



What is Service Learning?

Many students have a strong desire to help animals. Whether to save wild animals from poaching or finding homeless animals a loving family, students want to be part of the solution. According to DoSomething.org, the online community activist website for teens, helping animals is rated one of the young peoples' top five important social causes. Service learning that incorporates helping animals is a wonderful opportunity to encourage students' interest in animal welfare while providing learning in multiple subject areas.

Community Service has often been the traditional choice for students who want to help in their community. Students often work on a service project for a limited amount of time and there is often recognition for the completed work, either in the form of school credits or a small token of gratitude from their respective beneficiaries. Service Learning, which incorporates academic learning into service projects, is becoming more common and popular in today's classroom. Students not only benefit from helping those who are less fortunate, but they also learn a great deal in various subject areas throughout the duration of their project. For example, instead of just volunteering at the local soup kitchen, students may research the history of soup kitchens and determine how to lobby to increase funding for their community's homeless population.

In some school districts, service learning is a requirement. In others, only community service is mandated. When only community service is required, service learning should still to be encouraged, mainly for the benefit of the students. They will get more out of their projects by learning about the issues concerning animals and their community, in addition to developing skills in various subjects. Students will also get real life experience, which may help determine a career path, as well as the feeling of connection to a community, whether local or global.

In order for students to get the most out of service learning, it is important to incorporate the four stages of service learning – Preparation, Reflection, Action and Demonstration. **Preparation** will ensure that you have identified a need and established a goal for service and learning. **Reflection** before and throughout the project will allow both teachers and students to monitor their



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actions of service, as well as define the learning that will occur. **Action** ensures that students are working with their community partners to achieve the goal. **Demonstration** provides students with the opportunity to share their experiences with others, either through written materials (pamphlet, Web page, editorial) or spoken means (presentation, assemblies).

Students can choose from various forms of service projects – Direct, Indirect, Advocacy and Research.

- By providing direct service, students work hands-on with their beneficiary. Feeding and walking dogs in the shelter is an example of direct service.
- Indirect service benefits the community as a whole. Developing a fun and informational Web page to encourage adoption at the local shelter is an example of indirect service.

- Advocacy campaigns allow students to speak up for political changes both local and global. Writing a letter local officials and the editor of the local paper to encourage more funding for the animal shelter is an example of advocacy.
- Research involves students conducting interviews and surveys to determine public thought on an issue. Interviewing residents on their views and opinions of the local shelter is an example of research.

When students work on a local issue concerning animals, they will be able to see practical results and again, as they build a strong connection with their community. Local animal shelters and humane societies are always looking for help in various areas. The most popular is hands-on work with animals (e.g. walking shelter dogs, socializing and playing with cats, cage cleaning). Some of your students may not be old enough to work with the animals, as there is usually an age restriction, mainly for legal and safety reasons. In general, the age to work directly with animals varies from 12 to 16. Even if your students cannot work directly with the animals, there are still many opportunities at the shelter. Students can work on administrative tasks, help plan special events, and make dog and cat toys and collars. This will give them a variety of opportunities to learn, from learning the history, function and operations of the shelter to understanding how dog and cat behavior is similar and/or different from human behavior.

Additional projects to help in the community involve creating an adoption and/or spay/neuter campaign to reduce the number of animals who enter shelters.

Students can research why spay/neuter is important and use their mathematical skills to determine the impact that reducing overpopulation can have on shelters. Students will then be able to use their writing, communication and artistic skills to create their campaigns. Making a billboard, information pamphlets and/or a local public service announcement are all ways to get their message to the public.

Some service learning projects with animals allow students to work with people in their community with whom they may not normally have much interaction. An example of this involves students helping elderly residents get pet supplies and/or walking their dogs. Students can interview their new senior friend on the changes they have seen in their community and possibly write a report detailing how life or pet-keeping was different fifty years ago.

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Students can also lobby for local, state and national laws and programs to help animals. Some local projects include lobbying to create a dog park to increase the amount of funding to the shelter. These projects utilize mathematical, writing and social science skills. Some examples on the state level include advocating for stronger felony penalties and increased sentencing for animal cruelty crimes. Students will be able to learn about historical and legal issues involving animals, as well as gain an understanding of how the legal and judicial system work. Some national issues that students could support include creating a federal mandate for spay/neuter or increase in federal funding for animal issues. Students will also learn that although some laws don't get passed, laws for animals have significantly improved in the last few decades due to public concern.

Supporting local animal causes has immense benefits, but helping animals nationally and globally can be just as rewarding.

Students can research and learn about their causes via the Internet and even watch live Webcams of their subjects. It also helps to create a broad awareness of the issues around the world. Students will be able to recognize that there is a global community of people who want to help animals, which brings a feeling of connection.

Helping land and ocean wildlife is often a concern for many students. Many classrooms have adopted an animal who is threatened in some form (e.g. Adopt a Manatee Program).

These programs do provide opportunities for learning whereby students can study manatees and track the progress of their adoptee. Students will also gain an understanding of how their money is being utilized, which is an important concept for students to grasp. Raising awareness about endangered species has also been a popular cause among students. Students can learn a lot about the history of their chosen animals as well as the social, environmental and economic reasons of why these animals are in danger. These programs

have often proved successful. Some of the animals once on the endangered species list are now thriving.

Raising awareness helps and these programs, with their strong element of learning, should be encouraged.

The above suggestions are just some of the many service learning projects with animals. The ASPCA has developed a number of service learning projects with animals linked to national standards. They are featured on aspcaeducation.org.

Since many students want to help animals, these projects won't feel like work to them.

They will be excited and motivated, plus the benefits they receive will be social, emotional and educational. The animals will benefit, too!



Activity Sheet 1 Grades K-2



In this activity, students are introduced to animal shelters, the process of adopting a pet and about service-learning. Read or ask your students to read *“Let’s Get a Pup” Said Kate* by Bob Graham (Candlewick Press, 2001) or *Lucky, A Dog’s Best Friend* by Gus Clarke (Kane/Miller Book Publishers, 2005). Both books introduce students to animal shelters as a place from which to adopt pets into the family.

After reading one of the books, explain to your students that the class will be making some special treats and/or toys for the animals at your local animal shelter. These activities are the service component of service-learning.

For the learning component of the activity, following the instructions on Activity Sheet #1, and ask your students

to measure out specific quantities of the necessary ingredients.

Visit aspc.org/findashelter or check your local phone book to find your local shelters.

STANDARDS:

NCTM Mathematics #1:

Understand measurable attributes of objects and the units, systems, and processes of measurement.

NCTM Mathematics #2:

Apply appropriate techniques, tools, and formulas to determine measurements

NCTE English Language Arts #1:

Reading for perspective.

CNAEA Visual Arts #1:

Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.

Activity Sheet 2 Grades 3-5



Students create beautiful bird feeders and attract native species in their school yard. With this activity, your students

are receiving an introduction to volunteerism, and the satisfaction gained from helping others. Help organize students in a group walk around the grounds of your school, where they will chart and sketch the species of birds they find. Guide them to the Internet or school library to learn more about the birds’ habits—what they eat and where they go in different seasons. The class will create bird feeders from recycled materials (instructions in activity) and decide the best place to hang them. Help students plan a budget for supplies and a check list of responsibilities. When all the plans are completed, lead a classroom discussion about the costs involved, amounts of food needed per day (measurement) and the monetary value of their donated time.

This project will beautify your school grounds, provide food for native species of birds, and provide your students with a sense of accomplishment.

Your class may modify this project depending on budget and interest involving students in lower grades in this project is a fun way to show what your students have learned.

Extension Activity: 12 bird feeders, 1/2 cup of food per day, 180 school days per year, how many cups of bird food will you need? (ANSWER: 1080 cups of food for the year!) How many ounces of food is that? (ANSWER: 8640 ounces)

STANDARDS:

NCTM Mathematics #3:

Compute fluently and make reasonable estimates.

NCTE English Language Arts #8:

Developing research tools.

NCTE English Language Arts #7:

Evaluating data.

NCTE English Language Arts #5:

Communication strategies.

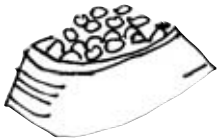
NCSS Social Sciences #5:

Roles of citizens.



Teacher Instructions

Activity Sheet 3 Grades 6-8



In this activity, students will team up with their local food bank to help the pets of owners in need by collecting and distributing pet food to these families.

Students will learn how pets bring joy and companionship to families in all facets of society; they will exercise their letter and grant-writing skills; and the importance of helping families and pets in need.

You will be able to provide guidance by encouraging them to search on the Internet for local food banks and community organizations that provide meals to the needy. Guide them in writing grants to pet food companies, requesting donations and writing letters to the local food banks presenting their project. Encourage them to write a proposal about their project, and volunteer with your students at the local food bank to assist with food distribution. For grant- and letter-writing ideas, visit Service-Learning Clearinghouse at servicelearning.org and National Youth Leadership Council at nylc.org.

Encourage discussion and guide students in writing a grant, checklist, budget, and, if needed, project proposal to distribute to the food bank and pet food company,

publicity and research. It is important to offer students a time for reflection as a group or in journals about their experience in working on the project, volunteering and any follow-up they feel is necessary.

Extension Activity: Students can compare and contrast how the service for pet food distribution has increased, including interest from families, since the program was introduced.

STANDARDS:

NCTE English Language Arts #4: Communication Skills.

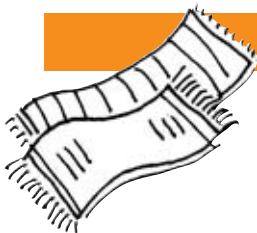
NCTE English Language Arts #8: Developing research tools.

NCTM Mathematics #3: Compute fluently and make reasonable estimates.

NETS Technology #5: Technology Research Tools.

CNAEA Visual Arts #1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.

Activity Sheet 4 Grades K-8



Collecting gently used towels and blankets and donating them to the local animal shelter is a great way to help animal

shelters save money and make the stay of shelter animals more comfortable. This activity, is a fundraising activity to support any service-learning project. Encourage your students to research on the Internet for their local animal shelters. Then, find out if the shelters have wish lists. They will notice that many shelters accept towel and blanket donations.

To prepare for the towel/blanket drive, help your students in assigning tasks to each student involved, such as calling shelters in your area, finding a location to hold the event,

creating posters, publicizing and distributing posters, collecting towels and blankets, sorting towels and blankets and boxing the donations.

This activity can easily be modified for younger students.

STANDARDS:

NCTE English Language Arts #4: Communication Skills.

NETS Technology #5: Technology Research Tools.

CNAEA Visual Arts #1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.

What is Service Learning?

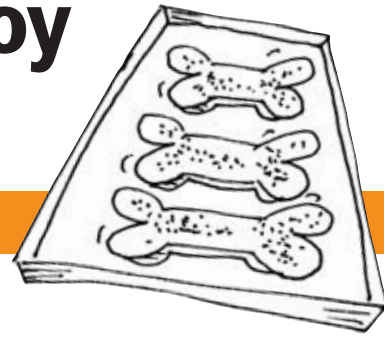
To learn more about service learning and the steps needed for a successful and rewarding service learning project, sign up for a free ASPCA brochure, *What is Service Learning?* by Cathryn Berger Kaye, author of *The Complete Guide to Service Learning*.

Please visit aspcaeducation.org to receive your free copy.





How to Make a Catnip Toy and Bake Dog Biscuits



CATNIP TOY

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Stuff the toe of the sock with 1 tablespoon of dried catnip.
- Next, stuff the foot of the sock with cotton balls or craft stuffing.
- Squeeze fabric glue on the inside of the sock's ribbing to glue the sock closed or knot the top of the sock.
- Decorate with fabric markers.

NOTE: DO NOT add a fabric or yarn tail. It can be swallowed and become caught in the cat's intestines, which could possibly result in a need for surgery.

SUPPLIES:

Infant or child size crew socks
Cotton balls or craft stuffing
Dried Catnip
Non-toxic permanent markers
Non-toxic washable fabric glue

CRUNCH AND MUNCH DOG BISCUITS

Make sure there's an adult to supervise and read the entire recipe before you begin baking.

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees.
2. Dissolve yeast in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup warm water. Add to vegetable or chicken stock. Next, combine all dry ingredients in a separate bowl; add stock mixture.
3. Knead mixture on a floured surface for about 3 minutes, working into a stiff dough. Roll out to a thickness of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. You can cut them into bars or use a dog-bone cookie cutter.
4. Beat 1 egg with 1 tablespoon milk. Brush each biscuit with a little of the egg/milk mixture and place on cookie sheets. Bake for about 45 minutes.
5. Turn off the heat, but leave biscuits in the oven overnight. This makes them hard and crunchy.
6. Give biscuit to dog and watch the shelter dog munch away!



INGREDIENTS:

1 package dry yeast
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup warm water
1 pint vegetable or chicken stock
3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups unbleached flour
2 cups whole-wheat flour
1 cup rye flour
2 cups cracked wheat or wheat germ
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry milk
1 teaspoon salt (optional)
1 egg
1 tablespoon milk
Makes 4 to 5 dozen dog biscuits



Beautify Your School



Many animals live and play right in your schoolyard. Wouldn't it be nice to attract even more animals to your school grounds, and help them live full, healthy lives? You might even learn something in the process! The following are several ideas for you and your classmates to appreciate wildlife.

Scavenger Hunt

Have a “bird scavenger hunt” with your class. Take a walk around the school grounds, and count as many birds as you can. Take sketch pads to draw the birds you see. Based on which part of the country you live in, you will see many different types of birds. Keep a list of the birds. Now for the research... First, identify the birds you saw using the Internet or books from your school library. Then investigate which birds are native to your area and which have been introduced. Learn what they eat. Some birds thrive on nuts, berries, seeds, suet or insects.

Create a Budget

How many birdfeeders are you going to make? What will it cost to fill each feeder twice a week? After you figure out the costs, start taking up a collection in your school to pay for the bird food. Make a list of how much feed you will need for the school year for your feeders.

Create the Feeders

Bring in empty plastic gallon milk containers, or 64-ounce plastic soda bottles. Cut out a section from the front of the bottle, large enough for birds to enter and eat the food inside. Poke small holes in the bottom of the feeder for drainage in case it rains. Tie strong string at the top of your feeder and hang from the trees, shrubs and fences around your school. Check the feeders every day. If the food is getting eaten, you are attracting birds!

Total Count

After a couple of weeks, have another walk around the grounds. Count the birds you see again. Do you see any new species? Are they the birds you were hoping to attract? If not, can you figure out why?

Prepare Booklets

Illustrate the booklets with sketches of the birds in your school yard and their needs. These books can be used by future classes, so they will be able to easily continue taking care of the birds at your school.

You may invite younger students to join your class in your walk-around. Show them what you've done, and discuss ways they can help beautify your school grounds, and live in harmony with the wildlife around you.



Work With Your Local Food Bank

You and your classmates can work with your local food bank to develop a program to provide for pets of those less fortunate. Your teacher, parents/caregiver and friends can assist with this project.

RESEARCH

Begin by researching the various food banks and soup kitchens in your community through the Internet or library. These services may be offered by hunger relief organizations, religious organizations, or other non-profit groups. Through research, you will learn about the various organizations that provide food and the other services they provide. Write a letter to these organizations explaining your program, let them know that you and your classmates are willing to help provide pet food for those in need.



CREATE A PLAN

Decide on the organization, based on responses to your letter, that will benefit from the program.

Create a food distribution plan that includes the type of food and how the food will be packaged. For example, you can provide a small bag of dry food, pull-tab can of wet food, a toy, a treat and disposable bowl in a paper tote bag. Items will depend on the kind of donations you receive.

Solicit donations from pet food manufacturers. Write letters to pet food companies asking for donations. Explain your project and the type of food you need, such as dry food, wet food, pet treats and toys.

Write a grant proposal. Apply for a service-learning grant or another type of grant to cover the cost of food, distribution, advertising and other administrative costs. Research the Internet on how to write a grant and types of grants available.

Conduct a fundraiser if you need to cover additional costs or to purchase any additional items.

Work with the organization to decide on delivery of food, dates of service, whether you and your classmates can volunteer to distribute the pet food, and any other details you can think of.

Advertise. Create posters and flyers or call your local radio station to announce the service. Ask the food bank for permission to mention their name in any advertisements.





Service Project: Towel and Blanket Drive

Collecting towels and blankets will help reduce the cost of caring for homeless animals in your local shelter—and they're usually always in great demand and very much appreciated! Search on the Internet for local animal shelters in your area. Look at their websites for a wish list, and check if towels and blankets are on the list. If so, you are ready to begin your project. The following is a guide to help you with your towel/blanket drive.

Getting Started



Contact a shelter. Contact shelters in your local city or town. Find a shelter at aspca.org/findashelter.

Ask for help. You will need lots of help to organize the event, collect donations, sort towels and blankets, and deliver the donations to the shelters. Ask friends and classmates and seek the help of an adult, such as a teacher, guardian, parent or community group leader.

Next, you should figure out what needs to be done and give a task to each person in your group.

Date and location of event. Once you have decided on a location for the event such as a school, community center or other location, decide on a date well in advance.

Get The Word Out

Create posters asking people to donate towels and blankets. Place posters in schools, community groups and clubs to which you belong. Please remember to ask permission before putting up a poster in any location. Make sure to include date and location of the event, theme, a brief description of the event, where the towels and blankets will be donated, and how donations should be packaged.

Day of Event

Location: Put up several posters to clearly mark your location for the towel and blanket collection. Display something colorful, like balloons, to draw attention. Use your imagination!

Materials: Set up a table to greet donors as they arrive. Hand out any information you would like to give away about the organization to which you are donating the towels and blankets.

Sign Up! Get a special notebook to record the name and address of each donor, and what they donated. You can ask them to sign in themselves, or assign someone to record the information. This information can be used to send donors information on future events and updates on the success of the drive.

Collection Bins: Have boxes set-up in an area to place donated towels and blankets. The boxes should be clearly marked.

The End

Congratulations! When the drive is over, determine when you will be able to get the towels and blankets to the shelter. Discuss with team members the outcome of the project and brainstorm for other ideas for your next project.