



## ***4-H Quick Tips - Community Service Ideas***

### **Help For The Hungry/Homeless**

- Collect money for a homeless shelter by having the crowd at a basketball game toss money into an open blanket as students hold it going around the gym
- 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
- Organize a neighborhood group to plant, tend and harvest a vegetable garden
- Donate the produce to a food shelf
- Collect canned goods, toys, household items for those in need
- Collect coats and blankets for distribution

### **Senior Citizens**

- Organize a clean brigade and volunteer at the homes of elderly citizens
- Adopt a "grandfriend"
- Visit a nursing home
- Rake leaves, shovel snow, clean gutters, or wash windows for a senior citizen
- Pickup medicine, or groceries for an elderly person
- Write your "grandfriend" a letter, or write letters for an elderly person
- Go for a walk with a senior citizen in your community
- Hold an afternoon dance for your local nursing home
- Teach them your dances and ask them to teach you theirs
- 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
- Assist with Senior Olympics or start one if there is not one in your town
- Make cards and decorations to celebrate holidays in Senior Centers, extended care facilities, hospitals or nursing homes

### **School Activities**

- Adopt a future 4-H'er
  - Paint a mural over graffiti
  - Sponsor a "sock hop" where you charge a pair of children's sock as admission to the event
  - Organize and invite local police officers to present a drug awareness or bike safety assembly
  - Form volunteer teams for a campus safety escort service
  - Tutor a student that needs help learning English or some other subject
  - Organize a canned good drive in conjunction with a school dance and donate the goods to a food shelf
  - Collect and donate books to the library
  - Organize a walk-a-thon, rock-a-thon, etc. for a needy organization, group, or family.
  - Make "Kits for Kids" by decorating shoe boxes and filling them with school supplies, toys, and other items
  - Challenge other school clubs or groups to see which organization can collect the most canned food in a week. Donate to a food bank
  - Print coloring book pages from the computer and staple into coloring books for children at the hospital and in homeless shelters
  - Volunteer at the Community Welcome Center
  - Volunteer at the Salvation Army, Goodwill or Soup Kitchen
  - Assist the Red Cross with a blood drive
  - Decorate a Christmas tree for the birds
- ### **Community/Neighborhood Enhancement**
- Organize a yard work crew to clean areas in older cemeteries, parks, and church grounds
  - Help neighbors paint and repair their homes
  - Clean up a vacant lot
  - Organize a community beautification project
  - Organize a campaign to raise money to purchase and install new playground equipment in an area park
  - Host a breakfast with Santa program to provide breakfast, presents, and holiday activities for low-income families
  - Campaign for additional lighting along poorly lighted streets
  - Paint a mural or clean up a local park
  - Plant flowers in public areas that could use some color
  - Work as a library helper shelving books and reading to kids
  - Volunteer at a local hospital
  - Volunteer as a mentor/recreation leader in a housing development, after school program, or day camp
  - Volunteer to assist with the library summer reading

program.

- Assist with a health fair
- Collect suitcases, clothes, toys, etc. for kids in foster care
- Volunteer to help 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
- Read books or the newspaper on tape for visually impaired people
- Bring toys to children in the cancer ward of a hospital
- Form a team for Relay for Life
- Collect cards for the "Born Again" cards program of St. Jude's Hospital

### **Politics and Government**

- Write letters or cards to servicemen and women
- Contact your local League of Women Voters or voter registration office, or Kids Voting Georgia
- Ask what you can do to help people register to vote
- Identify a local issue you are concerned about and contact someone in local government with your ideas on what to do about it
- Organize a public issues forum for your neighborhood
- Volunteer at a polling booth the day of an election
- Offer to pass out election materials

### **The Environment**

- Donate newspapers to a paper drive or organize your own paper drive
- Plant a garden or tree where the whole neighborhood can enjoy it
- Set up a recycling system for your home and participate in your neighborhood curbside recycling pick-up
- Organize a carpooling campaign in your neighborhood to cut down on air pollution
- Adopt an acre of rainforest
- Clean up trash along a river, in a park, along the beach, on a nature trail or along the road
- Create a habitat for wildlife
- Create a Campaign to encourage biking and walking
- Test the health of the water in your local lakes, rivers, or streams
- Plan and build a nature trail

### **Pets/Animals**

- Work with a local veterinarian and coordinate an animal health or rabies clinic
- Take animals to a Senior Center, children's camp or center for disabled kids or adults
- Volunteer at the local animal shelter
- Work with adopt-a-greyhound program

### **For Those with Special Needs**

- Work with dog training programs for the disabled
- Start a "Critter Sitter" service in your neighborhood to feed and care for their pets while owners are away

### **The Arts**

- Charge "late fees" of \$.25 for cast members who arrive late for rehearsal, need to leave early, etc. Collect fees and donate to a local charity
- Hold an art fair to involve community youth in art, music, and theater
- Create a mentoring program for older youth to team-up with younger youth on arts projects in communities
- Collect musical cassettes, compact discs, and videos to donate to a day care center or after school program that serves disadvantaged children
- Sing at after-school programs and day care centers
- Collect money for charity by placing collection cans on the desks of teachers in your school. Students can make a contribution to the teacher they would most like to see sing a solo at the next school assembly or concert. The teacher with the most money is his/her collection can/will need to sing that solo.
- Volunteer to be the special entertainment for a charitable cause in your community or for a charity's special event
- Hold a benefit concert and donate the admission proceeds from the concert to charity.
- Perform regularly at a nursing home, shelter, or day care center. Have sing-a-longs and teach them new songs. Stay to talk or help with activities.

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### **SOURCES / CREDITS:**

Youth Service America materials and web site  
America Sings materials and web site  
Character Counts materials and web site  
Jr./Sr. Project Development - Jenny Jordan, Extension 4-H Specialist  
Make A Difference Day materials and web site  
Nickelodeon's Big Help Day materials and web site

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