

# Youth Volunteer Project Ideas



## ARTS

- Create original ceramic items to sell to the public; profits support a local charity or agency working with children's issue.
- Design notepads, rubber stamps, bumper stickers, and t-shirts with environmental messages to sell; use funds to purchase trees for planting on school grounds or in community parks.
- Join together to create a community mural.
- Make pottery with peers who have disabilities
- Paint over a graffiti-covered wall; urge local artists to work with the students and give on-site lessons in form, composition, color, etc.
- Make table decorations for a shelter such as placemats or flower centerpieces to cheer the hungry or homeless
- Provide artwork to beautify local hospitals, community centers, and retirement homes
- Create artwork such as paintings or sculptures to present to homebound or institutionalized senior citizens, the physically handicapped, etc.
- Decorate the school or public library with banners and works of art
- Create brochures and booklets about local history; house the finished products in local museums or libraries
- Make decorations for holiday parties for younger students and children attending day care
- Make holiday crafts to fill homeless children's Christmas stocking, Easter baskets, etc

## FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- Volunteer to help at a Special Olympics event
- Set up a buddy system for kids with special needs at your school
- Raise money for Braille or large print books for the visually impaired
- Volunteer at an agency that works with emotionally disturbed children
- Bring toys to children in the cancer ward of the a hospital

## FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- Host a Cultural Fiesta featuring aspects of foreign life
- Translate a museum's signs into Spanish and lead tours for Latino/Hispanic children to help them become familiar with leading Spanish painters
- Provide translations of consumer information to people in the community who do not know English
- Become pen pals with the patients in a veteran's hospital who are fluent in other languages

- Organize cultural fairs at or near the school with exhibits, arts, crafts, food, and entertainment
- Interview immigrants at the local community center about their lives, then transcribe the stories; create books for each immigrant, in their language, based on his/her personal story

### **HEALTH, SAFETY, AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- Develop a smoking cessation class for students; create a smoking awareness survey for the school and prepare a statistical analysis with a math class
- Make/display “Mr. Yuck” posters at elementary schools
- Help organize walk-, run-, and bike-a-thons to raise money for community needs
- Teach recreational skills to mentally handicapped students
- Study first aid techniques and then demonstrate them to younger students
- Organize games and physical education lessons for elementary school students
- Organize and invite local police officers to present a drug awareness or bike safety assembly
- Form volunteer teams for a campus safety escort service
- Organize a sing-along at the children’s hospital
- Make decorations for hospital wards.
- Decorate tray liners for the meal trays at a hospital
- Distribute water at a city festival or event or race

### **HOMELESSNESS & HUNGER**

- Organize a canned goods drive in conjunction with a school dance and donate the goods to a food shelf
- Help cook and/or serve a meal at a homeless shelter
- Gather clothing from your neighbors and donate it to a local shelter
- Make "I Care" kits with combs, toothbrushes, shampoo, etc. for homeless people
- Help with repairs at a local homeless shelter
- Make a care package with mittens, socks, t-shirts, long underwear, etc. for a child at a homeless shelter
- Collect grocery coupons to give a local food bank
- If your community doesn't have a food bank, work with local officials to start one
- Pack and hand out food at a food shelf
- Donate the produce to a food shelf
- Collect stuffed animals to donate to children in a homeless shelter
- Hold a coat or mitten drive
- Make blank name cards to personalize shelter beds

## **LANGUAGE ARTS**

- Write about a local citizen; interview people who know the individual, collect photographs/memorabilia, and separate facts from lore
- Adopt a class at a nearby elementary school; read to the youngsters, perform scenes from short stories, and re-write classics into simpler terms
- Tutor a student that needs help learning English or some other subject
- Be a homework helper in an after school program
- Work with nearby retirement home residents to write about their childhood memories and then get together to compare their experiences and discuss the changes that have occurred over the years; document the information/summary for the local library archives
- Record favorite children's stories (or original stories) on tape and donate the tapes to local day-care centers
- Write letters to editors, city officials, businesses, the President, etc., describing a need in their community and what should be done about it
- Organize book-collection drives and establish informal libraries in low-income neighborhoods, or distributed to families who might not otherwise own books
- Create your own encouraging "thinking of you", "get well", or "thank you" cards for a children's hospital, veteran's group, senior citizens' home, or troops overseas
- Practice penmanship, language arts, and drawing skills by preparing and presenting messages of encouragement for hospital patients
- Volunteer to design and create display board for local non-profit agencies that work with children
- Help break down stereotypes held by others through pen pals (rural-urban, city-country, etc)
- Produce guides to parks, recreational areas, and other local attractions
- Volunteer at the local library and lead story hours for young children
- Perform a puppet show at a local library
- Read books or the newspaper on tape for visually impaired people or write for or read letters to visually-impaired individuals

## **MATHEMATICS**

- Visit homeless shelters and then calculate quantities of food and other supplies that would be needed to prepare meals for the homeless
- Make a quilt as part of a unit on measurement and geometric figures, and then donate the quilt to a local charity
- Calculate the amount of aluminum discarded in their community and the income that might be derived from recycling
- Create a math board game for younger children
- Inventory species of animals or measure/count trees and other plant life for the Departments of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, or Parks

- Discuss with senior citizens changes in the cost of living over the last two generations; calculate and graph price increases for specific items
- Practice budgeting in simulation exercises that reflect the financial plight of the poor
- Use geometric shapes and patterns to design holiday and birthday cards; present cards to local nursing home residents
- Write word problems for younger students using the students' names in the problems; teach the math concepts to the younger students

### **NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENT**

- Help neighbors paint and repair their homes
- Clean up a vacant lot
- Organize a campaign to raise money to purchase and install new playground equipment in an area park
- Campaign for additional lighting along poorly lighted streets
- Paint a mural or clean up in a local park
- Plant flowers in public areas that could use some color

### **SCIENCES**

- Organize a food drive, and present food with a menu of well-balanced meals to serve to the homeless
- Reduce pollution in the city by organizing neighborhood clean-up days
- Create a campaign to encourage biking and walking
- Organize a carpooling campaign in your neighborhood to cut down on air pollution
- Develop a butterfly garden for elementary school children and teach lessons on the development of the butterfly
- Create a xeriscape garden at a community center or park
- Plant a garden or tree where the whole neighborhood can enjoy it
- Plant and maintain flowerbeds around the school or around local community buildings
- Organize a neighborhood group to plant, tend and harvest a vegetable garden
- Teach about ingredients in and make "Gak" or Playdoh with younger students
- Work with local parks on maintenance, trail establishment, and gathering appropriate information materials
- Test the health of the water in your local lakes, rivers, or streams
- Participate in a trail restoration hiking trip to help keep park trails in good condition
- Adopt a zoo animal or species by sponsoring fund-raising recycling drives; use the money to enhance zoo facilities
- Adopt an acre of a rainforest

- Establish a classroom solar system museum; take younger students on a guided tour, complete with appropriate costumes
- Study an endangered species; build a birdhouse or other animal habitat for the animal and donate it to a wildlife refuge
- Study weather systems and the damage they can cause; hold a clothing/food drive to help hurricane or tornado victims
- Collect and properly dispose of batteries; share information in the community about battery safety
- Develop/present workshops on “greening” homes, apartments, etc.; teach installation of low-flow water heads, composting, strategic tree planting, etc.
- Set up a recycling system for your home and participate in your neighborhood curbside recycling pick-up

### **SENIOR CITIZENS**

- Rake leaves, shovel snow, clean gutters, or wash windows for a senior citizens
- Pick up medicine for an elderly person
- Write letters to an elderly person
- Go for a walk with a senior citizen in your community
- Deliver meals to homebound individuals
- Offer to pick up groceries with/for a senior citizen
- Help senior citizens in your neighborhood obtain and install locks or smoke alarms
- Teach a senior friend how to use a computer or the Internet
- Get a group together to sing or present a play at a nursing home
- Play games, make popcorn, and visit residents at local nursing homes
- Arrange a youth history hour at a nursing home where older people can talk with children about their lives
- Ask a nursing home what entertainment they would like to receive and work with families to organize the event
- Maintain yards of older adults.
- Repair or paint the home of an elderly couple or needy family.
- Take a homebound elderly friend to lunch or dinner.
- Visit the Alzheimer’s unit of a nursing home.
- Cut or buy fresh flowers for a nursing home or care facility.
- Let families share their children with senior citizens through an Adopt-a-Grandparent program. This could be a one-time visit, a group visit, or an ongoing project.

### **SOCIAL STUDIES**

- Read about/discuss current events; prepare friendship boxes for children in disaster areas around the world; the local Red Cross can provide lists of appropriate items to include in the boxes

- Develop plans for reducing hunger in their community
- Develop, write, and lobby for passage of a bill giving high school credit for service-learning and/or community service
- Track and publish the voting records of local officials
- Research statistics cited by candidates for office
- Study issues and educate the public about them from a non-partisan perspective
- Organize a conference on drunk driving for area high schools; feature skits and question-and-answer sessions
- Organize, with the help of the League of Women Voters, voter registration of all 18-year-olds at their high school
- Contact your local League of Women Voters or voter registration office and what you can do to help people register to vote
- Organize a public issues forum for your neighborhood
- Volunteer at a polling booth the day of an election
- Offer to pass out election materials
- Design a book about local landmarks; house the book in the local library
- Study the history of Memorial Day; meet with/interview veterans, organize special performances/services for veterans and their families
- Study the history of Veteran's Day; interview veterans, provide special performances/services/recognition for veterans and their families
- Visit a local cemetery, select a name off an old headstone, go through the public library/court record to reestablish history of the individual; compile all histories into a book for the local library
- Host a Senior Prom for senior citizens; interview senior citizens and make yearbooks to be given out at the dance/party (teach them your dances and ask them to teach you theirs)
- Fold ribbons for awareness campaigns (breast cancer, AIDS, immunization, etc.)
- Become a spokes-family for a cause you care about

**For more information about youth volunteer opportunities please contact:**

Andrea Bloomquist  
 Volunteer Center Specialist  
 United Way Volunteer Center  
 (970) 407-7054  
[abloomquist@uwaylc.org](mailto:abloomquist@uwaylc.org)