



GUIDE TO COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

Committee on Community Service

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GETTING STARTED

Is your class or regional association interested in starting its own community service program? Here's what you can do.

Find a champion. Crucial to a successful project is finding a leader or leaders to spearhead it. Every Princeton alumni organization has members willing to champion a cause for which they harbor a passion. Their vision, perseverance and leadership are critical. Reach out to champions in class/regional association meetings, newsletters and emails. Once leaders surface, you're on your way.

Identify the project. Your champion has most likely identified his or her interest, but may not know exactly how to pursue it. Look at established service organizations whose infrastructure you can work within such as Habitat for Humanity, the Red Cross, and the World Wildlife Fund. Established structures make it easier to launch and sustain projects. Another option is to link with an existing ongoing project, which could be enhanced by the organization's support.

Survey your members for support. Once a project is identified, send out a survey to assess the level of interest and degree of support, or bring up the subject during a class mini or major reunion or during a regional association annual dinner. Ask specific questions about people's willingness to donate time, money, materials, etc. This will give you the basis for determining how ambitious the project should be.

Start with little steps. Even small projects make a difference. Little steps often lead to big outcomes. It is the first step that is hardest to get people to take and requires the most encouragement from you.

Consider teaming up. You might want to team up with another class, association, corporation, or local group. You don't need to go it alone. Many of the most successful projects are a result of partnership.

Do it! It is important to plan a project, but don't worry about having every detail worked out or you will never begin. Jump in and start building momentum. Take the first step and enjoy the ride.

Communicate. Communicate in every way possible the progress of the project, goals, obstacles, successes. Communication is critical to the project's sustainability and success.

For classes, tie the project to Reunions. Better yet, tie your reunion theme to your project. Doing good for the community can be fun and a strong rallying point for your class. Joining a major reunion to a class service project has had powerful results. It can bring disaffected classmates back into the class fold and entice them to attend more class events. Reunions with a community service theme tend to be better attended, more fun, and foster a real sense of class pride.