



# Planning Guide



# Purpose

4-H members have always been proud of the communities they call home. Whether they live in cities, towns, or rural areas, 4-H'ers make their communities better year-round, but they couldn't do it without help. For this reason, True Leaders in Service was created in 2017 as a way for all 4-H members to say "thank you" to their communities, counties, and states for all the support they have provided to 4-H for over 100 years.

True Leaders in Service, a month-long community service activation, officially kick-offs the first day of April, and culminates with the National 4-H Day of Service on the last Saturday of April each year.

Thousands of 4-H'ers venture out into their communities throughout the month of April to do what 4-H'ers do best: lead in service to tackle community challenges and help meet the needs of others.

The National 4-H Day of Service can take place in every county across the country. 4-H members, adult volunteers and friends help improve their communities by adopting a service project. These projects can be done as individuals, as an entire county 4-H program, or anything in between. No matter the project, this is a day that will make a difference!

Please register at [4-H.org/true-leaders-in-service](https://www.4-H.org/true-leaders-in-service)

## Goal

The goal of True Leaders in Service is to encourage 4-H members in every county to make a big impact on our country. Each 4-H club or program will choose how best to ignite their spirit of service as they offer help in hundreds of ways across the nation throughout the month of April and/or on the National 4-H Day of Service.

## Making it Your Day of Service

We know 4-H'ers serve their communities all year long. We intend to highlight these contributions throughout the month of April. And we invite you to make the National 4-H Day of Service your day! You can work independently, as a group, or side-by-side with adults to serve your community. You can recruit non-4-H members to join in or partner with another youth group. Your service project can be as small as mowing a neighbor's lawn or as large as designing an innovative new community service project that will extend well beyond one day. Whatever your project is, it's your day to make a lasting, positive impression.

## Participants

True Leaders in Service is open to everyone in the community: 4-H and non-4-H members, their parents, club leaders and volunteers. Depending on how big your service project is, you could even invite other youth to join you.

What a great way to recruit new members to 4-H! Through one day of service, the youth in your community can see first-hand what 4-H does, how it serves others, and how much fun you have when everyone works together. Make your day of service special for someone else by extending an invitation!



## Ideas

Your service can be any project that makes a difference in your community and/or county. It can be as simple as cleaning up a yard for someone who is elderly or disabled, cleaning a house or doing simple painting or repairs, picking up trash in a local park, or collecting food for your local food bank. Other ideas include making care packages for seniors, the military and other special groups; coordinating a recycling day; planting trees, shrubs, or flowers to beautify the community; mentoring kids with disabilities; or working with a Senior Center to plan a day so that 4-H members can interact and visit with the residents.

## Organizations that could help

You might contact one or more of the following organizations or groups about working together on a service project. This list will vary depending on your community and county, and many will have others not listed here.

- County Commissioners
- Courts
- County or Parish Boards
- Lions clubs
- Master Gardeners
- Kiwanis clubs
- Garden clubs
- Chambers of commerce
- School districts
- Department of Transportation
- Park and recreation departments
- After-school programs
- Homeless shelters
- Missions
- Churches

## Determining what's needed in your Community

Whether you live in a small community or the largest city, every community has a need for some kind of assistance. If you can't readily identify a need or project, call your County Extension professional; he or she can help you to get in touch with one of the many organizations and/or agencies they collaborate with.

You can also advertise your services to the community and have residents submit a service project request. From these requests, a certain number of tasks can be selected to work on. What determines your decision to accept a particular job request will be based on your community or county, as well as the number of youth involved.



Another way to identify what is needed in the community is by involving 4-H members in a simple needs assessment experience. Provide 4-H members with a basic interview form and have them work in groups of four or five youth and one adult, as they go out into the community and seek input from adults and youth. You can then identify the similarities and differences of community needs for different age groups and use that information to guide the service activity.

## Planning a Safe Service Project

With any True Leaders in Service event it is important to review the risk management information provided to you by 4-H and use the resources available to plan a safe and successful event. You will need to have an adult (parent, volunteer, club leader or project manager) involved to assess risk to participants, bystanders, and property. These individuals will also supervise and assist where needed. No group should engage in a service project that poses a risk for any person or property. This Planning Guide provides some tools to help assess any potential risks. If equipment is needed for a service project, it must be used according to the manufacturer guidelines and only be used by age-appropriate individuals who have been trained in the correct use of the equipment.

All adults who are working independently with youth must be screened through the respective states' 4-H volunteer screening program.

## Signing up

In order for everyone to enjoy a successful True Leaders in Service and National 4-H Day of Service project, we ask all individuals and groups to register their projects by April 30 through the True Leaders in Service website at [4-H.org/true-leaders-in-service](http://4-H.org/true-leaders-in-service)

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## Reporting

Were you part of the greatest youth service project in the United States? If you think you were, tell us about it!

The person who registered the group should report the activities and accomplishments of the service project after the event concludes. You will find a reporting link on the True Leaders in Service website to record the number of people involved, the number of people reached, demographic information, and some narratives to complete regarding the significance of the event.

Information reported in the system will be compiled and distributed to the 4-H system, highlighting the day's success.

Reports must be filed by **May 15 @ [4-H.org/true-leaders-in-service](http://4-H.org/true-leaders-in-service)**

## Getting the Word out

### Public Service Announcement Talking Points

Use these talking points to record ads for your local radio stations. If possible, have a 4-H'er do the recording, as a young voice will stand out from the rest of the chatter on the radio. Or, if you know a well-known local person who is a former 4-H member, ask him or her to record the PSA.



- 4-H is the state's oldest youth organization. For more than 100 years, it has received many different kinds of support from communities for programs that help build better kids and create tomorrow's leaders. 4-H has decided to set aside the month of April and one specific April day each year to give back to our communities, as a way of saying thanks for all your support! It's called True Leaders in Service. This concept evolved from the Texas 4-H program which has been holding a "One Day of Service" event since 2009, and has become the nation's largest organized day of community service by 4-H.
- This year's National 4-H Day of Service is on April 28, 2018. All over the state, 4-H clubs, adult volunteers, and friends will conduct community service projects to say thanks for the many years of support we have received from parents, neighbors, volunteers, and local businesses and organizations. And you don't have to be a 4-H member to help out — we love volunteers of all ages!
- The [XXXXX] Extension Service 4-H office in [XXXXX] County would like to hear your ideas for what could be done to improve our communities. This could mean helping a person or family in need make minor home repairs or do yard work; raising money for a charity; cleaning up streets, parks, or highways; planting trees or gardens; or any number of other projects. Most of our National 4-H Day of Service projects will be done in one day by volunteer crews, which will include 4-H members and friends, adult leaders, and other adult and youth groups. Please submit a service project request to your County Extension Office by March XX, 2018.

## Social Media

- Encourage your audience to celebrate #TrueLeaders in Service by sharing photos of youth and families participating in community service projects.
- On Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, ask the 4-H community and supporters plan their own community service project and to register it a [www.4-H.org/true-leaders-in-service](http://www.4-H.org/true-leaders-in-service).
- Use the official hashtag in all social media posts: #TrueLeaders

### EXAMPLE POSTS:

- Join [STATE] in celebrating #TrueLeaders in Service this month! Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2loes4b>
- April is all about community service! Share photos of #TrueLeaders in your community giving back! <http://bit.ly/2loes4b>
- April 28 is Nat'l @4H Day of Service! Join [STATE] as we celebrate #TrueLeaders making a difference through community service!
- Today is Nat'l @4H Day of Service! Celebrate with us by sharing how #TrueLeaders in your community are making a difference!
- This #TrueLeaders in Service Month, we're celebrating youth who pledge their hands to larger service. Join us!



## Email Messaging

Subject Line: 4-H Celebrates True Leaders in Service this April!

Preview Header: How do you pledge your hands to larger service?

### EMAIL BODY:

This April, join [STATE 4-H] as we pledge our hands to larger service all month long!

4-H is launching the annual True Leaders in Service initiative, a way for all 4-H members to say “thank you” to their communities, counties, and states for all the support they have provided to 4-H for over 100 years. The month-long community service activation will officially kick-off the first day of April, and culminate with the National 4-H Day of Service on Saturday, April 28.

We are encouraging youth and adults to venture out into the community to lend a helping hand through fundraising, neighborhood clean-up, beautification projects and much more.

To learn more, visit <http://www.4-h.org/true-leaders-in-service> or contact [NAME] for more information about local service projects in your area.

Help us make a positive, lasting impression on our community and celebrate the True Leaders making a difference through service.

## News Media Guidelines

Want to get your local news media involved in telling about your National 4-H Day of Service event? Here are some ideas:

News operations are as different as the people who staff them, so there is no single approach that works best. Check first for advice from someone such as your County Extension professional, who works regularly with local reporters and knows from experience who to talk with and what approach might be best.

## News Release

Decide how you want the local media involved in telling your story. Do you want their help in putting the word out to encourage people with project ideas to contact you? If so, write a brief news release. Prepare a one-page release and send it directly to the person you've identified who handles news such as yours. At the top of the page, always include a date and headline as well as contact info in case the reporter needs more details. Your opening paragraph should get to the main point in a single sentence. Follow up with supporting details (including the who, what, when, where, and why questions) and end with what you want the reader to do.

See page 7 for a sample news release. Please develop your own local story, using quotes and information from those involved.



# SAMPLE

## NEWS RELEASE

April 1, 2018

### **County's 4-H members planning big "thank-you" to community** *Local youth to join thousands nationwide in national 4-H True Leaders in Service initiative*

Contact: Jim Green  
979-123-4567  
j-green@gmail.com  
www.4-H.tamu.edu

(XXXX) In recognition of National Volunteer Month, county 4-H members will lead community projects to give back to the community on Saturday, April 28. The effort is part of a month-long 4-H True Leaders in Service initiative with thousands of youth nationwide rolling up their sleeves in service to their local communities.

Youth will lead in a wide range of service projects ranging from food drives to community clean-up initiatives. 4-H True Leaders in Service is a new national initiative launching in the 4-H community for the first time this year, but the idea of service is not a new one for 4-H'ers. A Tufts University national longitudinal survey showed 4-H'ers are four times more likely to contribute to their communities in service.

"4-H is more than 100 years old, and we know we wouldn't be thriving in this county without the help of many of our friends and neighbors, past and present," said Jim Green, the county's 4-H and youth development agent with the A&M AgriLife Extension Service. "As a way of saying thanks, we are joining with thousands of 4-H'ers and other volunteers from around the state to organize a True Leaders in Service National 4-H Day of Service on April 28."

Anyone with an idea for a community service project, large or small, is encouraged to come by the

AgriLife Extension office at [ADDRESS] and fill out a 4-H Job Request Form. The forms must be turned in by March X, Green noted, so that the jobs can be planned and organized.

"Some projects may be beyond what we can do," he said, "but we hope to get a lot accomplished and help make our communities better by giving back to them."



## Media Advisory

You can generate lots of local interest in the True Leaders in Service through Twitter or other social media in the weeks before and on the day of the event. Sometimes you can interest the news media in doing their own stories on the day of the event as well. Try to direct reporters to an activity that offers good visuals for photos or video, and have them talk to members or volunteers who have had some experience speaking to the media, if possible.

Put together a media advisory to give reporters the information they will need to cover the story themselves. It could look something like this:

## SAMPLE

April 1, 2018

### **MEDIA ADVISORY**

County's 4-H members planning big "thank-you" to community

Contact: Jim Green, 979-123-4567, [j-green@gmail.com](mailto:j-green@gmail.com), [www.4-H.tamu.edu](http://www.4-H.tamu.edu)

**What:** (XXXX) County 4-H Clubs are organizing a 4-H True Leaders in Service event in gratitude for the support they have received from local people for many years. They will join with thousands of other 4-H'ers nationwide in rolling up their sleeves to serve their local communities.

**Who:** An estimated 500 4-H members and other volunteers will be cleaning parks, picking up litter, planting trees on the courthouse square, and helping elderly residents with chores and fix-ups around their homes.

**When:** All day Saturday, April 28, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. The event coincides with a nationwide "thank-you" that 4-H is offering on the same day in every county.

**Where:** Throughout (CITY/COUNTY). A list of where and when volunteers are working is available. Activities of special note include 4-H kids planting 30 trees on the courthouse square at 10 a.m. A work crew will be fixing playground equipment at (XXXX) School beginning at 11 a.m.

**Why:** 4-H, the state's oldest youth organization, is conducting community service projects across the state. This is a way for 4-H to show gratitude for the many years of support the organization has received from parents, volunteers and neighbors.

**How:** The A&M AgriLife Extension 4-H office in the county solicited ideas for what could be done to improve the community. More than 100 help requests were received. Most projects will be done by volunteer crews that will include 4-H members as well as other civic groups.



## Other means of advertising

Weekly newspapers might print your news release verbatim, while other media may run only a mention, if anything at all, so don't rely solely on the news media to generate a public response to your request for service project ideas. Consider other means, including posting a story on the Extension website for your county; getting a mention in a county agent's blog or newspaper column; hitchhiking on direct mail pieces that go out to the community from the local Extension office; or posting flyers and distributing Job Request Forms at banks, libraries and grocery stores.

## Follow-up stories

Help your local media get the full story by keeping tabs on how your community service efforts can be quantified. Include any statistics that measure your success: number of volunteers who worked, number of truckloads of trash hauled to the landfill, bags of litter picked up from the roadways, number of homes where trees were trimmed, and so forth. Recruit some volunteers ahead of time who can report these numbers to you.

## Community Service or Service Learning: What type of project should you choose?

Many people ask about the difference between community service and service learning, and which to choose for their National 4-H Day of Service project. Either is fine, because both provide a service to the community or individuals. To determine what type of project your 4-H group should do, answer these questions:

- Is this a project for which your 4-H members will identify a need and plan (SERVICE LEARNING), or is it something they have been asked to participate in by another organization (COMMUNITY SERVICE)?
- Will the project provide an opportunity for the youth to distribute goods and services once they are collected, such as distributing food at a food bank, and perhaps provide healthy recipes for using the food products being distributed (SERVICE LEARNING)?
- Is this project solely asking 4-H members to drop off canned goods, baked goods, or some other article (COMMUNITY SERVICE)?

Community service and service learning both reach out and serve the community, however a service learning project allows those conducting the project to either identify the issue based on their knowledge and community needs, or it arises from something that affects them personally, such as a community illness, accident, or disaster. A service learning project also immerses the youth in the project. An example of a service learning project would be if 4-H members conducted a needs assessment and found out that while they have a local food pantry that provides non-perishable foods for local families, the families do not have access to fresh produce. The youth could explore strategies to provide fresh produce locally, identify a space to create a community garden, raise funds to cover the expense of creating the community garden and work together to create and maintain it, with all of the produce being distributed through the food pantry. Another example would be working hand-in-hand with a family building a Habitat for Humanity house, or working on a community beautification project. The final component of a service learning project is the opportunity to reflect and process the project experience, which allows the youth to understand the value of their commitment and talk about future community assistance.



Community service, while vital, is more focused on conducting a predetermined task. For example, a 4-H group is asked to participate in leading people through a tour of a historical site. Although they are providing a valuable service to the community, the 4-H'ers will probably not experience a personal difference in their lives or contribute to change in their community. Another example would be a bake sale supporting the local children's home. While the 4-H members know they are doing something good for other kids, they might not understand why they are helping. Simply talking to the 4-H members about why some of the children are in the home and what might help them find a permanent home could change the project from community service to a service learning experience.

## Community Service Quotes

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*Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love.*

—Martin Luther King Jr.

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*Living is the art of loving. Loving is the art of caring. Caring is the art of sharing. Sharing is the art of living. If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.*

—Booker T. Washington

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*How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong.*

—George Washington Carver

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*No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of it for someone else.*

—Benjamin Franklin

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*When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die.*

*—Eleanor Roosevelt*

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*I don't know what your destiny will be, but the one thing I know; the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.*

*—Albert Schweitzer*

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*No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.*

*—Aesop*

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*Our nation will succeed or fail to the degree that all of us citizens and businesses alike are active participants in building strong, sustainable and enriching communities.*

*—Arnold Hiatt*

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*The miracle is this: the more we share, the more we have.*

*—Leonard Nimoy*

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*We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean, but the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.*

*—Mother Teresa*

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*Snowflakes melt alone — but together they can be traffic stoppers!*

*—Anonymous*

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*Teamwork allows common people to attain uncommon results.*

*—Anonymous*

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*Some people want it to happen, some wish it to happen, others make it happen.*

*—Anonymous*

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*Volunteers aren't paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.*

*—Anonymous*

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