my reflection: (Blow bubbles) 'Doing this community service project helped me to realize what caring youth we have in our community, when I watched each of you take an active part.'" (Continue around the circle until all members have had an opportunity to share)

"Now we would like to invite our guests to add their observations to this ceremony. We need to make our circle larger to include our guests in it. This also is representative of our community service project to include others and pass our skills, abilities, and talents on to others in the community." (Include parents and other guests in the circle and have them share their thoughts and observations about the project.)

"In closing, the bubbles floating represent us, as responsible citizens, keeping our community afloat by making our community a better place. Our community service project has helped our community, but more importantly, has guided us to be better citizens, while helping others."

(Adapted from *Leadership Development through Community Action*, University of Illinois Extension, 1999)



Volunteerism for the Next Generation



Evaluation

Please complete the following evaluation. The results of the evaluation will be shared with those who work with the program. Your participation in this evaluation is voluntary. Your responses will be combined with the responses of all other participants and you will not be individually identified on any report prepared.

Please answer the questions by circling the number that indicates your level of understanding of the topics listed before and after the training.

1 = Very little understanding 2 = Understand somewhat 3 = Clear understanding

	NOW – After the training			THEN – Before the training		
1. I can describe why community service is important to the 4-H experience.	1	2	3	1	2	3
2. I can identify key elements for an effective and successful community service project.	1	2	3	1	2	3
3. I can help youth develop a community service plan and support them in carrying out the plan.	1	2	3	1	2	3
4. I can support youth in evaluating their community service projects.	1	2	3	1	2	3

- Please list at least two ideas or skills that you learned as a result of this presentation.

- How will you use what you learned in this presentation?

