



GUIDE TO COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

From the Alumni Council Standing 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 potential community service chairs in class/regional association meetings, newsletters and emails. Once a leader surfaces, you're on your way.

Identify the project. The Community Service Chair may have his or her own special interest and often can motivate others to share their enthusiasm. If not take a 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. It is important that all of the constituents are as excited as you are about your project. 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, materials, etc. Ask classmates and regional association members for their ideas. 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.

REMEMBER, the most important thing about doing a community service project is that it should build connections among Princetonians. The strongest part of every alumni community service project should be the **in person component**. This draws regional association members and classmates together to participate in your project some meaningful way and connects them to one another as Princeton alumni. Community Service projects should bring classes and regional associations together for a common cause.

To learn if the Committee on Community Service can help your group, contact [Marguerite Vera '79](#), Associate Director for Class Affairs