Tips on Starting a Community Service Project

What's Your Issue? Defining Your Community Needs:

Look through your local paper or talk with friends about a couple of the most important needs facing your neighborhood or community. Write these down along with three things that you can do as an individual or group to help. Better yet, hold a meeting with some of your friends and discuss concerns/issues facing your community.

What Can We Use? Identifying our Resources, Skills, and Assets:

We all have many resources and skills that we can lend to solving a community problem; we just need to identify them. Write down three to six sentences about what resources, skills, or assets (such as other groups, programs, funders, volunteers, etc.) your group brings to the project or that exist in the community to help combat the selected problem.

What do we want to achieve? Defining your Mission, Vision, and Goals:

Planning a project requires developing a structure that helps organizers define their vision, mission, goals, and strategies. Strategic planning enables young people to **"See It"**, **"Believe it"**, and **"Build it"** (see steps below).

1. First give your project a name.
2. **See It**—Mission: Write one sentence that describes what your group's long term goal or purpose is in meeting this need. A mission should be a concise statement that reflects what, why and how your group does its work.
3. **Believe It**—Vision: A vision statement provides a clear description of what success looks like for your project. Complete the following sentence with the ideal vision you have for your community related to this issue: "(Name of group) is working toward the day when...(describe the change you wish to see in your community)".
4. **Build It**—Establishing your Objectives and Tasks: Define your short term objectives and describe the specific tasks that you will need to take to achieve the objective. An objective is a specific time-based measurable goal that you work towards Also, be sure to write down the name of who will be the contact person for each task and your deadline for completing the task.

What do we need? Creating your Budget:

Set up a chart: here are suggestions on what to include:

Type of Items	Item Description	Number of Items	Cost per Item	Total	Possible Sources
Ex. Equipment	Lunches	75	$4.50	337.50	hotels and restaurants
	Rakes	20	$7.00	140.00	hardware stores

Who will support us? Developing your Fundraising Campaign

Make a list of the top groups and sources for you to contact to mobilize the necessary cash or in-kind (donated supplies) resources. Be sure to add as many possible sources as you can think of to help you in meeting your funding goals.

Fundraising Plan:

Set up a chart using the following headings (an example has been provided):

Possible Sources	Source Name	Contact Person	Contact Information	Person responsible for contacting	Due Date
Ex. Businesses	Marriott	Jane Doe	1.202.555.1234 x00	Me	12/31/200_
	COSTCO	John Doe	1.202.555.2345 x00	You	12/31/200_

Roles and Responsibilities. Creating your Coordinating Committee and Advisory Committee:

Make a list of who in your group is in charge of what areas of project coordination. In addition, list some **Adult Allies** that can serve as advisors to your project. (See example below.)

Leaders	Coordination Area	Contact Information	Email
Melissa	Food	202.555.3456	melissa@mail.com
Jeremy	Equipment	202.555.4567	jeremy@mail.com

Generating Publicity/Buzz: Create your Press Release and/or Media Story

Make a list of the top contacts at different radio, TV, and newspapers/magazines in your community. Be sure to identify the various editors (City Editor, Assignment Editor, Feature Editor, Photo Editor, Editorial Page Editor, etc) as well as their deadlines.
(See example below.)

Type	Contact Person	Telephone	E-mail	What they need	Due Date	Person Responsible
TV	Marcia Smith	202.555.5678	msmith@tv.com	press release follow up call	3 weeks before event day before event	Olivia
Paper	Jim Jones	202.555.6789	jjones@paper.com	press release follow up call	2 Sundays before event day before event	Chris

Mobilizing Community Support: Now we have to get people involved in the actual project event.

PUBLICIZE. ADVERTISE. MOBILIZE. Get the community interested in your event by creating flyers, posters, etc. and soliciting their help in making your project happen. Recruitment can happen through handing out leaflets, postering in high visibility areas, and word of mouth.

Are we making a difference? Evaluating your Impact

1. Create your list of measurable "process" and "impact" indicators related to your goals as well as how and when they will be measured
2. Defining Process indicators: A "process indicator" is a measure of something that you do as part of achieving your goal.
3. Defining Impact indicators: An "impact indicator" is a measure of what about the situation or condition has changed.

Reflecting on what we did:

It is important to talk about and reflect upon our service experience in order to learn lessons that will make our work even stronger. Create a list of reflection questions and ways that the reflection will be carried out.

Celebrating and Recognizing our Efforts:

List the steps you will take to celebrate your project and who is responsible for each part.

Method for Celebration	Resources Needed	Person Responsible
Ex. Recognition Certificates	Paper, Computer for Printing	Janet

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have completed your project plan. You are on your way to helping change your community.

For an online version of this information visit Project Plan-It! at
http://www.YSA.org/planit