

Alumni “Tigers in Service” Initiative

January-February 2018

January is the Month of Service on campus – a time to celebrate the importance of engagement and showcase the many ways that Princeton students, faculty and staff support our communities. This year, the [Alumni Council Committee on Community Service](#) is launching a similar **Tigers in Service** initiative for January and February 2018 across the alumni family. We are excited for your participation!

The Committee invites each regional association, class and affiliated group to plan a community service event or project on a date of their choosing during the January/February timeframe. Symbolic in nature, and similar to the University’s [Month of Service](#), the goal of the Tigers in Service initiative is to encourage alumni to learn and engage through service opportunities, which we hope will inspire service year-round.

While ideally you should seek to create a service project that can be sustained, we see the Tigers in Service initiative as a vehicle for alumni groups that have not yet coordinated such projects to begin doing so – or for alumni groups that have projects underway to launch something new and special. **Accordingly, at this stage, we are asking simply that you plan and carry out some kind of project that reflects to the extent possible the core goals of Princeton’s commitment to hands-on community service.**

It’s easier than you might think to organize a community service project. Just keep in mind two concepts: The strongest part of every alumni community service project should be the *in-person* component; this kind of hands-on activity is at the heart of the Month of Service initiative on campus. Community Service projects is also an opportunity to bring regional associations, classes and affiliate groups together for a common cause and build ties among Princetonians.

The TigerNet web page for the [Alumni Council Committee on Community Service](#) contains helpful guidance on what to look for in a project and general advice for getting started. You can also consult the Pace Center’s Field Guide for Service, accessible as well on the Committee on Community Service web page. Take a look!

To get things started, here are some potential project ideas. These are just ideas – find what works for your group, and let's aim to have every alumni component do something service-oriented in January/February 2018! And, we would like to thank you for your commitment to service, your support for our communities, and representing the best of Princeton in your endeavor.

Project Ideas for Regional Associations:

- Perform service at a local homeless shelter or food bank/kitchen: Many larger organizations have a volunteer coordinator who can help identify specific areas of service or need, beyond simply donations of money. One regional association has committed to serve the nightly dinner at a homeless shelter on the last Friday of each month, which requires 4-7 volunteers who serve the meals and assist as needed with the approximately 500 visitors who come through. This shelter also allows groups to volunteer as well on a one-time basis, on a date that is convenient to both sides. If a shelter-type facility in your region has a volunteer coordinator, contact him or her directly. If not, approach the shelter with a proposal. One-time hands-on projects (be they serving meals, helping to clean facilities, or simply organizing a reading for kids or a games night), are relatively simple to put together and staff.
- Organize a drive for tangible goods, such as shoes or clothing, for a local shelter or aid group. Donations of business/interview type attire may be an area where Princetonians are especially able to assist. One regional association recently started a project to collect unused spare toiletries such as soaps and shampoos from local hotels and provide them to a homeless center; the projects involves contacting the hotels, placing baskets or bins in a convenient public space in the hotel with a message board explaining the concept, and then (with the assistance of trucks from the homeless center) delivering the items from the hotels periodically to the center for distribution to new residents.

- Partner with a local community service organization to help their projects/facilities: Several regional associations recently collaborated with a women's' advocacy group to improve the living space of the group's shelter for victims of domestic violence. The project included painting the bedrooms and providing new bedding and bath supplies. The associations coordinated with local painters and paint suppliers to obtain donations of paint and advice about the painting process, and alumni who could not attend on the scheduled day of the project could help gather the bedding and bath items in advance or bring them to the location.
- Help restore a green space: It can be easy to arrange a park, campground or beach clean-up outing. These events typically require very little planning, skill, or money, but can make a real impact, especially in neglected neighborhoods. Many larger public park facilities have a volunteer coordinator, and that person should be your initial point of contact. Just propose a date and get the word out to your local Princeton community. Alternatively, reach out to your local Habitat for Humanity and try to get on the calendar to help with an existing building project, or inquire about a new project that can be completed in the January-February time frame (or at least started!).
- Kick off an initiative with a local school: We recognize that building a mentoring relationship with a local school may require more groundwork, but Tigers Months of Service is the perfect occasion at least to get started on a long-term commitment by carrying-out a short-term project to introduce the Princeton community to the school and vice-versa (think of clean-ups, read-to-kids sessions, and afternoon or weekend mentoring clinics). Advice on launching a school mentoring program generally can be found on the Tigernet Community Service webpage.
- Organize a community workshop: One regional committee recently organized a successful Workshop on Racial Dialogue. The event attracted teachers, parents and community organizers who focused on how to improve race relations within public and private schools,

with an emphasis on bringing race relations into the curriculum and highlighting the role school sports can play. You could organize a workshop on virtually any topic that is of concern to your community, using the expertise and connections of the Princeton family in your area to jump-start hands-on progress.

- Consult the Pace Center website/calendar: Especially for regional associations in the greater Princeton area, check out the Pace Center's website, which lists a variety of scheduled projects that may present opportunities to partner with students on campus, or at least will give you ideas about areas of need and possible parallel projects for alumni to organize themselves.

For Classes and Affiliated Associations:

Organizing hands-on projects for alumni groups that are geographically diverse, outside of Reunions, requires more creativity. There are ways to do so, however.

- Promote a "Weekend of Service" within the month. Ask each member of your group to perform some hands-on service task in his or her community on a particular weekend during January 2018.
- If your group has a concentration of alumni in multiple areas, you can task alumni in those locations with the groundwork for any of the hands-on projects described above, perhaps to be performed on the same weekend. Although your projects may be inaccessible to some or even most of your members, they still represent an excellent opportunity to build relations among your members and make a class/affiliate wide contribution beyond donating money or waiting until Reunions.
- If your group can realistically only organize one project in one location where a group of alumni are concentrated, you can solicit alumni outside the location to make donations that will further the projects. For example, if a group has a significant concentration of alumni in Los Angeles, it could arrange any of the projects described above for

regional associations, and then members of the class who are not able to participate personally can send supplies or money (consistent with University guidelines) to further the project.

- Identify a member of your group/class who works for or closely with an existing community service initiative, and make a group-wide commitment to further that initiative during January. For example, if a class member belongs to a group that collects and distributes wheelchairs, the larger group can donate equipment and money, and to the extent possible, also assist hands-on with the collection and distribution of the items.

Please remember to report your Tigers in Service project here: <http://cs.createsurvey.com/publish/survey?a=ii7RQf>. Photos are always appreciated!

Thank you again for your commitment to service, your support for our communities, and representing the best of Princeton!

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