



Hands On
NETWORK

Project: Organize a Food Drive

Every day, millions of Americans lack access to food. Many children receive their one and only meal for the day through the free school lunch programs. Organizations such as local food banks have been hit hard during the economic downturn as their programs often function solely through donations. Now is your chance to affect positive change in your community and end hunger locally by contributing to these struggling organizations. Help support your community today by organizing a food drive to ensure that local families have the nourishment they need to survive.

Service Project Instructions

- **Recruit project leaders:**
Call your friends, family (don't forget to involve your kids and their friends) and coworkers and ask if anyone would be interested in helping plan and implement such a project.
- **Identify partners:**
Contact your local food bank and let them know about your volunteer efforts. They may even be able to support you by helping to post fliers or recruit volunteers.
- **Recruit other volunteers and establish roles:**
You have already identified your leaders. Now it is time to maximize your volunteers' skills and interests and put them to work! Identify people to fill the following roles:
 - Theme team – one way to make your school supplies drive fun is to identify a theme.
 - Manage marketing and communications.
 - Design and create fliers.
 - Secure and disseminate large containers to serve as donation bins.
 - Manage donation pick-up and drop-off to the partner.
 - Lead reflection and recognition efforts.
- **Define a timeline:**
When will you begin and end the project? What are your milestones in between? Give yourself enough time to plan and organize the project, as well as clean up and recognize those involved.
- **Set up and disseminate your collection containers:**

Obtain collection containers (plastic bins, heavy cardboard boxes, etc.), label them properly and strategically place them in convenient and targeted locations to make it easy for people to donate.

- **Promote!**
You may want to print fliers, publish information in the newspaper, send emails and use social media to mobilize your networks. Use whatever medium you can to get the word out and engage people in the effort.
- **Hit the streets:**
Contact your local colleges and universities, places of worship, clubs and associations. Talk to people in your community and ask them to support the cause. After all, you are giving them a gift – an opportunity to give to others.
- **Transport donations to the drop-off site:**
It is easy to forget that a big part of organizing a drive is transporting the products to the site. Don't forget to ensure that all containers are collected and dropped off at the appropriate site.
- **Reflect and recognize:**
Take a few minutes to reflect on the project and the impact it had on your community. Think about ways to continue such work. Last but not least, don't forget to thank your volunteers and partners. They deserve it!

Additional Resources

To learn more about local food banks and feeding America, visit <http://feedingamerica.org>.

To get your kids involved in planning and implementing service projects, check out the following resources:

Learn more youth service projects and free service learning curricula by visiting: <http://www.childrenforchildren.org/index.php?q=node/10>

Start your own Kids Care Club and gain access to free projects and other resources to help introduce your kids to lifetime of service:

<http://www.kidscare.org>

Reflection

After your volunteer project, it is important to reflect on the experience – to think about what you did, what you learned from it and the impact it had. Here are some suggested activities:

- Tell your family and friends about something you learned and how you will continue to help others.
- Draw a picture, write a poem or create a jingle about the service activity.

- Write about your experience on your blog, Facebook account, or Twitter feed.
- If you are working with a group of volunteers to do this project, lead a group discussion with questions such as:
 - Why did you volunteer today?
 - What did you learn about poverty, hunger and helping the community?
 - What is the one thing that you will remember most about this service activity?
 - How can you continue to make a difference in our community?

| Source: Adapted from Share Our Strength No Kid Hungry http://www.strength.org/get_involved/food_drive/