1.1 COMMUNITY SERVICE

1.1.1 The Background

The tradition of linking a service project to a major reunion emerged in honor of the University's 250th Anniversary. Following the initial 250x250 Community Service Challenge, many classes started or expanded projects at their major reunions. For some classes, the community service project has become a permanent feature of their class activities, continuing throughout the year and in non-major reunion years. The tradition is fitting of Princeton's unofficial motto, "Princeton in the nation's service and in the service of all nations." The kind of camaraderie that is created working together in the service of others adds a unique dimension to Reunions.

1.1.2 The Job

The job of the Community Service Chair is to help select and champion the reunion service project. In some cases this will be a continuation of an ongoing class project, or something that helps with one dimension of that project. In others, it will be linking up with existing University groups to help in some way. The basic job is to:

- Identify and coordinate the reunion service project for the class
- Consider linking the project idea to the reunion theme
- Work with class and/or University service groups
- Organize, publicize and facilitate the project

1.1.3 Related Information

Past project ideas. Projects have ranged from simple, one-time events to long-range and complex endeavors. Consider reaching out to Community Service Chairs from previous years to recreate or adopt past successful projects. Recent projects include:

- Book drives (these can be connected with other projects, such as helping an impoverished school start a library)
- Collecting and donating gently used sports equipment and eyeglasses
- Clothing drives
- Sponsoring and building a Habitat for Humanity house
- Working on local brownstone renovations and building area playgrounds
- Reading to children in the Hank Panell (Clay Street) Learning Center
- Developing mentoring, internship and job assistance programs
Link the theme to the project or vice versa. This may be appropriate depending on the scope and size of the project. ’77’s “Gimme Shelter” sponsored a Habitat for Humanity house, ’79’s “Return to Classics” had a book drive project entitled, “Return with a Classic.”

University service groups. The Alumni Council Committee on Community Service can provide information on projects and contacts; the current Chair and Vice Chair are listed under the Alumni Council Committees section: http://alumni.princeton.edu/main/. The Pace Center for Community Service and the Student Volunteers Council (SVC) sponsor a long list of projects and can make suggestions of possible projects and what help is needed. Contact information for SVC, the Pace Center, Community House and other campus groups can be obtained from the Office of Alumni Affairs or http://www.princeton.edu/main/.

Community groups. The University’s Office of Community and Regional Affairs is in contact with many local community organizations and can help you match class interest to a suitable project.

Tax-exempt restrictions. Princeton classes receive non-profit status under the University’s umbrella in order to further Princeton’s mission - research/scholarship and teaching of current University students. The Internal Revenue Service requires that donations to class organizations be related to the class mission. Service projects fall into this category only if they have in-person components that bring together classmates, thereby enhancing their connection to the class and to Princeton. Reunions engaged in hands-on projects may solicit donations for the project as part of their regular mailings or their website. However, without an in-person component a class may not solicit such funds or make such a donation. In addition, University policy prohibits using the class mailing list to solicit funds for a non-Princeton purpose. The class may mention the work that is being done (without making a solicitation) and provide classmates with a contact person should they wish to follow up individually. That way, the separate organization may create its own database of donors and interested individuals.

Because of the complexity of these situations, the Community Service Chair should seek approval from the Office of Alumni Affairs before beginning any community service effort, especially one that involves fundraising of any type.