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Karen McDonnell
University of Richmond

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Project America: A Leader in Service

By

Karen McDonnell

Senior Project
Jepson School of Leadership Studies
University of Richmond
Richmond, VA

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PART I

PROJECT AMERICA:

A LEADER IN SERVICE
Introduction to Project America

American calendars are filled with holidays and days of celebration. From Groundhog Day to President’s Day, Arbor Day to Secretary’s Day, American culture relies on these holidays for periods of reflection and remembrance. In 1993, three college students in New Jersey envisioned the next great American holiday, an annual national day of community improvement. For years, they struggled with the development of resources and energy to promote such a day. As a result of their efforts, Project America was born.

Project America was founded as a grassroots organization which uses a national day of service as a vital means of promotion of volunteerism. It targets people from all walks of life, from elementary school students to senior citizens, Girl Scouts to union members. It is an organization that exists to promote and empower citizens to improve their communities. The primary objective of Project America is “to engage citizens in addressing issues important to them on a local level through volunteerism. This year round mission is anchored in an annual national day of community improvement, Project America Day.”

Project America Day was held in the fall during the years 1994 and 1995 with limited participation and publicity. During this time, however, its founders were creating the building blocks for its future success. They established positive relationships with local government officials and corporate sponsors such as Reebok. However, no strong leadership existed within Project America as an organization until 1996, when Sigma Phi Epsilon became a chief supporter of the non-profit organization. When Project America

1 Project America, The Navigator 2 (Winter 1997): 1
was adopted as the fraternity’s unofficial philanthropy, an executive director was hired and office space was donated. Planning for Project America Day 1996 began in the spring, and the much anticipated day was held on October 19. On its third anniversary, nearly 30,000 volunteers donated time and energy to Project America Day. This was the greatest participation in the history of Project America.

One of the most outstanding projects registered in Project America Day was organized by the mother of two young daughters at The Collegiate School in Richmond, Virginia. Mrs. Julie Layfield felt that her daughters would benefit from learning about and serving those in need in Richmond. Mrs. Layfield sought assistance from the Red Cross and school administrators to organize a “Friendship Box” project. Collegiate students played key roles in the preparation process for the project. They learned about the communities they wanted to help and became oriented with their project. The children and their families purchased a variety of school supplies and organized them in an assembly line in the school’s corridor. On Project America Day, over 250 children chose to stay after school to participate in compiling “Friendship Boxes” filled with supplies for children of Richmond. The children were involved throughout the planning, implementation and follow-up stages of the projects, and exhibited high levels of enthusiasm and excitement about their accomplishments.

This project was one of over 140 projects registered as part of Project America Day 1996. Those individuals who organized the projects were identified by Project America as Project Leaders. It is with the introduction of this term that the relationship between leadership and Project America can be established.
Project America functions to develop citizen leaders: individuals who serve their communities in ways in which traditional and elected officials are often unable. According to its newsletter, Project America “mobilizes individuals to improve their communities, and facilitates relationships between volunteers and organizations that need them.” This mobilization is characteristic of citizen leadership development.

During the fall of 1996, an independent study course led me to become a Project Coordinator for Project America. In this role, I witnessed the frustrating and rewarding process of recruiting individuals to participate in Project America Day. I was called upon constantly to communicate with individuals who were identified as key contacts for Project America Day. As a Project Coordinator, I initiated dialogue with many of these individuals and introduced the mission of the organization, in the hopes that they might register a project. Some individuals were experienced with service, and easily agreed to sponsor a project. However, I also spoke with several people who were interested in serving and demonstrated a willingness to help, but were not familiar with how or what to do to serve.

For example, Project America received a phone call from a woman in Illinois. She was familiar with the organization and wanted to plan a project, but was uncertain about working independently to help her community. She did, however, wish to involve neighborhood children in a community service project. She was confused and lost as to what type of project to attempt. A Project America staff member brainstormed with the woman and helped her determine that a pond clean-up might be something that her community would benefit from and her children would enjoy. The women went as far as

\(^2\) Ibid.
asking where she might purchase fish nets with which she could clean the pond. The staff member offered her suggestions and provided local referrals and resources. This scenario is not unlike many experienced at the Project America office. Every day, individuals expressed their interest and uncertainty about service.

This project was developed in response to the needs of such individuals.

There are three goals of this project. Its purpose is to:

- *clarify the relationship between service and leadership,*
- *identify the foundations of successful and meaningful service*
- *provided a general resource for individuals who wish to improve their communities.*

This project explains service in the context of leadership, and investigates its practical applications. This knowledge will be used to help future project leaders at Project America with their planning, implementation and evaluation of their projects. The means by which this goal will be achieved is through a resource guide, in the form of a newsletter style publication. It supplements those resources and consultation services that Project America already provides. It also establishes a solid fact base from which are pulled relevant recommendations, advice and reflections for future project leaders about the basic components of planning a project for Project America.
Service is at its heart tied to leadership. Inherent in the definition of the leader is a capacity to serve followers in some dimension or quantity. The mission of the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond is guided by an orientation to service. Schools and corporations across the country recognize that in the capacity of its students and leaders lies an ability to serve. Modern theorists and authors identify the most effective leaders as servants. According to Nair, “We must place service at the core (of leadership), for even though power will always be associated with leadership, it only has one legitimate use: service.”

Motivations to Serve

What makes a person want to assume this leadership role, and as a result serve? More specifically, how can this question be answered in terms of community service leaders?

In Matusak’s text, *Finding Your Voice*, she articulates a potential in all individuals to be leaders, and vice-versa, servants. This potential hinges on the individual identifying his or her own motivations and desires to serve. She identifies this discovery as a process, which incorporates “self-knowledge...self improvement...and recognizing your passion and then seizing and creating opportunities to take action.” People are motivated to serve in order to initiate change. They see a need and identify in themselves the potential to meet

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that need. Leadership "...means initiating and guiding and working with a group to accomplish change."

Goldsmith elaborates on the relation of self to volunteerism when she identifies a deeply spiritual motivational aspect of service. An awareness of self and surroundings is implicit with serving. She writes that this awareness is only possible when people are taken out of their normal paths and settings and choose to serve others. In her book, *A City Year*, she gives examples of Boston youth who dedicated their lives to a year of service in some of Boston’s most impoverished neighborhoods. Her reflections on her experiences as a servant and the lessons she learned confirmed that the motivation to serve is tied deeply to helping not only others, but also one’s self.

**A Developmental Approach To Service**

In their book titled, *Some Do Care*, Colby and Damon examine a concept of development of moral leadership, in relation to individuals who demonstrated exemplary actions and attitudes in their service to society. "The conditions for developmental change are set when social influence coordinates with individual goals in a manner that triggers a reformation of the person's goals." In the case of volunteerism, Colby and Damon suggest that individuals are exposed to these critical social influences in various situations when they choose to serve. As the authors state, "This means that social influence plays a key role in the formation of major moral commitments." A volunteer chooses to serve because s/he was exposed to something that initiated this desire, which acted as a catalyst

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5 Ibid.  
8 Ibid.
or an agent of service. Examples of such catalysts are service learning programs, corporate service programs and service organizations, such as Project America.

From Colby and Damon’s framework can be applied a conclusion specific to the needs of Project America. Based on an analysis of prior participation, there are three categories of participants in Project America Day. These categories include young students, college students and volunteers affiliated with formal organizations, such as business. Very few individuals participated in Project America Day who were not tied to a particular organization.

Therefore, it can be suggested that there are three major periods of social influence which may play a role in the development of community activism. These periods include first, early education years, (including elementary, middle and high school), second, undergraduate and graduate education, and third, work and retirement years. Colby and Damon conclude that those individuals who receive positive social influences regarding social action in their early years will be most likely to initiate this service later in life.

• The early years of service

The earliest period of youth, in which young people attend elementary, middle and high school is the first of three stages in Colby and Damon’s process of social influence. According to Colby and Damon, a person dedicated to service requires a quality of attitude called positivity.9 Their use of this term, positivity, is in relation to an "enjoyment of life", accompanied by "hopefulness and optimism."10 Although many adults aspire to practice hopefulness and optimism, it often tends to be a natural instinct in children.

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9Ibid., 263.
10Ibid.
Children possess an innocent lens through which to view the world which promotes the type of attitude expressed in "positivity." Therefore, children would seem likely candidates to be successful in service.

*Service Learning* programs are social influences that create future leaders and servants. Much of the service activities completed by students in elementary, middle and high schools are a product of courses which mandate service learning. *Service learning* has become a symbolic term which represents a variety of complicated issues. According to Haskvitz, one major issue surrounding service learning is its ethical value.\(^\text{11}\) Is it truly a "service" to society if the action is mandated? Also, to what degree are teachers in schools at any level prepared to academically grade a student based on his or her service activities? Is one service activity any more valuable than the next?

Haskvitz attempts to resolve these issues by proposing a new model of service learning in which a holistic approach is taken. A holistic approach assures that meaningful service will occur. Meaningful service is the result of prior orientation to the needs and issues surrounding the service. In a service learning situation, students benefit the most from this holistic framework. Student volunteers can prove instrumental in identifying the needs of their community and making decisions on how they would best be served. A child who donates time at a food shelter would find the service much more meaningful if she had been exposed to the general issue of hunger and its place in her community. The holistic approach also ensures a greater commitment on the part of the volunteer, because the act of serving becomes much more meaningful.

Service, politics and America's young adults.

In a speech delivered on April 19, 1994, President William Clinton proclaimed that day to be National Youth Service Day. It was created in conjunction with President Clinton's national service program, AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps was created in the shadow of Kennedy's Peace Corps, but the motivation for its creation was entirely different. AmeriCorps was created not in the hopes of community involvement, but in response to it. In his speech, Clinton said,

"...my own dreams about national service began when President Kennedy challenged my generation to ask what we could do for our country—and thousands responded as Peace Corps volunteers. Thirty years later, a new generation of young Americans is not waiting to be asked. All along the Presidential campaign trail, young people told me again and again what they wanted most—the opportunity to make a difference. So we created AmeriCorps, a new national service program. Now the real work of rebuilding America must begin."12

AmeriCorps was created in response to a growing need for volunteers. As more women enter the work-force and volunteer rates decline, their absence has been truly felt by those who need them most.13 There is somewhat of a controversy surrounding the ethics of government sponsored volunteerism, that it "subverts the ideas of volunteerism—labor given for love, not money."14 However, the activities of AmeriCorps volunteers illustrated the changes they are creating, regardless of their ethical merit. AmeriCorps members are directly involved in service as they dedicate a year of service towards actively

solving society’s problems. For example, one study illustrates the impact of a single AmeriCorps unit focused on environmental issues.

“1,353 AmeriCorps members in 12 states restored 24 beaches, enhanced 338 miles of river banks, planted 200,000 trees, constructed 440 dams, and cleaned up 139 neighborhoods. In all, they estimated these Corps members working on environmental issues in those states ‘affected the lives’ of 469,000 people.”

Those students who initiated AmeriCorps are a far cry from those whom society has labeled as the apathetic “Generation X.” In contrast, Mosely characterizes contemporary youth as “responsive” and concerned for the welfare of their nation. This description is radically different from popular culture’s description of youth in their teens and twenties as uninterested or apathetic towards civic affairs. A more accurate description of this generation’s attitude may be found in the terms alternative, or creative.

Mosely states that, although they may not be the political activists of their parents’ generations, the youth of today does possess a concern for the welfare of society. This is true, even though they have not become involved in politics and the party system as their parents may have been. According to Ricki Seidman of Rock the Vote, “70 percent of voters between the ages of 18 and 24 are registered as Independents.” Instead of aligning with a party and taking a decisive stand, young men and women tend to act towards the greater good and take action on issues they feel are important. This action is often expressed through service. According to a 1992 survey referred to by Mosely,

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15 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
"over half of all people between the ages of 18 and 24 volunteered during the preceding year."\textsuperscript{18}

In many cases, young people decide to serve not only because of an intense desire or individual need, but also because of group membership. In many instances, this organizational affiliation is tied to colleges and universities. Of the 140 projects registered with Project America, 76 were from the collegiate arena. Opportunities to serve in colleges include student government organizations, special interest groups (such as environmental awareness or literacy), or sororities and fraternities.

Project America provides an excellent example of the motivation of a fraternity to become involved in service. Sigma Phi Epsilon is a “national college student organization with chapters on 268 campuses.”\textsuperscript{19} Over sixty chapters registered projects with Project America in 1996. Gary Griffith, Grand President of Sigma Phi Epsilon said of the united effort, “We understand our responsibility to the community and take it very seriously. That is why we are a national leader in Project America.”\textsuperscript{20}

The environment of many colleges lends support to a welcome atmosphere of social action. Young adults who attend college are encouraged to express themselves intellectually and socially, and many choose to do so through service. Regardless of the intensity of liberal or conservative views at a school, most any university sponsors an organization which aids its students in the completion of service. In addition, many classes incorporate service into their curriculum via service learning classes or individual projects required in the community in conjunction with traditional lesson plans.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} Project America, The Activity Report, 1996.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
College students may choose to continue their interest in citizenship throughout the post-graduate studies and experiences. Currently, in the United States, Masters of Business Administration (MBA) programs have proven extremely receptive to their student's interest in citizenship, and have made service a priority. Several schools, including Georgetown University; the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania; and Northwestern University's Kellogg School have incorporated service learning into the curriculum for their business students. In the case of Georgetown University, the curriculum aims to educate students about the moral dimensions of business, especially the concept of "powerlessness." Schools are learning to discuss power distribution in community problems, and to learn to translate their solutions in such terms as are related to service.

In a cover story by Mary Lord, U.S. News and World Report addressed the growing tendency of MBA schools to lessen the divide between the profit and non-profit arenas. There has been a growing interest in concentration in non-profit administration, as graduate programs in non-profit management jumped from 17 in 1990 to 40 in 1995.

This is growth is useful to note, as the numbers of students who choose non-profit careers begins to increase. The academic curriculum of schools has begun to change in response to the interests of their students. Total Quality Management (TQM) used to be a concept only applicable to board rooms and business meetings. Students may now apply business concepts such as TQM to fix society's ills, one problem at a time.

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The most important value that community service provides to both the college and MBA student is the restoration of perspective. Says a Boston College student, “It [service] gets a student’s feet right back on the ground...you have to put everything aside...It’s gratifying.”

- **Service in the corporate and retirement contexts.**

In accord with this attitude, American corporations have recognized the benefits that come with this renewed perspective. There are a broad range of companies that have recognized the emotional and financial profits that are derived from opening service opportunities to their employees. One example of such a forward thinking organization is the United Parcel Service (UPS). UPS has introduced a plan called the “Community Internship Program” for its associates. In this unique opportunity, managers spend one month at a community site, in which they learn about the needs of its disadvantaged. The company cites “better management skills, problem solving and human interaction” as direct benefits of the program. As a result of learning about the needs of the community, managers are better able to address the needs of their employees.

Arcadian Corporation is an example of a company which chose to launch a global service effort. A book drive was sponsored by the human resources departments at all the company’s locations across the world. Forty thousand books were collected, which were donated to libraries in Trinidad and Tobago, a community which served by Arcadian. This type of project had many direct benefits including, “area enrichment; increased teamwork

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and morale, goodwill between those served and those providing the service; unity among
diverse locations and a positive public image regarding the company.24

One innovative approach toward corporate volunteerism involves employees even
after they have left the organization. Retirement efforts have been facilitated when
community service has been used as a method of phasing employees out of the
organization. Through this process, self-esteem and self-worth are fostered. At Equifax,
an information services organization, a “Community Service Associates Program” is in
place to help facilitate the transition to retired life. Under this program, employees nearing
retirement age choose to affiliate with a non-profit agency for one to two years, while still
remaining on the payroll at Equifax. This process eases the adjustment from the corporate
mindset to a less competitive/community oriented one, with the hopes of instilling in the
individual an appreciation for value of service.25

The National Retiree Volunteer Coalition (NRVC) is an organization which helps
businesses set up such programs as are in place at Equifax. These programs prepare
retirees to apply those skills they used in their former jobs in a different context at a social
agency in need of support. The agency benefits from the retirees’ knowledge and skills,
and the parent company develops its public image and quality of employee relations.
According to NRVC, “developing a volunteer retiree program can serve as the most
effective way to harness retiree talent in a way that benefits the organization, the
surrounding community and the retirees themselves.”26

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Volunteerism raises employee morale and builds leadership and interpersonal skills. However, companies are just beginning to realize the deeper value which service holds. According to Romano, "Firms have always understood the public relations value of community service, but they are also starting to recognize how much their neighborhoods, schools, and community centers need their help." This development of citizen leadership in the work environment can provide a critical, final social influence to be used in shaping the lives of individuals interested in service.

Citizen Leadership

A primary goal of Project America is the development of citizen leadership. Couto mirrors the opinions of Mosely in reference to political activism versus apathy. He discusses the tendency of all individuals, not just the youth, to turn to citizen leadership in an attempt to solve the ills of society. The goal of citizen leadership is to "raise the floor beneath all members of society, rather than enable a few to touch its vaulted ceiling." Whether the leader be a member of a union, a city council, a business leader or an independent individual, each shares a common interest and motivation. This interest, according to Couto, "always includes the common human condition with all its aspirations and potentials."

Couto asserts that the citizen leader must struggle with the same issues and challenges as would a corporate CEO. S/he creates powerful leader/follower relations, often relying upon collaboration as a technique for maximizing these potentials. The

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29 Ibid.
citizen leader is transforming in nature, he or she brings about a significant increase in consciousness for his or her followers. Citizen leaders thrive in a sense of community, and do not chose the position, rather, it is often chosen for them.

Cheryl Mabey discusses citizen leadership as a viable leadership paradigm that accounts for the growing distance between citizens and political leaders. She writes, “Citizen leaders in our time are possible only if citizens develop the abilities to gain access to information of all kinds and skills to put such information to effective use.” Thus, Mabey asserts the value of the work of the citizen leader, and acknowledges that there is a need for tools for their effective action.

Mabey identifies an important factor in the development of citizen leaders as the opportunity to take action. She writes, “Developing a citizen leader begins with encouraging opportunities for doing something with others and for giving voice to one’s impressions and reactions.” Since Project America exists to support such activities, it can be concluded that they play a role in developing citizen leadership through community improvement.

Critical Elements of Community Involvement

VA COOL is one organization which tries to encourage such opportunities as are advocated by Mabey. VA COOL stands for the Virginia Campus Outreach Opportunity League. It has produced a guide, inspired by COOL (Campus Outreach Opportunity League) to aid interested community activists in motivating their volunteers to serve. In it they identify five critical elements of community involvement. These elements are useful

31 Ibid.
insights for project leaders as they develop their projects and try to recruit committed volunteer leadership.

1. Community Voice. A successful community leader begins his or her project by identifying the voice of the community. It is crucial to evaluate what the needs of the community are and how the group of volunteers can realistically contribute to the changing of this condition. In preparation for a project, a relationship can be forged between a community based agency and volunteers, which may prove beneficial in project implementation. In order to identify the voice of the community, project leaders need to be considerate of diverse interests and cultures, and should establish positive dialogue with community agencies and interest groups.

2. Orientation and Training. This extensive step incorporates everything from making sure volunteers know what time to arrive, to making sure they have the right equipment. Basic orientation includes taking care of the minor details such as supplies and directions. A more broad approach to orientation incorporates true service learning. Volunteers should learn about the issues their project addresses before they serve.

“Educational seminars, workshops, site visits, and speakers both on campus or at the community agency can orient and train students for the actual community experience.”

It is during this crucial phase that foundations are set for a true volunteer commitment to the service effort. If a volunteer truly understands why s/he is serving, they will be more likely to continue their dedication to serve.

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3. **Meaningful Action** Meaningful action is the true marriage of the terms “service” and “learning”. It means that in whatever aspect an individual serves, s/he will achieve the set objectives and allow volunteers to truly make a difference. Meaningful action is supported by “enthusiastic leadership.” This leadership should involve all participants in every stage of the project, and encourage a lasting commitment to service. The greatest challenge of this phase is to select a project that not only provides a service, but that addresses a larger issue that the group converges upon.

4. **Reflection** “Reflection is a time to ponder and to discuss as individuals and as a community the feelings, experiences, observations, and concerns surrounding a volunteer project.” A volunteer can reflect upon three aspects of the service. These aspects include “Identity” (What was my role in this project?) “Experience” (What were the highlights of the action of service?) and “Content” (What were the broader issues that surround the service experience?). Although the Orientation and Training stage ensures a short term commitment, it will be this reflection stage that will attempt to create a long term commitment from volunteers.

5. **Evaluation** “Evaluation provides direction for improvement, growth and change.” It differs from reflection because it can be used to further develop a project and is oriented towards future opportunities. Similar to reflection, it is important because it recognizes the intellect and opinions of volunteers, and challenges them to contribute to the future of the service. Evaluation is beneficial because it can increase the meaning of a

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33 Ibid., 14.
34 Ibid., 17.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 24.
project from a simple act of service to an expression of beliefs and morals. Evaluation is also critical if the group would like to serve in the future, the past project will serve as a model for analysis.

**Servant Leadership**

“All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his own unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group.” Robert Greenleaf.37

Among the dozens of definitions of leadership available to the scholar, those connected with service are most meaningful to Project America. It is this service that is at the heart of its mission, and it is the idea of the servant that is central to servant leadership.

Servant leadership is an idea introduced by Robert Greenleaf. It assumes that the leader’s existence is focused on the need to “serve” his or her followers. Servant leadership “…begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.”38 Matusak analyzes the concept of servant leadership, and this analysis can directly be related to community service. Servant leadership, like community service, “…appears to have slowly emerged as a concept that helps us cope with the stress and insecurity of the nineties.”39

Project America recognizes the potential of Americans to be servants and leaders. Those 140 individuals who chose to register a project can be considered leaders in their...
 communities, but only a select few can be considered servant-leadership. Through a growing awareness of volunteerism will the development of servant-leaders be increased.

**Literature Summary**

Literature examined suggests that motivations to service are deeply spiritual and rooted in the potential to create change. It also suggests that the desire to serve is related to social influences, which change throughout a volunteer’s life. This social influence holds the possibility to create citizen or servant leaders. These classifications of leadership are crucial to the mission of Project America, to help create citizens who lead their peers in service. Finally, critical elements of service do exist and serve as suggested building blocks for a project leader to use in their project planning activities.

**Methodology**

During the exploration of a senior project topic, I read a book titled *City Year*, by Suzanne Goldsmith. It told the story of a youth leadership organization in Boston, and shared the experiences of its members through the stories of their service. It was told through the voice of one of its participants, and it left the reader with no doubt as to the realities and issues of service. More than any other source I read in preparation for my senior project, this source was the most meaningful. Its case study method demonstrated not only what service is, but also how it is accomplished.

The purpose of the research was to investigate how and why individuals participate in community service as citizen leaders, and how such leadership is developed. It answers the question, “Why do people initiate, and maintain service to their community?” This
question was answered primarily through case studies of individuals who have
demonstrated a marked commitment to community improvement.

Many of the case examples offered stem from Project America Day 1996. A
variety of examples from Project America are used to illustrate what individuals are doing
for service and what supports help them with their efforts.

This project utilizes case study research as the primary method of investigation.
According to Robert K. Yin, this method of research is particularly useful in situations
revolving around "community psychology and sociology," "organizational and
management studies," as well as "city and regional planning research."40 This project is
applicable to each of these dimensions. It seeks to identify psychological aspects of
service such as motivations to serve, as well as sociological aspects such as the
identification of community voice. The research relates to organizational studies in terms
of service learning in school and corporations. The relevance of community service to
government and municipal issues makes it applicable to the final situation of "city and
regional planning research."

The case study approach was a useful tool for analysis of situations in which
community service was successful. It answered the questions "why" and "how" this
success occurred. The primary case study research technique utilized was direct
observation. Direct observation draws its factual basis from the researcher as witness to
relevant activities. The direct observation technique drew mainly upon reflections of my
experiences as Project Coordinator at Project America, from the period of September
through December of 1996.

Document analysis was also utilized during the preliminary research period of this project. Those documents which were used as primary sources included promotional guides from organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and AmeriCorps, Project America staff generated literature such as The Navigator and The Activity Report, and surveys conducted by Project America of project leaders. Project leaders were asked to complete a survey, distributed by Project America, reporting general outcomes of their Project America Day projects. 21 leaders responded with cursory information regarding descriptions of projects and numbers of participants.

Following initial research, a secondary survey was developed for the purpose of this project. (A copy of both surveys is included in the appendix.) Its intent was to further investigate the details of the implementation of the projects, and gather information regarding key issues. These issues included:

- Use of media and publicity to promote a project.
- Degree to which fundraising efforts were utilized to support a project.
- Volunteer recruitment, performance, recognition and commitment.
- Perceived impact of the project on the community served.
- Reflections on motivations to serve and the anticipation of future service.

Seventeen project leaders were chosen to complete the survey. They were chosen on the basis of the following criteria: meaningful content of project, quality of preparation, variety of representative groups, diversity of project choice, and communication history with Project America. Essentially, those project leaders who had exhibited a past tendency to communicate with Project America, who were enthusiastic about their projects, who initiated projects that made a difference and who represented
different groups were chosen. These individuals represent a wide range of age, geographic
location, gender, profession and group membership.

35% of the surveys were returned, via the enclosed self-addressed, stamped
envelope. They were mailed through the Project America organization, and a follow up
note was sent.

Those project leaders contacted were

• Napi Ippolitto of Richmond, Virginia. Ms. Ippolitto completed a project with the
  Circle School.

• Julie Magnano of Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. Ms. Magnano
  organized a project with her sorority.

• Fernando Muniz of Bridgeport, Connecticut. Mr. Muniz is the Youth Director for the
  Regional Youth/Adult Substance Abuse Project, in Bridgeport.

• Aron Kramer of Madison, Wisconsin. Mr. Kramer worked with his fraternity to plan
  a project with an elderly home.

• Julie Layfield of Richmond, Virginia. Mrs. Layfield planned a project with students
  at Collegiate, St. Christopher’s and St. Catherine’s Schools.

• Jaclyn Houston of Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Ms. Houston organized a Girl Scout
  Project in which the grounds of an elementary school were cleaned.

• Pam Zimmerman, of Lombard, Illinois. Ms. Zimmerman collected canned goods in
  her neighborhood via red wagon.

• Meghan Rosenfield of Northbrook, Illinois. Ms. Rosenfield is a three time Project
  America Project Leader.

• Georgia Carrington of the Greenwich Academy School in Connecticut. Ms.
  Carrington and her students baked desserts for a soup kitchen.

• Rob Stuart of Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity in Warrensburg, Missouri. Mr. Stuart
  and his fraternity brothers played Bingo with residents of a veterans home.

• Tammy Trojanowski of Stratford, Connecticut. Ms. Trojanowski organized town-wide
  projects for the youth in her town.
• Josh Cazares, of Bloomington, Indiana. Mr. Cazares repaired the home of an elderly women with fellow union members.

• Bob Leathers of Ithaca, New York. Mr. Leathers owns a company who helped with playground construction across the nation.

• Fred Karrenburg, of Miami, Florida. Mr. Karrenburg's neighborhood association cleaned up local streets.

• David Dukes of Madison, Florida. Mr. Dukes organized a youth directed clean-up of a cemetery.

• Andy Burchfield, of Kalamazoo, Michigan. Mr. Burchfield led his fraternity brothers in a project.

• Yulitza Franklin of Albany, New York. Ms. Franklin asked participants of a national convention to serve during their conference.

Direct observation, document analysis and surveys were all tools used in the case study method in this project. Each of these categories of evidence were utilized in the process of the research. In general, the research was qualitative in nature. As a qualitative researcher, I was required to critically evaluate all the factors that impacted the development of projects. My role also required interpretation of survey responses to evaluate commonalities and themes. Less emphasis was placed on the quantity of individuals involved in service than was placed on the quality of involvement which occurred, and the factors necessary for its success.

A degree of bias did exist in relation to my past affiliation with Project America; I possessed a vested interest in the project's results. My familiarity with project leaders led me to choose specific individuals to survey, and to exclude others that I felt would provide little useful information. However, the method of research should have provided a balance to any biases that exist. The case study approach allowed for an in-depth study of each
project. The project leaders completed surveys independently and without my influence.

At the conclusion of research, adequate balanced information was compiled to answer the question "How and why do individuals succeed in community service?"
Results

The initial goals of this project were to identify how and why individuals participate in service. Once that information had been gathered, it was to be used to create a resource for the use of project leaders, which simply outlined the basic steps in planning a community service project. The actual guide is provided in Part II of this project. The process by which it was developed is as follows.

The most important contributing factor to the success of this project was the positive relationship between myself and Project America staff. Having been a part of the organization for the fall semester, I entered the research process in the spring with a familiarity with Project America and its rules and norms. I was aware of the responsibilities of my new leadership role, and helped clarify my role as the semester progressed. I possessed the flexibility and time to research a topic which was relevant, but not crucial, to Project America's activities. The information I had the opportunity to explore was closely related to my own experiences. I bypassed the orientation and conflict stages of research, and was able to fully dedicate my energy to Project America, without fear of rejection or mistake.

The leadership role I held was maintained throughout the entire project by constant communication with Project America, especially with Executive Director, Juli Finnell. Ms. Finnell and I met on a regular basis to reevaluate the goals of the project and to clarify expectations.

At one point, a conflict arose regarding the difference between the academic and practical expectations of the research. I had concentrated so greatly on the "Literature
Review” aspect of the research that I had lost sight of the purpose of the project. It truly meant very little if it did not help those who needed it most, the project leaders. For example, leadership terms and theories would be useless to the teacher who wants to help eight year old students clean a pond.

This is a crisis that is applicable to any leadership scenario. The leader must be constantly aware of both her own needs and the needs of her followers. In the ideal situation, the needs and goals are mutual. In the case of Project America, Ms. Finnell and I found our common goals and established a criteria of what would be useful to project leaders and to the project itself. It was determined that the guide would be most useful if it was written in simple terms, targeted to a specific audience, with relevant information that helped a person plan a project.

Survey Response

The methodology of the project indicated that the primary method of research was from case studies. The following projects were those case studies which were focused upon.

- Julie Magnano of Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania.
- Fernando Muniz of RYASAP, Bridgeport, Connecticut.
- Julie Layfield of Richmond, Virginia.
- Pam Zimmerman of Lombard, Illinois.
- Meghan Rosenfield of Northbrook, Illinois.
- Georgia Carrington of Greenwich Academy, Greenwich, Connecticut.
- Tammy Trojanowski of Stratford, Connecticut.
- Josh Cazares of Bloomington, Indiana.
Survey respondents’ answers ranged from cursory to enlightening. A summary of the most relevant responses follows.

1. Why did you participate in Project America Day.

“At the request of a former student.” “Because it was needed.”
“We wanted our children to develop a sense of the importance of volunteerism, community service is only learned through ‘doing’. ” “I feel a responsibility to my community and am a role model to the children I work with.”

2. Which resources were most helpful to you in planning your project?

“Project America literature, other service organizations (Red Cross)”, “Information regarding local needs”, “Project America staff visit or phone consultation” “Partnership with a community organization in my city”

Why were these resources helpful? What resources do you wish you had used?

“We were partners with the Red Cross” “It’s always good to see what others are doing. It gives us ideas as well as validation to our work.” “The organization we worked with told us how to volunteer. They set up the entire project and taught us how to do it.”

3. How did you recruit other volunteers to participate in your project? Was this an easy or difficult process?

“We have many students willing and able-eager-to volunteer. We have difficulty in securing fun and rewarding opportunities with proper adult guidance.” “We contacted the teachers and they adopted the project, the process was easy once the idea was ‘sold’” “I thought I had a lot of people, but only three showed up. I have to try a better way to get them here.” “I thought there was going to be a bigger turn-out, but I guess not enough people knew about it.”

4. How did you publicize your project to the local community? To what degree did this publicity contribute to your project’s success?

“Flyers, it always helps more than just word of mouth.” “We need to do more publicity, it’s an issue of time-not enough of it!” “Contacted local TV stations and publications, mostly done by Project America staff and Red Cross.” “We tried to pass out flyers, but most of them ended up in the garbage.”
5. Did your group of volunteers continue to serve after Project America Day?

"The teachers at Collegiate have decided to do a yearly project with the Red Cross, both parties are very enthusiastic about this partnership." "Yes, our projects are on-going." "Yes, we are trying to do this project every week."

6. Did your project require funding? If so, how did you raise the funds necessary?

No responses were provided to this question

7. If you could tell a future project leader five reasons why your project was a success, what would they be?

"We involved a large number of children and made it fun." "We carefully planned each step and stayed very involved from inception to completion." "We had a very specific idea and stuck to that idea only." "We had good agency contacts and great school support." "Project America Staff was ready and available to help us whenever we called." "Start planning a long time before the project and try to get as many people as possible. Make sure the people who say they will come really do come!"

Survey Analysis

Several conclusions can be drawn from the survey responses. The first is the motivation to serve. Those reasons supplied by project leaders mirrors those determined by such authors as Matusak or Goldsmith. Project leaders decided to organize a project in response to a need or in reference to a change. One respondent wanted to volunteer because of the intrinsic value of serving. Like Matusak, she recognized the value of "self knowledge" and stated that "service is learned only through doing."

The second conclusion is that project leaders have very basic needs which must be fulfilled in order to complete a successful project. For example, project leaders need to know how to forge a relationship with a community agency. They need to know how to
publicize. They need to know about liability forms. They need to know how to recruit volunteers. They need to know how to raise funds.

An example of the successful project whose needs were met is Mrs. Julie Layfield's Collegiate School project. She identified Project America consultation, resources and literature as helpful during her planning process, as well as a partnership with the Red Cross. She stated that the project's success was characterized by careful planning and involvement throughout the process. Project America's role as a support was important as well, and this resource was utilized a great deal.

Publicity and fundraising are two aspects of project planning that often go untapped in community service projects. However, they are two vital elements that will generally increase the impact of the effort. In the case of funding, no respondent indicated that s/he chose to conduct any fundraising activity in preparation for the project. Only one project respondent chose to use publicity to their advantage. One respondent actually expressed a desire to publicize, "We need to do more publicity, it's an issue of time, not enough of it!"

Finally, volunteer recruitment and involvement is an area in which respondents expressed a need for support. This need was also reflected in the preliminary surveys returned by 21 of the project leaders. In almost every response, the project leader suggested that involvement could have been more meaningful and more volunteers could have been involved. The challenge for Project America lies in helping project leaders secure and maintain this involvement.

Project America: A Transactional Leader in Service
Literature and research clearly indicate that service is deeply rooted in the definition of a leader. In the development of a leader lies the possible creation of a servant to society. Therefore, among the motivations to lead, in addition to power or position, is the desire to serve.

It also has been established that service is related closely to a spiritual motivation and results in heightened self awareness, or a transformation. However, this transformation is not all that is necessary to create servant leaders out of volunteers. Volunteers require not only a transformational leader, but also rely heavily upon transactional leadership. Bass writes, "Transactional behaviors include clarification of the work required to obtain rewards." Transactional leadership gives the volunteer a path to follow to reach a goal. It provides them with the tools necessary to be successful follower, and in turn, the opportunity to become a leader. As Greenleaf asserts, "A mark of a leader, an attribute that puts him in a position to show the way for others, is that he is better than most at pointing the direction." This is especially true in the case of service.

In the survey responses, there was a clear indication that the majority of volunteers involved did so because they believed in the need to serve, they had some sort of consciousness raising event, or transformation. What is not included in this basic desire to serve, however, is the knowledge of how to serve. Although some individuals possess this knowledge themselves, many volunteers require transactional leadership to guide them through the process of serving. Project America is this transactional leader in the field of

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42 Greenleaf, 9.
community service. It is the link between volunteers and successful service. It provides answers, directions, resources and advice.

As a result of Project America’s leadership role in community service, my role within the organization made me a leader as well. My efforts as a leader in Project America held the possibility of recruiting a single volunteer, or motivating a generation of volunteers. Through this project, I chose to act as an agent of change in the future of volunteerism. The guide I created can be used to interest any number of individuals in service. It has the potential to help a volunteer create a challenging, impactful project. It will serve as a tool of transactional leadership in the exchange of information between volunteer coordinators and volunteers.

The short term implications of the project include a more committed, educated volunteer force. There could be more meaningful projects registered in Project America Day 1997, with less emphasis placed on isolated service projects. The research holds the possibility of long term success as well. Project America is seeking to carve a niche for itself in the field of national service. It competes with “Points of Light Foundation” and “Make a Difference Day”, two institutions which are heavily endowed and supported. Through increased participation and support, Project America could become a name synonymous with service advocacy. Such a reputation would then further the interest in volunteerism. One survey respondent wrote that “The idea is a great one... the point I’m sure you’re striving for...is a highly publicized National Day of Service.”

The founders of Project America started the organization with a dream, a national day of community improvement. In its three years of existence, Project America has made
significant strides to achieve this dream. With every article in a newspaper, every link established on the World Wide Web, with every project registered, more and more Americans are learning about volunteerism through Project America. This research project is yet another means by which Project America will promote volunteerism. In its basic language and simple approach, it will make service easy for the teacher, the college student and the corporate executive. It will challenge these individuals to examine their own motivations to serve. Through their service, they have the potential to discover a willingness to lead. Project America, itself a leader, is helping to create servant leaders in this nation. This guide plays a part in that development. It was written in the hopes that in several years, American calendars will look a little different. Among the squares that read Groundhog Day and Arbor Day, there will read a small caption on one day in October. Project America Day.
Bibliography


Project America. The Navigator 1 (Fall 1996).


PART II

THE PATH TO A PROJECT:

RESOURCE GUIDES FOR:

• THE ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER
• THE COLLEGIATE PROJECT LEADER
• THE CORPORATE VOLUNTEER
THE PATH TO A PROJECT:
A Map for Elementary, Middle and High School Teachers.

THE FIVE INTERSECTIONS

The process of planning a successful project is not an easy one, but it can be very rewarding, for planner and volunteers. The benefits of the project are not over on the day of its completion, either. Lessons can be learned by students during the planning, implementation and evaluation phases of planning a community service project. As you begin your journey towards this project success, take note of the following intersections along the way.

Intersection #1
Listen to the voice of your community

This is the first of five intersections you will meet on your path toward project success. Listening to the voice of your community means that you and your students will collectively identify the needs of those around you. A good listener is aware of different opinions and cultures and is well informed and active in learning about the community. You can encourage your students to draw on their extracurricular involvement and memberships to help identify the needs of the community. Encourage students to speak with residents regarding their needs or attend community meetings at which such needs are addressed. Make sure you utilize PTA and teachers during this phase, to ensure a broad range of opinions.

The involvement of students in this early stage of project planning will ensure that the students truly “own” the
project. This ownership will ensure a positive level of commitment necessary for project success.

**Intersection #2**

*Orientation and Training*

The good volunteer is the informed volunteer. Volunteers need to be informed on two levels. The first is on the most basic level. They should be aware of the time and place they should arrive, what they should wear, what supplies they should bring. If skills or special knowledge are required for your specific project, they should be taught prior to the project day. For example, one project from Project America Day 1996 was a food drive arranged by a church play group. During the period before the project day, children decorated boxes for collection and learned about what hunger meant to their community. As a result, the project meant more to the children and they had a greater appreciation for their actions.

When students are familiar with the purpose and possibilities of their service, it becomes more relevant, and more meaningful.

**Intersection #3**

*Meaningful Action*

Your students have been thoroughly trained at this point and they know why they are participating in this project. This is perhaps the most creatively challenging intersection you will face. What project will you do?

A list of project ideas is included in this guide. What ever project you choose, make sure it meets the needs of the community and the volunteers, and meets the goals you set during your project planning stages.

You will create meaning in your project when you properly educate your volunteers about their role in the project. You will supplement this meaning by choosing a quality project. Try to select a project that is beneficial to the community and is interesting to the volunteers. And don’t forget, enthusiastic leadership helps create enthusiastic volunteers.

**Intersection #4**

*Reflection*

As an educator, the reflection phase will be one of significant use to you. It provides the opportunity to connect service with learning. The goal of this step is to generate an awareness of the purpose of the project and to establish a structure to the program. Ask students to share what they saw at the project, and what surprised them. Encourage them to share the feelings they experienced while serving, and what feelings they experienced after the project is complete. If possible, ask students to express these feelings and the things they saw in creative means such as skits, drawings or essays. A discussion is a useful tool of reflection as well.

**Intersection #5**

*Evaluation*

The final step on your journey, evaluation is an additional opportunity to link learning to service. *Reflection* is a personal opportunity to explore issues related to the service. During the evaluation stage, however, the group partakes in a dialogue to gauge their degree of successful service. Evaluation
can be a final exercise in reflection. It can be done silently (via survey) or openly (via discussion). Evaluation gives students a chance to express their views and play a part in the planning of future projects, using their first one as a guide. Finally, evaluation is an opportunity for you to celebrate your success...you've reached your destination!!

Innovative Ideas for Student Projects

Scrub and paint a public school
Clean up your neighborhood or campus
Tutor people with mental illness
Organize letter writing campaigns
Work with an adult literacy program
Make pans of lasagna for a homeless shelter
Volunteer with a national park
Plant flowers in public places
Design a system to help the blind experience zoos and parks
Make coloring books for bilingual children
Build shelves - and fill them - at a food bank

Don’t Forget To Pack These Essentials For The Trip!

Publicity: You had a great project, but no one knew about it because you didn’t publicize!! Don’t make that mistake again. Use the local media (radio, television, newspapers) to spread the word. A professional press release is easy to write and will attract the attention of interested reporters. Provide the basic facts and information and be creative! Also, make eye-catching posters and flyers in bright colors and odd shapes. Make your project impossible to forget!

Fundraising: Sometimes you need to spend money to make money. So don’t be afraid to raise funds in order to execute a project. Fund-raisers such as bake sales, talent shows or auctions are great ways to unite the community and raise money. Also, don’t forget that local merchants will often donate supplies and services in the name of a good cause. Ask area stores to donate door prizes or labor for your project.

Volunteer Recognition: The most important resource for any service project is not money, it is people. Make sure your students know that they are crucial and that their involvement matters. Include them in all aspects of project planning, from its inception to reflection. Find out what their needs and concerns are and help them meet those needs. Finally, recognize them when the project is over and show them that you appreciate what they did! Children at one project celebrated their success with a “Jump in the Leaves!” party. What will you do?

Promise That You’ll Write!

Project America is a resource for individuals who wish to serve their communities. If you need assistance during any phase of your project planning, contact Project America. The staff will be more than willing to answer your questions and help keep you on your path to project success. Keep us informed on your process and let Project America know how wonderful your project turned out. Good luck and have fun on your journey!
The Path to a Project:
A Map for Service On The College Campus

140 individuals registered in 1996 as Project Leaders with Project America. Of those 140 project leaders, 76 individuals who led their peers in service were students from colleges and universities. That sends a strong message to America that college students have a significant interest in making a difference in their nation.

Do you want to be a part of that message? Can you motivate your peers to give their time to meaningful service that can help make a difference in this nation? If you feel that you can, Project America would like to help. Project America promotes volunteerism through a national day of community improvement. If you want to plan a project, but are unsure of the steps to take, then this guide is for you.

Not sure of the next step you should take. Read on!! This guide is here to help you get started on your journey towards project success. Follow the directions and read the street signs below. As in all adventures in life, look out for traffic and stick together. Project America will be there for you to hold your hand as you cross the street.

The Five Intersections:
The process of planning a successful project is not an easy one, but it can be very rewarding, for planner and volunteers. The benefits of the project are not over on the day of its completion, either. Lessons can be learned by college students during the planning, implementation and evaluation phases of planning a community service project. As you begin your journey towards this project success, take note of the following intersections along the way.

Intersection #1
Listen to the voice of your community

This is the first of five intersections you will meet on your path toward project success. Listening to the voice of your community means that you and your students will collectively identify the needs of your community. A good listener is aware of different opinions and cultures and is well informed and active in learning about the community.

As a college student, you can take advantage of the diversity of opinions and cultures present on your campus to gauge the needs of your community. You can choose to make a difference on your college campus, or in the surrounding communities.

College students generally over-committed and always busy. If you involve your volunteers in the project from this earliest stage, you will ensure ownership and dedication that will translate into volunteer commitment.

Intersection #2
Orientation and Training

The good volunteer is the informed volunteer. Volunteers need to be informed on two levels. The first is the most basic level. They should be aware of the time and place they should arrive,
what they should wear, what they should bring. If they need to learn skills prior to the project day, they should be taught these things ahead of time.

On a larger level, volunteers should be oriented as to why the project is important. Important questions to ask at this point include:
“*What issues or larger problem are you directly dealing with?”*
“*How does your project relate to and deal with this problem?”*

It might be useful during this stage of your planning to link up with a community agency in your area to help you orient yourself to the needs of the community. For example, if you choose to focus on a project surrounding hunger, you may want to contact a soup kitchen to identify specifics regarding the issue of hunger in your community. This relationship could result in a partnership between the agency and your volunteers, which could translate to more meaningful action.

**Intersection #3**

**Meaningful Action**

Your volunteers have been thoroughly trained at this point and they know why they are participating in this project. This is perhaps the most creatively challenging intersection you will face. What project will you do?

A list of project ideas is included in this guide. Whatever project you choose, make sure it meets the needs of the community and the volunteers, and meets the goals you set during your project planning stages.

You will create meaning in your project when you properly educate your volunteers about the role in the project. You will supplement this meaning by choosing a quality project. Try to select a project that is beneficial to the community and is interesting to the volunteers. Enthusiastic leadership helps create enthusiastic volunteers.

**Intersection #4**

**Reflection**

Busy college students rarely have time to eat, let alone think. However, it is crucial to set aside time to reflect on the execution of your project. This time provides volunteers with the opportunity to connect their service with their learning goals. This integrated learning is useful to the college student in that it allows you to apply the lessons you have learned to your entire collegiate life. The goal of this step is to generate an awareness of the purpose of the project and to establish a structure to the program.

During reflection, creative means of expression can be encouraged such as artwork, essays, poems or discussion. A connection should be established between the initial goals of the project and the activities that occurred.

**Intersection #5**

**Evaluation**

The final step on your journey, this is an additional opportunity to link learning to service. Reflection is a personal opportunity to explore issues related to the service. During the evaluation stage, the group partakes in a dialogue to gauge their degree of successful service. Evaluation can be a final exercise in reflection. It can be done silently (via survey) or openly (via discussion). Evaluation gives students a chance to
express their views and play a part in the planning of future projects, using their first one as a guide.

Innovative Ideas for Collegiate Projects

- **Scrub and paint a public school**
- **Clean up your neighborhood or campus**
- **Organize letter writing campaigns**
- **Work with an adult literacy program**
- **Make pans of lasagna for a homeless shelter**
- **Host a carnival for area children**
- **Volunteer with a national park**
- **Plant flowers in public places**
- **Design a system to help the blind experience zoos and parks**
- **Raise money to buy books for a local library**
- **Read to a child**
- **Build shelves - and fill them - at a food bank**
- **Sponsor a concert with canned food as the admission cost.**
- **Establish a partnership with a local elementary school to tutor.**

Don’t Forget To Pack These Essentials For The Trip!

**Publicity:** You had a great project, but no one knew about it because you didn’t publicize!! Don’t make that mistake again. Use the local media (radio, television, newspapers) to spread the word. A professional press release is easy to write and will attract the attention of interested reporters. Provide the basic facts and information and be creative! Also, make eye-catching posters and flyers in bright colors and odd shapes. Make your project impossible to forget!

**Fundraising:** Sometimes you need to spend money to make money. So don’t be afraid to raise funds in order to execute a project. Fund-raisers such as bake sales, talent shows or auctions are great ways to unite the community and raise money. Also, don’t forget that local merchants will often donate goods and services in the name of a good cause. Ask area stores to donate door prizes or labor for your project.

**Volunteer Recognition:** The most important resource for any service project is not money, it is people. Make sure your volunteers know that they are crucial and that their involvement matters. Include them in all aspects of project planning, from its inception to reflection. Find out what their needs and concerns are and help them meet those needs. Finally, recognize them when the project is over and show them that you appreciate what they did!

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The Path to a Project:
A Guide to Corporate Service

When should you compensate your employee for not doing his/her job? When they are participating in community service, of course!

Corporations across the nation have recognized the powerful benefits that are derived by exposing their employees to service. Members of businesses serve on Saturday mornings in soup kitchens, conduct lunch hour fundraisers, or sponsor dress down days at work to benefit a local charity.

Although the community benefits greatly, so does the organization who sponsors the service. Employees who participate in company based service increase their interpersonal skills, improve presentation competence, enhance their orientation towards teamwork and promote unity among diverse locations and associates.

Why not use Project America to bring these benefits to your corporation? On Project America Day 1997, organize a group of your fellow employees to serve, and the entire company will benefit.

If you aren’t sure what the next step might be, this guide is for you! It is here to help you get started on your journey towards project success. Follow the directions and read the street signs below. As in all situations in life, look out for traffic and stick together. Project America will be there for you to hold your hand when you cross the street.

The Five Intersections:

The process of planning a successful project is not an easy one, but it can be very rewarding, for planner and volunteers. The benefits of the project are not over on the day of its completion, either. Lessons can be learned by employees during the planning, implementation and evaluation phases of planning a community service project. As you begin your journey towards this project success, take note of the following intersections along the way.

Intersection #1
Listen to the voice of your community

This is the first of five intersections you will meet on your path toward project success. Listening to the voice of your community means that you and your fellow employees will collectively identify the needs of your community. A good listener is aware of different opinions and cultures and is well informed and active in learning about the community. Draw on the diversity of your company to explore the wide range of community needs that are present.

The involvement of company volunteers in this early stage of project planning will ensure that the employees truly “own” the project. This ownership will ensure a positive level of
commitment necessary for project success.

Intersection #2
Orientation and Training

The good volunteer is the informed volunteer. Volunteers need to be informed on two levels. The first is the most basic level. They should be aware of the time and place they should arrive, what they should wear, what they should bring. If they need to learn skills prior to the project day, they should be taught these things ahead of time.

On a larger level, volunteers should be oriented as to why the project is important. Important questions to ask at this point include:

"What issues or larger problem are you directly dealing with?"

"How does your project relate to and deal with this problem?"

When volunteers are familiar with the purpose and possibility of their service, it becomes more relevant, and more meaningful.

Intersection #3
Meaningful Action

Your volunteers have been thoroughly trained at this point and they know why they are participating in this project. This is perhaps the most creatively challenging intersection you will face. What project will you do?

You will create meaning in your project when you properly educate your volunteers about the role in the project. You will supplement this meaning by choosing a quality project. Try to select a project that is beneficial to the community and is interesting to the volunteers. Enthusiastic leadership helps create enthusiastic volunteers.

A list of project ideas is included in this guide. What ever project you choose, make sure it meets the needs of the community and the volunteers, and meets the goals you set during your project planning stages.

Intersection #4
Reflection

The daily grind leaves little time for reflection and private thought. Therefore, this reflection phase will be one of significant use to you. It provides the opportunity to connect service with learning. The goal of this step is to generate an awareness of the purpose of the project and to establish a structure to the program. Ask employees to share what they saw at the project, and ask what surprised them. Encourage them to share their feelings experienced during and following service. If time is a factor, encourage a lunch time meeting following the project to process everything that has been learned.

Intersection #5
Evaluation

The final step on your journey, this is an additional opportunity to link learning to service. Reflection is a personal opportunity to explore issues related to the service. During the evaluation stage, the group partakes in a dialogue to gauge their degree of successful service. Evaluation can be a final exercise in reflection. It can be done silently (via survey) or openly (via discussion). Evaluation gives volunteers a chance to express their views and play a part in the
planning of future projects, using their first one as a guide. If the volunteer feels his or her voice has been heard during this phase, s/he will be more likely to participate in service in the future.

Innovative Ideas For Corporate Projects

- Scrub and paint a public school
- Clean the grounds by your office
- Organize a letter writing campaign
- Devote a Saturday to a soup kitchen
- Volunteer at a national park
- Sponsor a dress down day
- Build shelves (and fill them) at a shelter
- Become storytellers at a library
- Sponsor a mentor partnership with a local high school
- Teach computer literacy classes
- Have a garage sale for a good cause
- Plant trees
- Build a playground, or reclaim one from trash
- Sponsor an after work happy hour to benefit a good cause.

Don’t Forget To Pack These Essentials For The Trip!

Publicity: You had a great project, but no one knew about it because you didn’t publicize!! Don’t make that mistake again. Use the local media (radio, television, newspapers, internet) to spread the word. A professional press release is easy to write and will attract the attention of interested reporters. Provide the basic facts and information and be creative! Also, make eye-catching posters in flyers in bright colors and odd shapes. Make your project impossible to forget!

Fundraising: Sometimes you need to spend money to make money. So don’t be afraid to raise funds in order to execute a project. Fund-raisers such as bake sales, talent shows or auctions are great ways to unite the community and raise money. Also, don’t forget that local merchants will often donate goods and services in the name of a good cause. Ask area stores to donate door prizes or labor for your project.

Volunteer Recognition: The most important resource for any service project is not money, it is people. Make sure your volunteers know that they are crucial and that their involvement matters. Include them in all aspects of project planning, from its inception to reflection. Find out what their needs and concerns are and help them meet those needs. Finally, recognize them when the project is over and show them that you appreciate what they did!

Promise That You’ll Write!

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APPENDICES

Appendix A  Project Leader Survey (distributed February, 1997).

Appendix B  The Navigator, Vol. 1, No. 1 Fall 1996
(includes preliminary project leader survey, distributed in fall, 1996).

APPENDIX A:

Project Leader Survey (Distributed February, 1997).
Project Leader Survey

1. WHY DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN PROJECT AMERICA DAY?

2. WHICH RESOURCES WERE MOST HELPFUL TO YOU IN PLANNING YOUR PROJECT?
   - __ Project America literature (action guide, newsletter, etc.)
   - __ Project America staff visit or phone consultation
   - __ Other service organizations (Habitat for Humanity, etc.)
   - __ Published guides (books, magazines etc.)
   - __ Other: ____________________________

   WHY WERE THESE RESOURCES HELPFUL? WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU WISH YOU HAD USED?

3. HOW DID YOU RECRUIT OTHER VOLUNTEERS TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR PROJECT? WAS THIS AN EASY OR DIFFICULT PROCESS?

4. HOW DID YOU PUBLICIZE YOUR PROJECT TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY? TO WHAT DEGREE DID THIS PUBLICITY CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR PROJECT'S SUCCESS?

Please complete the back of this form. ➔
5. Did your group of volunteers continue to serve after Project America Day? Why or why not?

6. Did your project require funding? If so, how did you raise the funds necessary to implement your project?

7. If you could tell a future project leader five reasons why your project was a success, what would they be?

8. Additional thoughts and comments.....

Thank you for taking the time to reflect and complete this survey.
APPENDIX B:

The Navigator, Vol. 1 No. 1 Fall 1996 (Includes Preliminary Project Leader Survey, Distributed in Fall, 1996)
Across America, volunteers and communities are anxiously awaiting October 19, 1996—the third annual Project America Day! On that Saturday, volunteers will impact and improve hundreds of communities around the country—demonstrating the power of volunteer action. Whether a project involves two people, or 2000, all of the work and effort devoted to America’s communities is important. To get you thinking about your Project America Day 1997 activity, here are a few examples of events planned for 1996:

New York Cares, one of the largest and most successful City Cares organizations, is hosting its 5th annual New York Cares Day in conjunction with Project America Day. New York Cares will mobilize 8000 people in the New York City area to participate in a day of volunteer service benefiting the city’s public schools. Volunteers will be creating murals, restoring playgrounds, painting classrooms, and building gardens.

Leathers and Associates, Inc., of Ithaca, New York, is coordinating five projects in four states on Project America Day. A company which sponsors the construction of elaborate playgrounds (as big as a city block!) for community organizations, Leathers and Associates will be constructing 5 playgrounds on October 19th in: Houston Heights, Texas; Grahamsville, New York; Islip Terrace, New York; Camden, Delaware; and North Haven, Connecticut. More than 6,000 volunteers will assist in the construction of these projects.

Students from coast to coast are excited about and participating in Project America Day. For example, Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity undergraduate chapters have planned projects on many college campuses. While the national organization is supporting their efforts, each chapter has been encouraged to pick a project that is important to them and their communities. For example, the Washburn University chapter (continued on page 2)
BE SELFISH...VOLUNTEER!

Volunteers can change lives in large and small ways. They can feed the hungry or make a child smile. And, did you know that the person who volunteers benefits in measurable ways, too? Volunteering is good for both your emotional and physical health!

In addition to the good feeling you get when you volunteer, giving your time and energy is good for your health. In a national study reported in First Magazine, researchers found "nearly all the respondents said they experienced a 'feel good' reaction after volunteering—a 'helper's high' similar to a runner's high, followed by long lasting serenity." More than half of those questioned said their self-worth and happiness were increased as a result of their volunteer efforts.

Volunteering can reduce your stress level, blood pressure and heart rate as well. According to Personnel Journal, companies who advocate volunteer programs in the workplace often find their workers "better informed, more enthusiastic and more confident about their work" as a result of their volunteer efforts.

So, on Project America Day, be selfish and volunteer! Not only are you helping improve the lives of others, you are doing something for yourself.

NOW WHAT?

The toughest thing about success is that you've got to keep on being a success.

—Irving Berlin

It's October 20, 1996. You organized your volunteers, you planned your project. You had an amazing experience on Project America Day. Now what do you do to capitalize on the energy and enthusiasm you have created? Why not channel this energy into a continuous effort that you can celebrate on Project America Day 1997? Use these action steps to keep your momentum:

1. Communicate with your group after Project America Day. Find out how they would like to continue their efforts year-round.
2. Develop a plan for your group. Create a calendar of events for continuing your work, or just for having fun together. Together, determine your mission and set goals.
3. Act on your purpose and maintain a role in your community.
4. Plan for Project America Day 1997—and beyond!

PROJECT LEADERS ENSURE OCTOBER 19th SUCCESS

I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything; but I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.

—Edward E. Hale

Project leaders are the key to Project America’s success. These individuals have identified a need for action locally, and have energized community members to serve. This year project leaders range in age from 8 years to 80 and cross all boundaries of race, gender, and culture. They are the current and future leaders of their communities, small towns and big cities alike. They are the people who organize volunteers, coordinate fundraisers, initiate media coverage, and make sure every aspect of their projects run smoothly. Congratulations to all project leaders for your initiative and insight. Thank you.

KNOW WHAT YOU WANT, AND GET IT!

As October 19th approaches, why not spend some time thinking about what you want your outcomes to be? By having a target for your end result, you will be better prepared to make it happen. Think about these issues as you set your goals. Good goals are:

WRITTEN: Articulate your goal to be sure it is clear and understood.
REALISTIC: Set a challenging, yet achievable goal.
MEASURABLE: Determine objectives so you can measure project success.
DATED: Timelines allow you to prioritize your efforts to achieve the goal.
SIMPLE: Your goals should be easy for volunteers to remember and act upon.
WORTHWHILE: Set a goal with meaning and value. An achieved goal will provide your group with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Continued from page 1—Project America Nationwide in Topeka, Kansas will be rehabilitating homes with the Cornerstone Project. Voter registration will be the focus of the fraternity volunteers from the University of Missouri on Project America Day. And, at the University of Richmond, members will be assisting the elderly in home renovation.

The far reaching impact of these projects and locally focused volunteer efforts will make October 19th a monumental day in community improvement.
WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD

MTV's The Real World is looking for people like you. In preparation for the show’s 1997 season, the casting department is seeking interested individuals to become members of the most challenging season to date. The Real World '97 cast will not only live together, but will run a community center for kids in the heart of Boston. This after-school program will let you impact America. You can become a tutor, a coach, or develop your own creative projects. Whatever your interest, this is your chance to share your insight with the world. If you’re 18-25, single, and think you can do it, MTV wants to hear from you.

“This will be a real chance for the cast to become involved in the community,” says Executive Producer and co-Creator Mary Ellis Bunim. “The cast will spend time tutoring, playing sports, teaching new skills and will generally have an opportunity to help. This season we’re really focusing on a socially-conscious and motivated cast.”

To apply, send a 10-minute videotape of the real you answering the questions:
- Why would you be a good roommate?
- What do you have to offer?

All tapes must be clearly marked with your name, age, address and phone number. Most importantly, make sure that you can be seen and heard clearly. Interested applicants must send tapes by October 15, 1996 to:

Bunim-Murray Productions, Inc.
Real World Casting Department
6007 Sepulveda Boulevard
Van Nuys, California 91411

WHAT HAPPENED?

How did it go? Let us hear from you so we can share your story with other project leaders around the country. Please complete the follow-up survey below and tell us all you did to make Project America Day a success.

Name: ________________________________

Project Description (What did you do and how did it go?): ________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Number of Volunteers: _________

What, if anything, would you change about your project? _________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

How much planning time did your project require? _________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Will you continue this project throughout the year? □ Yes □ No

Will you do it again next Project America Day? □ Yes □ No

Please enclose pictures, news clippings, or any information you would like to share about your success.

Please detach this portion and return it to Project America.

Project America • 310 S. Boulevard • Richmond, Virginia 23220 • Tel: 800-880-3352 • Fax: 804-359-8160
project@project.org • http://project.org
APPENDIX C:

The Navigator, Vol. 2 No. 2 Winter 1997
As Harry Truman once said, "It is amazing how much we can accomplish when nobody cares who gets the credit." Volunteerism is the solution to many of the major social problems facing the United States today. Through volunteerism, individuals not only positively affect their fellow man, but learn from their communities, and develop the character and skills necessary for the advancement of and revitalization of America. Project America recognizes the importance of volunteer power and is working to develop people of all ages to be effective citizens and life-long volunteers. Project America mobilizes individuals to improve their communities, and facilitates relationships between volunteers and the organizations that need them.

In 1993, three college students envisioned the next great American holiday — national day of community improvement. The day, Project America Day, is now a reality. It is the culmination of years of volunteer endeavors. It serves as a catalyst for new volunteers to be active in their communities, highlights the work of volunteers, and celebrates the success of grass-roots organizations. Today, Project America is growing beyond the founders' original dream.

Project America, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in Richmond, Virginia. Project America's primary objective is to engage citizens in addressing issues important to them on a local level through volunteerism. This year-round mission is anchored in an annual national day of community improvement, Project America Day.

Saturday, October 19, 1996, was the third annual Project America. Grass-roots organizations, urban service organizations, project leaders, and new volunteers all participated.

Project America is currently housed by the headquarters office of Sigma Phi Epsilon National Fraternity. The fraternity's board of directors and 15,000 undergraduate members value Project America for the opportunities and support it offers to facilitate volunteer service in 265 campus communities around the country. This relationship with Sigma Phi Epsilon has helped form a solid foundation needed to ensure long-term viability for Project America.

To continue its operations, Project America is currently raising funds to cover programming, resourcing, and administrative costs. In addition to the distribution of the Action Guide to Community Service at no cost, this includes a full-time executive director and the continuation of an internship program involving five Richmond-area college students each year.

Interested volunteers may contact Executive Director Juli Finnell at Project America's toll free number.

Communities small and large are changed for the better because of the enthusiasm, motivation, and innovation of special individuals. These are the people who identify issues that are important to them, and important to their neighborhoods or towns. They design plans to address the problems, and gather friends, old and new, to put their plans into action.

Project America Day 1997, the fourth annual national day of community improvement, will be on October 18, 1997. On that day, more than 500 project leaders will direct 60,000 volunteers in projects in all fifty states. Project America will assist project leaders in recruiting volunteers for their projects and in publicizing their projects to the local media.

More information on registering your projects will be available at (800) 880-3352 on May 1, 1997.
Volunteerism Summit

The White House recently announced a national summit on volunteerism to be chaired by retired General Colin Powell. The “Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future” will be held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on April 27-29, 1997.

This is an exciting development for volunteers and non-profit organizations as it will bring recognition to current efforts, and direct the nation’s attention to the need for additional volunteers.

“Much of the work of America cannot be done by government,” President Clinton said. “The solution must be the American people through voluntary service to others.”

General Powell added, “This is about each and every one of us who have been blessed by the wealth of this country sharing that blessing by reaching down and reaching back and lifting up somebody in need.”

Former President George Bush, also a co-chair of the summit, said, “Volunteers take the next step. Not only do they care, they roll up their sleeves and they do something about it. The challenge we face today is getting more people to take that next step.”

The goals of the summit focus on children, and include efforts to make sure that all children have access to attention and guidance from adults.

Project Ideas

Keep your volunteer experiences exciting and challenging by trying new projects in varied fields. Here are some ideas:

- Serving on a local non-profit’s board
- Being a regular mentor to a young person
- Helping senior citizens at retirement homes with their taxes
- Answering calls for a crisis hot-line
- Help prepare an adult for the G.E.D. exam

If you have project ideas you would like to share with others, please send them via phone, fax, or email to Project America.

Service Learning

In contrast to philanthropy, which is raising money for a cause, service learning involves direct contact with those served, and a hands-on effort. A service learning project could mean working to feed the homeless, providing day care for the children of working mothers, or tutoring adults in a literacy program. It could also mean building a house, driving an elderly neighbor to the grocery store, or working in an animal shelter. Whatever the size or type of community, the opportunities for service learning are always plentiful and varied.

It would seem that service learning is just basic community service, but it is not. The two are differentiated by the fact that service learning involves on-going personal reflection which contributes to the server’s growth as a person and as a citizen. Basically, service learning provides an increased opportunity to learn from helping others.

There are questions you can ask yourself, and those you are volunteering with, that may encourage such personal growth and development:

- What am I learning from and about the people I am working with in my community?
- What am I learning about society and myself?

Service learning is critical to leadership development. Through service projects, volunteers develop empathy for their neighbors, a broader world view and a dedication to responsible citizenship.

Reflection can make the difference between a positive service experience and a negative one.

Additional Questions for Reflection:

- What did I see?
- What surprised me?
- How did I feel during this experience?
- How do I feel now?
- Why do/did I feel that way?
- What is my initial judgment?
- How do my values and experiences shape what I see and feel?
- How am I part of the problem? How am I part of the solution?
- How can I be more sensitive to community needs?
- How can I interact with the community to gain a better understanding of the problem?
- How can I support the community’s efforts to solve its problems?
A Day of Peace

This I know. This I believe with all my heart. If we want a free and peaceful world, if we want to make the deserts bloom and man grow to greater dignity as a human being — We Can Do It! -Eleanor Roosevelt

The Day of Peace Foundation is encouraging all 5.7 billion people around the world to stand together for a Day of Peace on May 10, 1997. The foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to generating worldwide conversations about peace. Their activities focus on collecting A Day of Peace declarations, visions, and actions. It is not affiliated with any political, religious, or ideological organization or movement, but is simply devoted to the promotion of peace on earth.

You can find out more by calling (212) 371-1964, or visiting their web site at www.peaceonearth.org.

You can participate in the Day of Peace by completing your declaration card (below) and sending it to:

Peace on Earth Foundation
147 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10017

I stand for Peace on Earth, and declare May 10, 1997 as a Day of Peace.

Signature: __________________________

Place: __________________________

City: __________ State: __________

Age: __________ Country: __________

My Vision of Peace is:

On A Day of Peace, I will experience peace by:

☐ Please keep the information on this card confidential.

☐ Please share my vision with others.

project america

Getting the Word Out

Publicizing a service project has many benefits. It can serve as a volunteer recruitment tool. It can generate widespread awareness of community problems and potential solutions. It can inspire further action.

There are lots of different publicity techniques you can use to get people on board your project, including:

- Putting flyers in grocery bags, or putting ads on grocery bags themselves
- Hanging posters in store or theater windows
- Setting up booths at local malls
- Tacking up notices on bulletin boards
- Inserting a "stuffer" in utility bills
- Placing an ad or notice in church, university, company, or organizational newsletters

One of the best ways to let people know about your event — and to get others to take up the torch of community service — is to get your message out to the media including local newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and wire services (such as the local bureau of the Associated Press). Though you may be tempted to avoid a media relations effort because of all the other things you have to do, think twice: the power of the press is enormous. Getting media coverage of your project can help you draw people to your event, lend credibility to your cause, create goodwill in the community, and start people thinking "I should be out there doing something, too."

A media relations campaign can include:

- Distributing an announcement to the calendar section of your local newspaper to let people know your event is taking place. Check with the newspaper to see how far in advance you need to submit the announcement.
- Sending out a press release or "media alert" to newspapers and television stations prior to your event; they may want to send a reporter or camera crew to the project site to do interviews with participants.
- Contacting the photo desk of a local newspaper to invite a photographer to snap some pictures of volunteers in action.
- Submitting a public service announcement to your local radio stations.
- Contacting radio stations to see if they would like to interview your project leader or non-profit partner about what you are doing.
THE PROJECT AMERICA DAY 1997 CHALLENGE

The fourth annual Project America Day will be on Saturday, October 18, 1997.

More than 60,000 volunteers are expected to participate throughout the fifty states. It is never too early to start planning your project, and to recruit other project leaders in your community.

Here is the challenge: Recruit 5 other people (friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, fellow parishioners, customers, etc.) to be project leaders on Project America Day. Show them how easy it is to organize a community improvement project and make sure they register their efforts with the Project America office. If there is someone you would like Project America to send information on volunteering to, please let us know by calling 800-880-3352 or emailing at project@project.org.

Project leaders, people who are willing to go the extra mile, are the key to successfully addressing many of the problems America faces today.

Will you accept the challenge?

310 S. Boulevard
Richmond, Virginia 23220