



# The World Awaits You!

**Your ideas, your compassion, your spirit and drive...to be a better place, the world needs you!**

When you care deeply for someone or something – passionate even – you’d do anything to help, right? Listening to a friend when they’re down, cutting the lawn for your grandparents or lending a hand at the animal shelter...these expressions of caring are priceless to those in need.

**Who or what else do you care about? Is there something bigger that you keep thinking about?**

You know it’s important but you’re not sure what to do about it. Maybe you’re worried about global warming, the plight of the polar bears or hearing stories about kids not having enough to eat.

**But how on earth do you – personally – make a dent in these huge problems? And would it make a difference?**

YES! By adding action and organization to what you care about – and learning a bit more about community, leadership and service - you create a service project to be proud of and make this world a better place.

## About generationOn

Celebrating the energy, talent and compassion of kids, teens and families everywhere – and turning them on to volunteer community service – is what generationOn’s all about! A division of the Points of Light Institute, generationOn believes meaningful volunteering is the best way to help our world and ourselves be kinder, happier and healthier.

**If you would like to make a difference in this world, read on. And congratulations for taking such a caring step.**

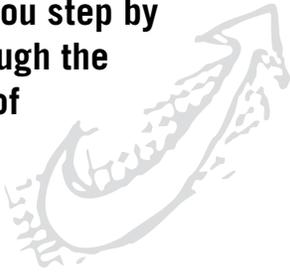
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# How do you Begin?

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Reading through this guide is a great way to begin your service project journey! It takes you step by step through the process of deciding:



- 1 **WHAT** project to tackle
- 2 **WHERE** the need is
- 3 **WHO** benefits and who can help
- 4 **HOW** to manage your project

There's also an opportunity to reflect on your accomplishments and consider ways to do more. Plus your service guide is packed with helpful tips, some sample projects and a resource list.



## What do you need?

Like any big school project, planning ahead and addressing each step goes a long way to keeping you focused, relaxed and on track from start to finish. (Haven't got there yet? No problem...now's a good time to learn!)

Here's what you need to stay efficient:

- ✓ Your Do Your Own Thing Guide
- ✓ 3 ring binder, paper & a bunch of tabbed dividers
- ✓ A handful of folders
- ✓ Access to a computer – online research is super handy

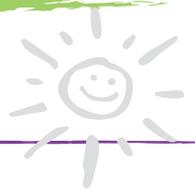


### Stay Efficient & On-Task!

Create tabbed dividers to match each step in your service guide. insert them into your 3-ring binder. Now you have lots of room to explore each issue, and keep your notes and ideas together.

This guide gives you the basic information you need to plan your service project. You can also go to the library or search online to learn more about project planning!

# First Things First - Your Service Project Idea



**Quick!**  
You've got  
10 seconds!!

What do you care about most? \_\_\_\_\_

Then what? \_\_\_\_\_

Then what? \_\_\_\_\_

Okay, take more than 10 seconds (!) but do any ideas pop into mind? It could be anything, broad or narrow, like "family" and "environment" or "dogs", "milk" or "bikes". There are no wrong answers. And hey! You just took the first step in figuring out what's important to you and what would be a cool service project.

Now, is there one idea that appeals to you the most? Great! Move right along to our handy project idea builder. Can't decide? That's okay. Just repeat the next two steps for each of your main ideas.

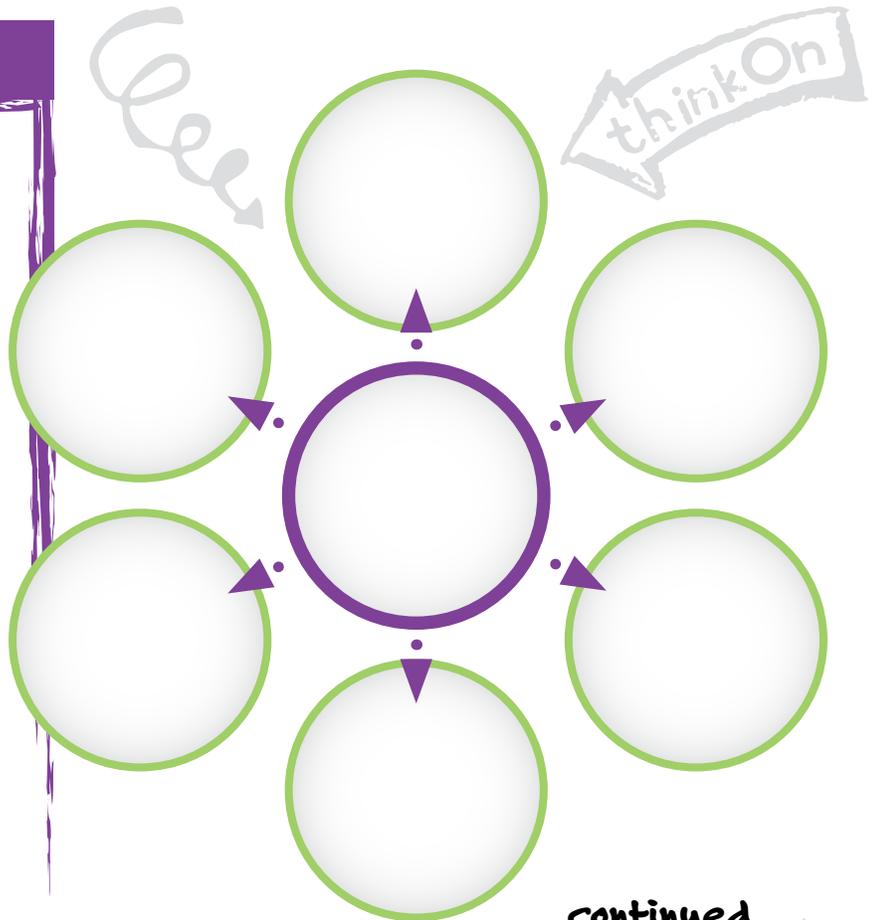
## Project Idea Builder • PART I

### Step I

1. Write your **MAIN IDEA** in the **CENTER CIRCLE**
2. Write **RELATED THEMES** in the **OUTSIDE CIRCLES**
3. If you want, add more outside circles to match your interests
4. Repeat for each main idea you care about

### Step II

1. Which "outside" themes interest you the most?
2. For your favorite theme, what could you do to help? Write down your ideas!



continued... →

# Project Idea Builder • PART I continued...

## HERE'S AN EXAMPLE:

- ➔ Say “global warming” is your main idea, then one of your themes might be “reduce energy demand”. There’s a bunch of ways you personally could help: turn off lights when you leave a room, unplug your chargers and shut down your computer (and the power strip!) when you’re done, and ride your bike to save gas.
- ➔ When you think about your community, is there an idea that might serve more than just your household? What about energy saving lightbulbs? What if you could get every house on your street or neighborhood to switch to energy saving lightbulbs, wouldn’t that be incredible? It would reduce energy demand, conserve power resources, cut back on pollution and help keep the earth cool. Check out Appendix A for a true life example of this idea!
- ➔ No, it won’t solve the entire global warming problem...but when folks like you take an interest and do your part, those combined efforts add up to change, big change, that makes a huge difference in the way people think and behave. And that’s why it’s so important that each of us do our share to make the world better.

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Need a few ideas to get started? Try these!

- Animals (homeless pets, endangered or abused animals)
- Community revitalization
- Disaster relief
- Domestic abuse
- Education/tutoring/mentoring
- Unemployment
- Environment/conservation
- Healthcare
- Health issues (cancer, HIV/AIDS, obesity)
- Homelessness
- Housing (building, renovation)
- Human rights
- Hunger
- People with disabilities
- Poverty
- Recreation/sports
- Seniors
- Technology
- Youth Leadership



Got an existing club or group?

Want to start one?

Think “service” and pick a variety of projects to help your community. Acting together you lighten the burden, have fun sharing the work and help more people, animals or places than you might on your own!





You've got your favorite theme but why is it important to your community? Strong, personal interest is crucial to your project's success but so is relevance. If you think about and write down answers to these key questions, to your satisfaction, you've got yourself a winner!

Why is your idea important?

What facts and research support your idea?

What would happen if no one addressed this issue?

Why do you care?

Why should others care?



# Where on Earth?

Awesome! You have your service project idea! But where is your project relevant and how far can your efforts reach? Be ambitious – but don't let the project's scope overwhelm you.

Think about where you could implement your project. Identify one or more areas below.

Street? \_\_\_\_\_

Neighborhood? \_\_\_\_\_

Town? \_\_\_\_\_

Other? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this location best?

Do you have to travel to this location?

What are the costs of this location?



How long will you be there?

Any alternative locations?

# Who Benefits & Who Can Help

There are two parts to this topic:

1. who or what you can help
2. who can help you achieve your goals.

Part  
1

## WHO or WHAT can you help?

Name all that apply and state why they need your assistance:



Individuals \_\_\_\_\_

Groups \_\_\_\_\_

Organizations \_\_\_\_\_

Communities \_\_\_\_\_

Animals \_\_\_\_\_

Environment \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

How will these people, animals or places be affected?

\_\_\_\_\_

How many recipients can you help in: 3 months? 6 months? 1 year?

\_\_\_\_\_

Part  
2

## WHO can help YOU?

Answering the questions in Part I might be tricky, but do your best. Then reach out to others who can help you:

1. Search online for organizations that serve your project's recipients. Review their websites and contact them for more information and help with your project.
2. Ask parents, caregivers, teachers, community leaders and state officials for ideas, information and names of other folks who could help you.

### BE PROFESSIONAL!

- When you contact someone, note the day & telephone number/ email address.
- Introduce yourself and briefly explain your project.
- Ask questions about your issue: is it relevant to the organization's recipients? Are statistics available?
- Ask for assistance. If appropriate, how can you contact/serve the organization's recipients?
- Ask for referrals to people and organizations that could help you.
- Thank them!

# Putting it all together - Your Service Project Plan

Stay focused and  
on track with an  
organized, written  
project plan!

## And keep these principals in mind:

✓ **Make it easy to read.**  
Use concise sentences &  
outline format to save time.

✓ **Get feedback.** Have a  
friend or mentor read your  
plan and make sure it's  
complete, logical and  
understandable.

✓ **Refinements are normal.** As you learn more about your project  
topic and meet people who offer information and advice, you may  
want to adjust your project goals, tasks or timelines. That's okay!  
But make sure any plan adjustments help you achieve your goals.

✓ **One step at a time.** There's a lot here to digest and work  
through. Take a rest when you need. But remember, a little effort  
each day or week – plus a few big pushes – will see you through  
to completion!

**Find a Mentor!** Besides giving you valuable encouragement each step of the way, a mentor can give you feedback, help you answer questions and think of ideas to flesh out your project plan. Ask a parent, caregiver, teacher or community leader – someone you know with a sincere interest in helping you and your project succeed.

## Creating Your Project Plan



**1 Objective.** State your service project topic and list your goals. Be **SMART** about it!

**SPECIFIC** – Make your topic and objectives specific! (e.g., for one year, I will provide children ages 3-6 in my town's homeless shelter with new pencil boxes filled with 12 crayons, scissors, a sharpener, eraser and 3 colorful pencils.)

**MEASURABLE** – Make progress of your objectives something you can check! (e.g., I will get (1) an estimate of how many kids ages 3-6 stay in the shelter each year and (2) an updated list of new children every month that need pencil boxes.)

**ATTAINABLE** – Go for the possible! (e.g., donating pencil boxes is an attainable goal but lap tops might not be – at least not yet!!)

**RELEVANT** – Double check that your measurable, attainable objectives support your topic!

**TIME** – Give yourself ample time to complete your project! (e.g., 3-6 months may be enough time to complete the pencil case project; 3-6 weeks might not.)

**2 Your To Do List.** Note every task needed to implement your project. For each:

- List in order of timing & importance
- How many people/volunteers needed
- Estimate amount of time needed



continued... →

# Creating Your Project Plan continued...

## 3 Things You Need. List all the materials, supplies, tools, travel and services you need. For each:

- **Quantity** & why you need it.
- **How** will you get it? Donation, borrow or purchase? Cost?
- **Deadline** to get it.



## 4 People You Need. The more help you get, the greater the chance for success, fun and efficiency!

- **Refer** to your “to do” and “things you need” lists; check off each item you need help with.
- **Ask** friends, family, neighbors and anyone you know to help. Give them your flyer! Ask them to pass it on!
- **Create** a flyer that states your goal, why it’s important, why others should care and how people can help.
- **Ask** organized clubs, faith-based groups, businesses, community centers and other organizations to volunteer time, space, materials &/or provide monetary donations.

## 5 Money You Need. It’s super important to figure out:

- (1) the cost of materials, supplies, tools, travel and advertising plus items on your task list, and
- (2) how to raise money to pay for everything.

- **Create a chart listing quantity and cost of each item; then calculate “Total Cost”. Now subtract any donated items or money you have; the “Net Cost to Fund” is how much money you need to raise for your project.**

Item	Quantity	\$ Cost	Donated?
<i>Complete for each item</i>			
Total Cost		\$	
Less: Donations			
Net Cost to Fund		\$	

**What** materials can you get for free?

**Who** will you ask for sponsorships/donations?

**How** else will you raise money?

**Think about these ideas:**

- ✓ Do fundraisers (e.g., bake sales, sporting events...).
- ✓ Look for grants and businesses/organizations that might donate money.
- ✓ Adapt your flyer to get the donation you need.

**Learn more about project budgets and raising money for charitable events! Ask your mentor, go to the library or research online. TIP! Track your income and expenses; make sure you don’t overspend.**

continued... →

# Creating Your Project Plan continued...

**6 Go Public.**  
Identify strategies to broaden your reach for greater project success!

**To start:**

- Write a title and slogan for your project.
- Write 1 or 2 concise, persuasive paragraphs to inspire people to donate money to your project.



**Shout About It**  
& reap the rewards of your publicity campaign!

- Boost volunteer recruitment
- Raise community awareness
- Inspire others to act!

**How will you get the word out?** List five things you could do to tell everybody about your project. How about these ideas?

- **Put flyers, posters and banners** where people you want to help and potential volunteers can see them. Remember, get permission first!
- **E-mail blast** everyone you know plus organizations that might help.
- **Call or send a press release** to your local newspaper or radio and T.V. stations. (Search "how to write an effective press release" online!)
- **Blog, use social media & online public event forums** to get attention and announce fundraisers and activities.

**7 Schedule Your Time.** Break your project tasks into reasonable, related chunks. For each chunk, think about how long it will take and if anything else must happen first. Then graph the information on a timeline such as this.

(or search online for free timeline tools – remember to ask a parent or caregiver for permission first!):

Task	Deadline	Helpers	Date Completed	Notes
Complete for each item				

## Time to Reflect

**All meaningful projects – like your service project – take time, thought, energy and perseverance. It can be a lot of work but so rewarding!**

**Think of the many lives you touch.** There are people, animals or places you help, and people you meet that help you. Everyone has learned something through your efforts, has been refreshed, made more aware and heartened that someone cares.

**Even you have been affected!** Creating, launching and fulfilling a service project – and caring about the people, animals or places you've helped – is a gift to yourself because it helps you grow in compassion and understanding with the world around you.

Your service project is a priceless experience, but now it's up to you to figure out why. Here are some questions to help you do that; reflect on the answers each month so you can watch your progress:

- What new things have you learned about the people, animals or places you're trying to help?
- Do you have enough help? Does everyone work well together?
- What people have you met along the way? What have you learned from them?
- What impact have you had so far? Have you heard back from anyone?
- What's been easy for you to accomplish? What's been difficult?
- Will you continue to stay involved? How?
- What makes this service project meaningful and worthwhile to you?

**Reflect as you go!**  
Record impressions of your service project journey while they're fresh in your mind. It's awesome to later flip back and see how much you've accomplished!

# Sample Service Project Idea



In March 2006, Avery Hairston was 14. He had just seen the Oscar® winning documentary “An Inconvenient Truth” and felt compelled to help the environment. Together, Avery and his friends created and launched relightNY – a project to switch New York City buildings over to CFL bulbs.

**relightNY:**

- Spreads awareness of environmental issues and helps people understand the benefits of lowering energy usage.
- Reduces carbon emissions, energy used and energy costs (economy CFL bulbs last up to 10 times longer than standard light bulbs).
- Empowers people and helps them fight global warming.

## EVERY'S IDEAS

### Project Idea Builder • PART I

**STEP I** - See Avery's ideas in the pictograph.

**STEP II**

Which “outside” themes interest you the most? *Global warming*

For your favorite theme, what could you do to help?  
Write down your ideas! *Decrease CO2 emissions*

### Project Idea Builder • PART II

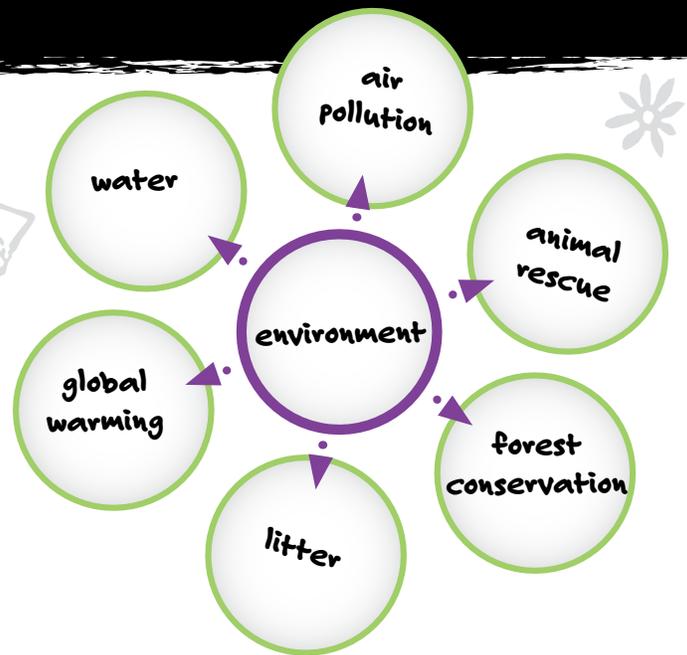
**Why is your idea important?**  
*Carbon dioxide causes global warming*

**What facts and research support your idea?**  
*It traps heat from the sun in the atmosphere*

**What would happen if no-one addressed this issue?**  
*Glaciers are melting and plants and animals are being displaced from their habitats*

**Why do you care?** *We need to create a better environment and future for us all.*

- Why should others care?**
- *The weather is being affected, storms and droughts are increasing*
  - *We need to protect our environment*
  - *We need to make sure we don't disrupt animals and plants*



### Where on Earth?

- Which is the best location?** *Everywhere! Online!*
- Why is this location best?** *Because everyone can access it*
- Do you have to travel to this location?** *No, work from home*
- What are the costs of this location?** *Web development costs*
- How long will you be there?** *At least until I go to college*
- Any alternative locations?** *Library, friends' homes, school*

*continued...* →

# Sample Service Project Idea continued...

## Who Benefits and Who Can Help?

Who or what can you help?

People in the community, who can save energy costs by switching to CFL bulbs. People everywhere will benefit from having a more stable environment.

How will these people be affected?

- They will have decreased energy bills
- They will have longer-lasting light bulbs
- They will decrease global warming

How many can you help in:

3 months? 100 6 months? 500 1 year? 5000

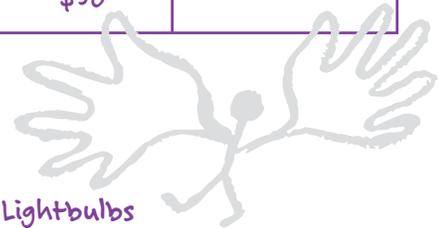
Who can help you?

- My friends
- Ask Home Depot for a sponsorship

## Money You Need

Item	Quantity	\$ Cost	Donated?
Lightbulbs	5000	\$15,000	
Website	1	\$500	
Printed Materials	50	\$50	

Total Cost: \$15,550  
 Less: Donations (so far!) \$1,000  
 Net Cost to Fund: \$14,550



What materials can you get for free? Lightbulbs

Who will you ask for sponsorships/donations? Home Depot - I will ask them for a sponsorship

How else will you raise the money? I will ask for donations on the website. I will also ask friends to buy switchplates that I have decorated

## Go Public

Write a title and slogan for your project.

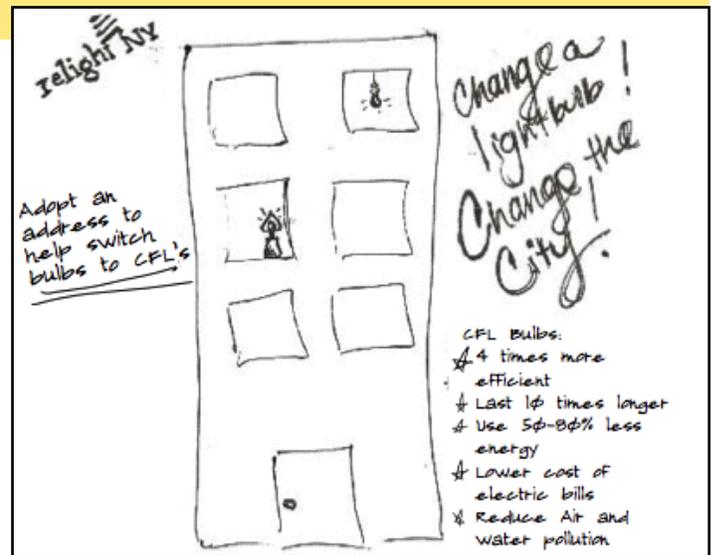
relightNY - Change a light bulb! Change the city!

Write 1 or 2 concise, persuasive paragraphs to inspire people to donate money to your project

I will get donations of light bulbs so that I can help change light bulbs and educate the public on the importance of decreasing CO2 emissions.

How will you get the word out? List five things:

- Email my friends
- Post it on Facebook
- Put flyers up at school & ask to do a presentation
- Talk to local environmental groups
- Make posters
- Design a website



## Schedule Your Time

Task	Deadline	Helpers	Date Completed	Notes
Design Website	July 18	my brother	July 20	Launched July 27
Design Poster	July 30	mom		

# Service Project Ideas

## Service Project Idea - Democracy Matters!



Perhaps Abraham Lincoln said it best: democracy is a government “of the people, by the people and for the people.” In a democracy, citizens vote and make their wishes understood. Citizens can serve as a representative to local, state or federal government, or elect officials to represent them.

Throughout our history the concept of democracy has evolved:

- At the founding of our country only white male landowners could vote.
- In 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment granted voting rights regardless of race.
- In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment granted voting rights to women.
- In 1964, the Twenty-fourth Amendment made it illegal to require citizens to pay taxes in order to vote in federal elections.
- The Voting Rights Act of 1965 did away with literacy and other tests as a prerequisite for voting.
- In 1971, the Twenty-sixth Amendment lowered the voting age from 21 to 18.

Today all Americans have a free and equal right to participate in government and vote, if you're 18 or older. But even if you're not yet 18 you still have a right to express your wishes and be heard!

Once you start thinking about the world around you, ideas to help abound! Here are two ideas to get you going:

### Service Project Options

**Spread awareness about an important community issue!  
Make your voice heard!**

- ✓ Do your research and read the local papers. Talk to friends, parents, caregivers, shopkeepers, business owners and school staff. Learn about the concerns in your community!
- ✓ Think about the issues; which do you feel strongly about? Is there something you can do?
- ✓ Create flyers and posters stating your concern; ask permission to put them in public places (schools, libraries, town hall, shops, etc.).
- ✓ Any town festivals or fairs coming up? Get permission to attend, bring a table, your flyers and some volunteers to get the word out.
- ✓ Write letters to your town officials expressing your concern and your suggestions for addressing the need.

**continued...** →

# Service Project Ideas continued...



## Service Project Idea - Environmental Responsibility

Do you use cloth shopping bags and walk or bike to destinations whenever possible? Do you pass on clothes that don't fit and toys you've outgrown? Does your family recycle at home and when you're out and about?

All of these things demonstrate environmental responsibility!

Each person, family, business, organization and government - everywhere! - is responsible for doing their part to help reduce pollution and waste in our world. How? By practicing the three principles of environmentalism: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

How do you demonstrate environmental responsibility and awareness? How about your school, faith-based organization, stores on "Main Street" or favorite museum?



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## Service Project Options

- ✓ Do your research! Find out what services your town offers. Then ask schools, businesses and organizations in your community how they address the three R's. Are there shortfalls in what they can or want to do? Are they aware of their options?
- ✓ Think about the three R needs in your community. Which do you feel strongly about? Is there something you can do?
- ✓ Create a flyer explaining your town's recycling services (or get copies from the town hall) and volunteer to pass them out to local area businesses and organizations.
- ✓ Organize trash collection parties where needed most in your community. Create flyers, hang up posters or banners (get permission first) and get the word out in advance.
- ✓ Do a survey of the trash you collect; e.g., candy wrappers or fast food wrappers by manufacturer. Post the results at school, do an e-mail blast or use social media. Contact the manufacturers; maybe they could help your efforts to spread awareness!

# Cool Resources

generationOn.org

The internet offers endless possibilities for rewarding service project ideas!  
Visit these great organizations online and learn more:

HandsOn Network ..... [www.handsonnetwork.org](http://www.handsonnetwork.org)

Corporation for National & Community Service ..... [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov)

Civic Reflection ..... [www.civicreflection.org](http://www.civicreflection.org)

Do Something.org ..... [www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org)

Energize Inc. .... [www.energizeinc.com](http://www.energizeinc.com)

Idealist.org ..... [www.idealist.org](http://www.idealist.org)

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse ..... [www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)

National Youth Leadership Council ..... [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org)

Resource Center ..... [www.nationalserviceresources.org](http://www.nationalserviceresources.org)

Service Leader.org ..... [www.serviceleader.org](http://www.serviceleader.org)

Students in Service ..... [www.studentsinservice.org](http://www.studentsinservice.org)

TakingITGlobal ..... [www.tigweb.org](http://www.tigweb.org)

Youth Service America ..... [www.ysa.org](http://www.ysa.org)