



Girl Scout Leader Take Action Guide

(formerly Community Service Guide for Girl Scout Daisy through Ambassadors Leaders)

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girl scouts
of minnesota
and wisconsin
river valleys

Community service has been an integral part of Girl Scouting for over 100 years. During this legacy, Girl Scouts have rolled hundreds of bandages in war times, collected thousands of pounds of food in times of disaster, and raked at least a million leaves. But more importantly, the significant moments shared with others have been countless.

Through this guide, you will concentrate on one of Program Essentials ten focus areas: Take Action. Program Essentials is the core plan that girls and leaders use to implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in River Valleys. The national Girl Scout leadership journey books are the foundation of Program Essentials, which is complemented by additional skill building activities.

Using this guide, you will learn the components of planning a successful Take Action project. Girls will become motivated and excited about making an impact in their community and possibly earning one of Girl Scouts highest awards: Bronze, Silver and Gold Award. Take Action encourages girls to think bigger and to address problems in such a way that they do not reoccur. And, perhaps most important, a girl's Take Action project changes the world in a meaningful way.

- **Girls can identify community needs.** In order for girls to start working on their award projects, they must first find out what the community is in need of. Girls also learn how to identify the root cause of the issue they choose to address.
- **Girls are resourceful problem solvers.** Undoubtedly, there will be roadblocks along the way, which means that girls will need to come up with creative ways to solve the problems that arise.
- **Girls advocate for themselves and others, locally and globally.** As they learn about the issues in their communities and work to solve them, girls stand up for issues they believe in, influence policy, and identify ways to continue their project goals into the future.
- **Girls educate and inspire others to act.** By spreading the word about their experiences, girls educate others about issues that are important to the community and inspire others to act. This approach cannot help but have a positive effect on their communities.
- **Girls feel empowered to make a difference in the world.** Girls develop leadership skills and use the knowledge they gain through their experiences to improve their community...and the world!

Finally, by using this guide along with some of the sample activities, girls will know that they are part of a larger community and recognize the importance of building diverse, supportive, social networks for their personal and leadership development.

Happy Serving!

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Community Service and Take Action

Defining Community Service Projects

Some community service projects address an immediate need in the community: girls organize a book or clothing drive, paint walls to cover up graffiti, or hold a one-time march or fair to highlight a community problem. Although these projects address a need in the community, they do so for only a short period of time.

Defining Take Action

A Take Action project picks up from where a short-term project leaves off. For example, the girls organizing the book or clothing drive could make their project a Take Action project by holding the drive annually and getting a sponsor to advertise and organize it every year. The girls who painted the walls to cover up graffiti can create a club that travels around the city painting beautiful murals on buildings that have been defaced. And the girls who held the march or fair could expand the event to include community artisans and make it an annual gathering. For each project, girls can publicize and get people in the community to come out and support. They can even get community leaders involved.

When girls pursue Take Action projects, they take time to identify and understand the root cause of the issue they are addressing. Girls also must make sure that each project is **sustainable** and that the impact is **measurable**. Because these two words are nebulous and difficult to define, take the time to **DEFINE** each with participants.

- **Measurable:** The success of the project can be determined based on the number of people the project helped, the number of people who were involved, any reduction in the community's need, and other concrete numbers. A project is measurable IF it changes someone's mind, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, or behaviors.
- **Sustainable:** Girls must make arrangements (such as collaborating with community leaders and/or organizations; building alliances with mentors) to ensure that the project creates lasting change and is not a one-time event.

Note: *Take Action* is a Girl Scout term. When out in the community, you might describe it as doing a *service learning* project...

Seven Components of a Successful Take Action Project

Steps	Description
1. Map It - Investigate	<p>Girls explore community priorities and needs of concern to them. They work with community partners to identify community needs and to examine the root causes of community problems. Meaningful Take Action Projects engage with the broader community in planning and shaping the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many different ways for girls to investigate community priorities, including community walks, examining public documents, conducting surveys, community mapping, and interviewing key leaders. • Girls then interpret the findings from their investigation to identify community needs, root causes, solutions, and goals to determine their Take Action project.
2. Plan It - Prepare	<p>Planning and preparation involve getting ready for all aspects of the Take Action project. While the girls or the group of girls are leading, volunteers, and community partners are active participants in project planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project plan addresses both the goals of the project as well as sustainability and measurability. Girls examine money-earning, safety requirements, participant training and any other elements needed for a successful project. • Girls set the goals, make a timeline, and plan how and when to evaluate their project.
3. Do It - Act	<p>The action phase is often the most visible and tangible part of a Take Action Project, as it involves providing the measurable and sustainable service in the community. The primary aim is to be doing “with” the community not “for” the community. It moves social issues from girls’ heads into their hearts and hands, and it motivates them to learn and grow while also contributing to community life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The action phase requires clarity in expectations, assignments, and schedules. • Encourage girls to build relationships with community members and their peers to ensure that the project is appropriate and meaningful for everyone. • Building bridges across differences is a core strategy in Taking Action. • Girls collect data, artifacts, pictures, and other documentation for reflection, demonstration, celebration, and evaluation.
4. Think About it - Reflect	<p>Reflection does not just occur at the end of a project. Girls reflect throughout the stages of their Take Action project. Effective reflection is crucial for quality Taking Action. Reflection is more than talking about feelings; it involves challenging thinking, analysis, problem solving and interpretation so that girls integrate the experience into their learning and identity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls can select, design, and lead reflection times utilizing a variety of methods and approaches that match different learning styles. • Pose these core reflection questions: What? So what? Now what?
5. Advocate It -	Teaching is said to be the best way to learn something. That’s what

Demonstrate	<p>advocating is all about; it gives girls a chance to synthesize and articulate what they have learned, why their issue is important, what difference they have made, and how they've grown through their Take Action experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls can advocate and demonstrate what they have learned with a small audience or they may demonstrate what they've learned to key community leaders, the media, or a global audience on the Internet.
6. Be Proud of It - Celebrate	<p>Complementing and reinforcing demonstration is celebration. It invites girls and partners to step back and say "thank you" to all who are involved in the Take Action efforts. Recognition of others' contributions is not just gracious; it also helps to cement the experience in girls' lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating may involve public, high-energy recognition events with media coverage. Or it may mean writing and sending a personal note to participating youth acknowledging their contributions.
7. Keep It Going - Sustain	<p>Sustainability involves engaging the community in the project so that the community sustains it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts to sustain projects will need to be age/grade appropriate, and involve planning to guide future efforts. • Encourage girls to find ways they can use their own gifts and interests to pursue their next involvement.

Community Mapping

Community mapping is a tool for thinking about people and places in the community. This is a good activity to start out any community service project. Some suggestions for community mapping are:

- 1) Go on a walk or a drive in the community. Upon returning, paint or draw a mural of the things that were in the community.
- 2) Use grid paper and draw out the community. Place representative stickers on the places where people gather.
- 3) Create a community resource list. Include an address, phone number and the name of a contact wherever possible.
 - a. 5 churches of different denominations if possible
 - b. 5 community centers include parks and places where people gather
 - c. 5 schools public, private, traditional and non-traditional
 - d. 5 businesses, stores or shopping areas
 - e. 5 colleges and universities include barber colleges, vocational institutes
 - f. 5 social agencies
 - g. Newspapers/Bulletins/Community newsletters attach a copy if possible
 - h. Location of local bulletin boards that post local activities and events note at least 3 communities activities/events
 - i. Ethnic organizations
 - j. Community restaurants
 - k. Speak with an area resident (could be the sales person in a store, someone in library, friends who live in the area). Jot down their insights about the area and needs of girls and their ideas of what Girl Scouting is.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is an effective method for groups and individuals to generate a list of possible projects. Another method is to brainstorm talents and skills and use those to develop a community service project.

Brainstorming Tips

1. Use large sheets of paper or black/white board and write so all can see.
2. Establish that there are no right or wrong ideas.
3. BE SPONTANEOUS AND WILD!
4. Write EVERYTHING down.
- 4) Be encouraging, open and respectful.
- 5) Keep going! Sometimes the best ideas are buried under "right" ideas and need time to come out.

Questions To Stimulate Brainstorming

What do you . . .

like
dislike
would like to change
would like to see more of
would like to see less of

. . . in the community?

What do . . .

girls
parent/guardian
teachers
classmates
relatives
neighbors

. . . know how to do well?
. . . have for resources?
. . . could teach someone else?

Games To Stimulate Brainstorming

Community Hot Potato

Using a ball for the “hot potato” girls take turns tossing it to each other and shouting words associated with topics such as “people in the community”, “things I like/dislike about my community”, “issues that concern me”, “what I see in the community”. If a girl holds onto the “hot potato” too long while thinking, she gets “burned” and the game starts over.

Community Concentration

All girls sit in a circle and simultaneously slap their thighs with their hands twice, clap twice and snap each hand’s fingers separately until a 6 count rhythm is established. While maintaining the rhythm, girls take turns saying words associated with designated topic (see above) in time to the snaps only (the slaps and claps are pauses for thinking). If a girl misses the rhythm, laughter ensues, and the game begins again.

Community Chain-Of-Words

All girls sit in a circle. After establishing a topic (see above), girls create a “chain-of-words” by starting their answer with the same letter as the last letter of the previous girl’s answer. For example, if the topic is “people in the community” and the first girl answers “teacher” the next girl must answer with a word that starts with “r” because it is the last letter in “teacher”. She might say “real estate salesperson” and the next girl may follow with “neighbors”. Continue until you want to change the topic or move onto brainstorming.

Community Collage

Create a community collage by asking girls to write or draw people, places and things they see in the community on colored index cards. Ask the girls to arrange the cards on large sheets of paper. Connect the people, places and things with string or draw lines to show their relationships. Use the collage to talk about community issues or concerns and brainstorm ideas for a project.

Survey *(appropriate for Girl Scout Brownies through Girl Scout Ambassadors)*

Surveys are used to gather general information from a large group of people. Surveys can be used to learn community opinions or ideas in addressing a particular issue. Some potential places to conduct surveys are schools, malls, school board meetings, town meetings, neighborhoods, etc. A survey can be found in the Appendix.

Survey Tips

1. Girl Scout Brownies should only survey people they know well such as family members, teachers and friends.
2. Girl Scout Juniors should only survey people in familiar places such as schools.
3. Girl Scout Seniors and Girl Scout Ambassadors can conduct surveys in public places but no Girl Scout should conduct a survey alone. Girl Scouts should be accompanied by an adult at all times.
4. If conducting a survey in a public place, permission may be needed.
5. Write questions carefully. Use a combination of choice questions such as Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree with one open-ended question.
6. Limit questions to five or so. People are volunteering their time to answer!
7. Respect people's opinions.
8. Be polite at all times even if you disagree!

Interviews *(appropriate for Girl Scout Brownies through Girl Scout Ambassadors)*

Interviews are used to gather in-depth information from a small number of people. Interviews can be used to determine what a particular agency, school, organization, or group may need and what kind of partnership can be developed to perform community service. Some potential interviewees are principals, agency directors, social workers, agency clients, community leaders, librarians, etc.

Interview Tips

1. Girl Scout Brownies and Girl Scout Juniors should interview people they know such as family members, teachers and friends.
2. Girl Scout Cadettes through Girl Scout Ambassadors should always let an adult know who they are interviewing and when and where the interview will take place.
3. Prepare questions in advance. Open-ended questions are better than yes-no questions. Have the questions written down with spaces in between so you don't have to worry about wondering what answers go with what questions!
4. Practice interviewing and being a good listener.
5. Be punctual.
6. Bring extra paper and writing utensils.
7. Bring a tape recorder if desired.
8. Introduce yourself.
9. Be a good listener!
10. After the interview, ask the person if there is anyone else you should talk to.
11. Thank the person for their time. Also, send a note thanking the person for their time.
12. If you use their words as quotes in anything, be sure to let them know and send them a copy.

SURVEY SAMPLE

1. Increasing recycling is an important issue in this community.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

2. Increasing literacy is an important issue in this community.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

3. Increasing interaction between different age groups is an important issue in this community.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

4. Decreasing littering is an important issue in this community.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

5. Increasing after-school activities for teenagers is an important issue in this community.
Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

6. Out of the 5 issues mentioned, recycling, literacy, inter-generational relationships, littering and after school activities for teens, which would you consider the most important issue?

7. Do you have any ideas or resources or people we should talk to about tackling this issue?

Reflection

Reflection is a key ingredient in a quality Take Action project. Reflection activities give girls the opportunity to look back on the experience and think about what they learned, what they liked, what they would do differently, what felt good, what didn't feel good, and why. Thinking critically about experiences inspires growth. The following reflection activities are based on Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory which states there are many intelligence areas (at least seven and probably many others to be considered) rather than one intelligence that people possess to a greater or lesser degree. Use these suggestions as a guide for choosing reflection activities.

Verbal/Linguistic - Word Smart

Does the girl think in words? play with language? tell stories, jokes, and tall tales? read frequently? like to write? then she might like . . .

Journal writing
Role playing
Song writing
Creating games
Writing letters to the editor
Making public service announcements
Making speeches to various organizations as a way to promote change
Compiling a community service scrapbook
Creating a verbal collage of words

Visual/Spatial - Picture Smart

Does the girl think in images and pictures? knows the location of everything? is fascinated with machines and contraptions? then she might like to .

Make a collage
Write and design the layout for a service newspaper or newsletter
Create cartoons
Sculpt an experience or feeling
Draw the funniest/saddest incident that happened during the project
Take photographs
Make a slide show

Interpersonal - People Smart

Does the girl think and process by relating, co-operating and communicating with others? is a leader among peers? possesses an uncanny ability to sense feelings and intentions of others? has many friends? likes to be the organizer and communicator? then she might like to . . .

Discuss and share thoughts about the project
Speak at a meeting to share your service experience
Show and tell from the service project Hot Seat activity in which each group member takes a turn sitting in a designated chair-- the "Hot Seat"-- and answers questions asked by the group
Host a "Talk Show" where "guests" are interviewed about their service experience

Intrapersonal - Self Smart

Does the girl display a strong personality? have a deep awareness of inner feelings, dreams and ideas? tend to be reflective and analytical? tend to shy away from team activities? requires private space and time? then she might like . . .

Journal writing
Silent meditations and reflections with optional sharing
Develop personal goals
Create a personal list of the challenges of doing service
Examine pre and post service experiences, thoughts and biases

Logical/Mathematical - Number Smart

Does the girl think conceptually? is skilled in reasoning, logic and problem solving? explore patterns, categories and relationships? questions and wonders about natural events? then she might like to . .

Create a puzzle
Analyze data; for example, make a graph of high points and low points
Plot and graph frequency of feelings, activities or experiences
Problem solve real or fictional problems

Musical/Rhythmic - Music Smart

Does the girl think in sounds, rhythms and patterns? sings, hums and whistles to herself? immediately responds to music? is sensitive to environmental sounds-- crickets, bells, ambient music? then she might like to . . .

Share a song that expresses something about the service experience
Create a natural sound collage of service sounds
Perform or create a song about service
Write rap lyrics and perform

Body/Kinesthetic - Body Smart

Does the girl process knowledge through bodily sensation? possess excellent fine-motor coordination? have "gut feelings" about things? needs to move around a lot? then she might like to . .

Mime or role play significant incidents that occurred during service experiences
Play charades
Dance out a service experience
Make human sculptures that represent feelings
Write and act out scenes from doing service
Create a three dimensional collage

Adapted from "Reflection Activities Targeting Gardner's Seven Intelligences" by Cheryl Pantalone

Linking Social Media Tools to Take Action

Elements of Quality S/L	Web Ideas	Notes
Investigate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find potential project ideas and curriculum on the SLICE curriculum idea database on the National Learning Clearinghouse Website (http://servicelearning.org/slice/index.php?ep_action=share). Then contribute your own examples so others can use them. Have youth gather data from the Web on local issues and to identify potential partners and interviewees for their investigation project. They can also access extensive information on various methods for investigating community priorities and needs. Use Wikis or other collaborative creation tools to create your investigation tools, allowing youth to design the questions, methods, and strategies even when they are not physically able to gather for planning. Demonstrate the results from your investigation by having young people post video blogs or other user-generated content on the Web, then encourage local organizations to link to the postings as a way to share learning about the community. 	
Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize an online project-planning site to work through the logistics of the project, inviting youth leaders and partners to have access to the site for real-time updates. Check with youth and community partners about the online tools they're using so that you do not have to introduce a new platform. Try the "my!TeamPlanner" tool on Facebook that allows you to share documents, create to-do lists, schedule, make announcements, and facilitate discussions in a way that is integrated with young people's Facebook use. 	
Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have young people video document the service-learning project (or create their own video diaries) for posting on video-sharing and other social networking sites. Encourage selected youth to Twitter about their experiences during the service activities. Invite youth to blog about their service-learning experience. (If the service is being provided far from home, this becomes an important way to keep others up to date on how the project is going.) 	
Reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up a private group on Facebook or another social media site, and have all youth join it. Then pose questions (and have youth pose questions) for reflection. Have them find and upload links to online resources, videos, and other material that helps with reflection. (<i>In order to be eligible to sign up for Facebook, users must be thirteen {13} years of age or older.</i>) Encourage young people to share their reflections through their own social media sites, then link to your program site. Identify online communities that are addressing the 	

Elements of Quality S/L	Web Ideas	Notes
	<p>underlying issues or concerns of your service-learning project. Encourage young people to share their experiences, perspectives, and questions with the advocates and experts who are part of that online community (keeping in mind, of course, appropriate precautions to ensure young people's safety).</p>	
Demonstrate & Celebrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have youth create e-portfolios in which they purposefully collect and showcase their learning and impact. An e-portfolio may include a variety of digital artifacts, including self-reflections, video clips, comments from adult leaders, peers, parents, and community partners. These can then be evaluated in light of learning and growth objectives, and they can contribute to the larger program evaluation and storytelling. These e-portfolios can be interactive and dynamic through using Wikis, blogs, and other online tools. More information is available at http://electronicportfolios.org/. • Have youth participate (with appropriate supervision) in online communities where people are dealing with the issues they addressed through their service experience. Have them contribute their stories, ask questions, and share their perspectives. • Submit your project idea, story, or photos to the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (www.servicelearning.org/library/share/index.php), which will often share the information nationally through their Website, electronic newsletters, and other venues. 	
Sustain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep information on your service-learning current on your organization's Website, and encourage youth to share their stories and testimonials through posting blogs, videos, or other information. This can help stakeholders recognize the value of the program to their vision. • Ask youth to create videos of examples of how your program implements the quality standards for service-learning. Post these on the Web and use them to orient new staff and volunteers. • Use social networking sites (such as Facebook) to connect with other service-learning professionals to get new ideas to renew your programs and your commitment to service-learning. 	

Service Learning Resources

How Young People Develop Long-Lasting Habits of Civic Engagement: A Conversation on Building a Research Agenda Sponsored by the Spencer Foundation, 2008:

www.compact.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/spencerconversationresearchagenda1.pdf

Featured Best Practices of Environmental Projects:

http://www.nationalservice.gov/for_organizations/tta/best_practices.asp#ENVIRONMENT

National Service Connector Organizations:

http://www.learnandserve.gov/pdf/07_0305_brief_connectors.pdf

Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends since 1974:

http://www.learnandserve.gov/pdf/06_1203_volunteer_growth_factsheet.pdf

Youth Helping America:

http://www.learnandserve.gov/pdf/05_1130_LSA_YHA_SI_factsheet.pdf

Social Media Glossary:

https://pol.expoplanner.com/docs/Speaker_Files/1/Social_Media_and_Web_2.0_Glossary_Jan09.pdf

Social Media Basics:

https://pol.expoplanner.com/docs/Speaker_Files/1/Social_Media_and_Web_2.0_FS.pdf

Service Learning-Social Media Template:

https://pol.expoplanner.com/docs/Speaker_Files/1/Handout%20quality%20and%20social%20media%20crosswalk.doc

Social Citizens:

www.socialcitizens.org/blog/millennial-activism-it-activism-20-or-slacktivism