

Community Service Resources for Mentors

Overview

Having an opportunity to do something helpful for others can be a gratifying experience. It is an experience that many children never get a chance to have. Community service as a mentoring activity can be fun while also providing a child with a chance to make a positive difference. This resource is designed to help mentors engage their mentee in exploring how they can give back and to encourage their voice and choice in selecting the activities.

Important Points to Keep in Mind

Including a community service activity during the first year of their match is a great way to learn more about each other and to share a unique and meaningful. This activity can be done in a group or individual setting and can either be organized by the mentoring program or by the match. The intention behind this activity is to provide youth with an opportunity to practice kindness and gratitude, to expose youth to new people, places, and experiences, and to include youth as partners in the planning and decision making process.

Just as important as the activity is the opportunity to reflect on the experience afterward. Being involved in an act of service can be an eye-opening and/or humbling experience for both mentor and mentee. It provides a chance to learn things about yourself, each other, and your community that you may not have known. Make sure to take the time after the activity to reflect on how it made you each feel and what you thought about it. Don't worry if you don't have all the answers; sometimes just exploring the questions together is a powerful experience. Also remember that the staff at your program are always there to help you process the bigger questions.

Types of Activities

Finding the right community service opportunity can be overwhelming sometimes. Here is a list of ideas that other matches have tried in the past. Feel free to use this as a starting point as you brainstorm with your mentee about what you may like to do together.

Community Partner Activities - activities that you do through another organization or event

- Non-profit farms need help with cleaning up and caring for animals
- [Pack Away Hunger](#) or other food packing events
- Nursing home visits to play board games or just talk
- Decorate placemats for Meals on Wheels
- Park clean-up
- Gleaning for food banks

Individual Activities - activities that you and your mentee can do together, or with other matches at your agency

- Making cards for kids in the hospital
- Making kits for homeless pregnant women within the community
- Paint "kindness" rocks and place them around the community for others to find
- Making blankets for an animal shelter
- Create small stuffed animals to donate at firehouses and police stations for kids in tough/traumatic situations
- Gardening/raking leaves/tree planting for elderly or disabled neighbors

Community Service and Gratitude Reading List

If this activity sparked an interest for you or your mentee, you may also want to explore some books that focus on service and gratitude. Reading about others' experiences may help to spark an interest in your mentee or give you both a new perspective to reflect on a service activity that you did together. Below is a selection of books from the Doing Good Together [reading list](#):

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Children's Books

- Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are? by Dr. Seuss
- Is There Really a Human Race? by Jamie Lee Curtis
- No one but You by Douglas Wood

Adolescent Books

- I Will Make a Difference: Students Aspire to Inspire by Gary Martin Hayes and Adam Christopher West
- Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman
- Where the Mountain Meets the Moon by Grace Lin