



When you woke up this morning, what did you decide to try to accomplish today? Maybe finish an assignment, catch up with an old friend, go to the gym, run some errands. What about change the world?

It sounds crazy, maybe even impossible, but really it is quite simple. The time is NOW, and YOU are the answer. You may not realize all that you have to offer, but you can start a movement that changes the world.

Find Your Passion

What issues make you stop and think? What news stories make you want to DO something? When you walk or drive through your community, do you see the effects of poverty? Are the rivers and streams polluted? Have you, a friend or a family member been personally affected by a disease?

Meaningful action begins with passion. When you know what issues are important to you, action is a natural result; you will be driven to act on your passion and convince others to join you.

You can be passionate about a huge global issue, such as HIV/AIDS, or about something closer to home, such as the neglected state of the playground in your neighborhood. The important thing is to know what fires your passion—and then figure out how to use that to change our world.

Connect with Your Community

Take some time to get to know your community. Then figure out how your passion fits into what you see. Make sure what you want to do is truly needed by the community. For example, you might be passionate about homeless pets and you want to paint the outside of the local animal shelter. However, a little research might reveal that the shelter has a population of 75 animals but can only feed 50. How might this change your project plans?

How do you make sure that you're dedicating yourself (and your supporters) to the most productive and effective activities related to your passion? Easy: Ask the community!

Find out all you can about the issue in the community where you are serving. Talk to the people who live there. Visit your local volunteer



center or other community agencies that are already working around your issue of interest. Search the internet for information about the issue in your community, such as statistics or trends over the past few years.

The important thing is to focus on the community's actual needs, not just on what you think they want or need. By working together with community members, you will build community awareness and help ensure community buy-in and support for your campaign activities.

Engage Others

Why should your friends, family or neighbors share or care about your passion? It's time to start thinking about how you're going to get others involved. Mobilization (recruitment) is the process of showing people that they actually can do something they already want to do. All the reasons why you want to act and create change can apply to others, too. It's your job to show them how important your issue is and why they should support and advocate your cause.

Before you can begin recruiting supporters, you have to know whom you need and what you want them to do. Map out a recruitment strategy—who, how and when.

You can gain supporters and recruit volunteers in a variety of different ways. You can ask them individually. You can post flyers and pass out brochures. You can visit classes or weekly meetings of the groups you want to involve. Don't forget the internet, school newspaper or radio station, bulletin boards, or blogs. Word of mouth is one of your best tools, so spread the message! Remember . . . think beyond your group of friends or the people you see every day.



Mobilize

You know what issues you are passionate about. You have some ideas for things that are truly needed by the community. So now it's time to act. The action should be something you and other supporters will enjoy doing.

Planning your project will take some effort. Take time BEFORE the activity to plan what you're going to do, what you will need, how you're going to get it, who will do what, and all the other details that will make your project a success.

Find Money and Resources

Mobilization and action to achieve social change through service projects can require financial and material resources. So how do you recruit partners and sponsors to support your passion?

Grants, gifts and in-kind donations are a great way to get support from individuals, corporations and community organizations. Contact businesses or organizations that already have a connection to your issue area or that are known to support social causes. Use your contacts, and don't be afraid to make new ones.

Develop a strategy for approaching a group or business about donating money, services or in-kind goods. Identify the correct people to contact, and make targeted requests that appeal to their needs/wants. Clearly communicate why the project is important, the impact it will create, your team's ability to complete the project and how the group/business can be a part of the effort. Be specific about what you need from them, whether it is funds to purchase a certain item, three hours of consulting time on a particular topic or contacts to other like-minded organizations that might want to get involved. Prepare your strategy and then ASK!

When you're trying to decide on what to do, consider these things:

- What do you most enjoy doing with/for others?
- When you look back on this year, what things will stick in your memory? Why?
- What do you want to accomplish?
- What kinds of service projects or activities would you and others in your community (friends, family members, others you recruit) like to do?



Make connections that count! Here are some tips:

- Start with people you know (family, friends, neighbors, other students).
- Ask people you know to engage their friends to support your project.
- Partner with associations and institutions in your community. Businesses, non-profits, community centers and neighborhood associations can help you recruit sponsors, secure donations, obtain meeting space, etc.
- Talk personally with people to “sell” your project and get their support.
- Know what you need, and ask people how they can contribute.
- Create and post flyers in your community. Be sure to include e-mail and phone contacts.
- Publicize your project in local newspapers, web sites and newsletters.
- Don’t be afraid to “tap” people’s emotions (happiness, anger, fear, passion) and incite them to get involved.
- Try creative outreach approaches, such as posting flyers or hosting outreach stations on college campuses and at local corner stores, bus stops, fast food spots, or other informal gathering places.

Be sure to thank your contacts and sponsors for donating to and supporting your cause. Sending a post-service summary on how their contributions helped to achieve success is an effective strategy to building long-lasting partnerships.

After you have secured these resources, don’t forget to create a budget—and stick to it. Budgeting isn’t always easy, but with the right tools, it can be quick, easy and painless. From the beginning of the planning process, manage your budget carefully. It’s important to watch your expenses and the funds you have available through sponsorship or fundraising.



Here are some basic steps to preparing a budget:

1. **Assess your needs.** Determine what funding you need.
2. **Recognize what you have.** List funding and other resources you have from grants, gifts, donations, etc.
3. **Create categories.** Separate costs by category (e.g., supplies, foods/beverages, printed goods, communication costs, volunteer recognition items, etc.).
4. **Stick to your budget.** Track your income and expenses based on the categories. If your budget starts getting off track, try to figure out where you are overspending (or underspending) and adjust accordingly.

Spread the Word

Publicity for your cause is essential to raising awareness of the issue, leading to possible community-generated solutions, boosting support and sponsorship, and inspiring people to take action. You have lots of choices on how to publicize your message, including:

➤Flyers, posters or banners	➤Mass e-mail distribution
➤Media campaigns	➤Public announcements at local events
➤Press releases	➤Online social networks, forums and blog sites

Make use of viral marketing, a technique that leverages people to spread a marketing message to others, creating potential for exponential growth in the message's exposure and influence. Consider these tips for using viral marketing to publicize your activities, gain support, and secure resources:

- **Use word-of-mouth.** Once you have a core group of supporters, they will be your best resource for advertising and recruiting others. Think six degrees of separation: with a team of people talking about your cause and message, individuals can spread the word to many more people using their social networks than you can as one person.



- **Utilize more online and fewer printed materials.** Use online social networking services, such as facebook.com and myspace.com, and post blogs, videos, pictures and news updates as quick and effective marketing strategies—for free! These online outlets facilitate 24-7 streams of communication and accessibility, which have notably increased civic mobilization and action.
- **Highlight and connect the benefits of service** to people’s own motivations so they find personal value in engaging others.
- **Tap into existing networks** in the local area and on college campuses, such as clubs, fraternities/sororities, academic departments or community centers.

The viral nature of the web enhances an individual’s ability to communicate quickly and effectively to thousands of people. By sharing information about something important to you through online social networks and content-rich media, such as blogs and videos, your messages are searchable and can be seen by anyone using the internet. As people actively respond to postings with their own questions, answers and opinions, your message can become self-sustaining, thus increasing your chances for new and continued support. Your job is to start the conversation.

Act

Successful service projects exhibit a good balance between logistics, time and people. As the leader, you will need to consider and coordinate these three elements carefully in order to implement a successful, productive activity.

Logistics: Plan for and be prepared to manage these aspects of event logistics:

- ✓Scheduling
- ✓Registration
- ✓Safety
- ✓Access to event site
- ✓Food, beverage and breaks
- ✓Weather and attire
- ✓Evaluation and feedback

Time: Establish a schedule (or run of show) for the project. This will help you and other leaders manage the various details once on site. Do your best to keep things moving on time so that you accomplish the



goals of the activity. Don't be afraid to adjust the work as needed; it's better to complete some of the tasks than to leave all of them half-finished. The volunteers will continue to feel motivated when they see progress, even if it's only part of the overall goal.

People: You want each volunteer to understand the purpose of the project, the various tasks and individual responsibilities. You want them to have fun, get the job done and feel appreciated for their work. Remember to recognize and thank your volunteers and supporters for their contributions and service.

Go Deeper

You started your service activity by identifying a community issue that you are passionate about. Just as you did in gaining supporters, you must continuously connect the work your volunteers are doing to address the larger community issue. So how do you communicate the value of this service event by connecting it with the bigger picture?

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead

Reflect to help volunteers see how their work has benefited the community. Through reflection, volunteers can think about their commitment, what work they did (or will do or are doing), how it affected them, the impact it made on the community and future actions they can take to continue to effect social change.

You can help volunteers reflect on their service in a variety of ways. Volunteers can have a group discussion, blog about their experience, create an online photo-journal of the activity or respond to quotes about service. Think about ways to share these reflections and continue post-project discussion and engagement using online resources.

Be sure to recognize and thank the individuals and groups involved in your project for their contributions. Include volunteers, community members, funders, sponsors, partners, community leaders and other supporters. These people have invested time, energy, attention and resources to make your project successful. People tend to excel when they are acknowledged for their hard work and participation and can celebrate their accomplishments; the key is to maintain active engagement and commitment of your current supporters and use their voices and experiences to gain new advocates.



Additional Resources

The Resource Center: www.nationalservicerresources.org

Campus Compact: www.compact.org

Civic Reflection: www.civicreflection.org

Do Something: www.dosomething.org

Energize: www.energizeinc.com

Idealist Action without Borders: www.idealist.org

National Service Learning Clearinghouse: www.servicelearning.org

National Youth Leadership Council: www.nylc.org

Nonprofit Technology Network: www.nten.org

Raise Your Voice: www.actionforchange.org

Service Leader: www.serviceleader.org

Students in Service to America: www.studentsinservicetoamerica.org

Taking It Global: www.takingitglobal.org

Creating Change: How organizations connect with youth, build communities, and strengthen themselves:

<http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/store/95>

How to give a presentation:

http://www.americorpsweek.gov/assets/files/08_0408_acweek_guide.pdf

Asking for donations:

http://nationalservicerresources.org/epicenter/practices/index.php?ep_action=view&ep_id=445

Working with the media:

http://www.americorpsweek.gov/pdf/Media_Guide.pdf



Working with local media:

<http://encorps.nationalservicerresources.org/resources/documents/LocalMedia.pdf>

Ways to get press attention:

http://www.americorpsweek.gov/pdf/acw2008_tenways.pdf

http://www.americorpsweek.gov/pdf/acw2008_quicktips.pdf

Diversifying your recruitment outreach:

http://encorps.nationalservicerresources.org/rp_outreach.php

Finalizing your service day project plan:

http://nationalservicerresources.org/epicenter/practices/index.php?ep_action=view&ep_id=4808

Celebrating and recognizing your volunteers:

http://nationalservicerresources.org/epicenter/practices/index.php?ep_action=view&ep_id=1122