



G2G Growing to Greatness: The State of Service-Learning Project
Profiles of Community-Based Service-Learning
In the United States

December 2005



Growing to Greatness is funded by the State Farms Company Foundation.

Available from the NYLC Resource Center at www.nylc.org.

Portions originally published in "Growing to Greatness 2004" and "Growing to Greatness 2005."

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Introduction

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Most Americans think of service-learning as being planned and implemented in either elementary and secondary schools, or colleges and universities (higher education). In these school-based service-learning models, community-based organizations (CBOs) are often partners in planning and managing the efforts, but they sometimes simply serve as “worksites” where students provide service. As highlighted in previous “Growing to Greatness” reports, however, there is an important “third leg on the three-legged service-learning stool”: CBOs sometimes take the lead in designing and implementing service-learning activities, either on their own or as partners with educators in schools and colleges. We use the term community-based service-learning (CBSL) to describe this model.

CBOs and their programs provide thousands of service-learning experiences, serving tens of thousands of young people. Since they do not constitute a random sampling of CBSL programs, readers should not generalize from the specific patterns that emerge in our analysis. There is no doubt, however, that the profiles document the richness, vibrancy, and contributions of the CBSL sector.

Scope

Most of the 22 profiled programs and agencies are national in scope; many support service-learning programs in half or more of the states, and some have international affiliates as well. We have included four programs that operate in just one or two school districts to show that many non-affiliated community-based service-learning programs are also promising. We believe that developing better estimates of the nature and extent of such programs is a high priority for future research, and that this could lay a foundation for more in-depth studies of this important type of service-learning.

Focus

Community-based service-learning programs have a wide variety of intended outcomes, but youth development appears to be the dominant common denominator. The majority of the profiled programs and agencies make explicit references to youth development objectives, and these objectives are implicit in the others. There are also examples of other important intended outcomes scattered throughout the 22 profiles, including academic achievement, career development, and promoting civic engagement.

Roles of National CBOs

Each profiled national CBO plays numerous roles vis-a-vis local service-learning programs, including facilitator and provider of technical assistance and curriculum developer. Most also monitor and assess the service-learning offerings of their local affiliates.

Use of the Term “Service-Learning”

All profiled agencies and programs meet a broad definition of service-learning; they all combine service with explicit learning objectives and opportunities for reflection. Many utilize the term on a regular basis for at least some of their programs, including Earth Force, KIDS Consortium, YMCA of the USA, Eco-Education, FirstCall, and PeaceJam. While others don’t use the term regularly, we have included them in the profiles in order to make the point that adoption of service-learning approaches has been far more widespread than would be imagined if one simply did a web-based search on the term.

Roles of Local CBOs

CBOs play numerous roles in planning and managing service-learning at the community level. The role as junior partner to schools and universities (or at least site at which service is delivered) is inherent in most school-based service-learning. In many profiled cases, local community-based organizations work as equal or senior partners with schools to plan and implement program models that were initiated by the CBO itself. Many other CBOs plan and carry out service-learning on their own, without any link to schools other than serving the same young people who attend the schools.

The profiles and the broader literature in the field illustrate the wide variation of the roles played by local CBOs in planning and carrying out community-based service-learning. For example, they show that...

- recruitment for CBSL programs sometimes takes place in schools and is sometimes totally independent of the schools.
- CBSL opportunities are sometimes offered to all young people and sometimes to specialized target populations.
- CBSL activities are offered in schools, at CBOs, and elsewhere in the community.
- CBSL opportunities are offered as onetime sessions and as ongoing activities.
- assessment of CBSL programs and the accompanying reflection vary in the degree of formality and utilization of explicit written forms.
- CBSL programs vary in the degree to which they provide feedback to schools and/or academic credit, meeting graduation requirements, and so forth.

Evidence of Effectiveness

Evidence about the impact of CBSL programs is just beginning to emerge. Several profiled groups studied affiliate programs. However, much more work is needed to increase our understanding of the effectiveness of these programs, and the characteristics that promote quality experiences and positive outcomes.

Conclusion

Schools are not the only institutions that educate our young people, and community-based organizations can be far more than the “stage” that schools use to deliver the service-learning programs that they develop. Kindergarten-through-twelfth-grade schooling is only one format for “education” where young people gain the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and aspirations they will need to become successful adults. In sum, CBOs and CBSL are key elements of the broad range of opportunities open to America’s young people.

City Year

www.cityyear.org

City Year, founded in 1988, is dedicated to the belief that young people in service are powerful resources for addressing our nation's most pressing issues. City Year engages young adults, ages 17 to 24, from diverse racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds in a year of full-time community service, leadership development, and civic engagement. Corps members provide tutoring and mentoring, and lead children into service to help youths grow and develop as successful, confident, caring, and actively engaged citizens.

City Year also engages citizens in service by organizing large-scale physical service events such as renovating community centers, painting schools, planting community gardens, and other community investment projects. Starting with the first site in Boston, City Year has grown to 14 sites across the nation, including New York, Philadelphia, San Antonio, and Seattle/King County. A fifteenth site is under development in Little Rock.

Service-Learning in City Year

While specific service varies among City Year's sites, service-learning is a major strategy to enhance learning and civic development. City Year's primary approach to engage students in community-based service-learning is through corps-led team-based youth corps modeled after the City Year corps model for different age-groups: elementary (Starfish Corps), middle (Young Heroes) and high school (City Heroes).

Young Heroes program, the middle school service corps, is the oldest and most developed of the three programs. It emphasizes five elements: teamwork, diversity, the study of social issues, community service, and mentorship. Each Young Hero must complete more than 75 hours of service in areas such as visiting with and serving with senior citizens, participating in immunization drives, promoting healthy ways of living, restoring green space, planting trees, or painting murals. Each service project is preceded by a workshop on the specific issue to be addressed. At the end of each day, the teams reflect and extract lessons from their experience. Young Heroes has received national recognition from organizations such as AmeriCorps, Points of Light Foundation and America's Promise.

Scope of Service-Learning

The Young Heroes program engages over 1,000 middle school students in ten communities across the country: Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Columbia, Columbus, Detroit, Philadelphia, Rhode Island, San Jose and Washington D.C. Since 1994, over 6,000 middle school students have participated in Young Heroes nationally. In 2003, 125 City Year corps members led over 1,000 Young Heroes in over 70,000 hours of service. City Year plans to expand the Young Heroes program to all of its 14 sites.

Intended Outcomes

Young Heroes seeks to enhance participants' awareness of and sensitivity to community issues, and to enhance their motivation, capacity, and commitment to take action to address those issues. In 2003, City Year contracted an external evaluator to conduct an exploratory study of outcomes in the Young Heroes program. The findings of this study are leading to the development of measures for standardized outcomes, and are informing the design and implementation of a system-wide evaluation of the program that will yield empirical data on outcomes and impacts.

Updated March 2004

Common Cents New York

www.commoncents.org

Founded in 1991, Common Cents created and runs the Penny Harvest Program in New York City schools. The program turns the multi million-dollar resource of idle pennies into the philanthropic property of young people. Common Cents believes that by giving young people the means to mobilize, allocate, and use the money they “harvest” through the program, children in large numbers will be able to express their generosity and empathy spontaneously and enthusiastically towards others, learn through practice the skills of a democracy from a very young age, and develop lifelong habits of good citizenship. Based on the program’s popularity, scope, and track record, Common Cents has successfully secured substantial in-kind support from the Department of Education and has built strong relationships at all levels of the system.

Service-Learning in Common Cents New York

Since 1999, participating schools have followed a Common Cents service-learning curriculum that includes standards-based lessons in math, science, language arts, art, character education, and social studies. Common Cents New York conducts two teacher trainings every year. Each training session includes the “Common Cents Handbook,” which walks teachers through each module of the program and includes extensive support, research materials, and suggested activities.

The Penny Harvest program has three phases that span the academic year. In Phase One, called simply “Penny Harvest,” pre-K-8th grade youths gather pennies, working with their families to collect door-to-door. School-wide and classroom activities encourage program-related educational outcomes in areas such as math, art, and character development.

In Phase Two, “Penny Harvest Roundtables,” students run an 8-10 week “Philanthropy Roundtable.” The Roundtable is a group of student leaders who decide how to allocate their school’s Penny Harvest funds to service and community grants. The Roundtable students assess their communities’ needs, conduct site visits to community-based organizations, review proposals, and award grants.

Phase Three, “Youth Service,” involves engaging students, parents, community residents, and teachers in service projects for their community. Projects are planned and led by students to address a range of community issues based on research about the community need. Roundtables can decide to implement service projects and/or other student groups in Penny Harvest, and participating schools can apply for a “Student Action Grant” to create a new service-learning project, or fund a project or organization that is already serving their community.

Scope of Service-Learning

The Penny Harvest Program operates in 721 NYC public and private schools (Pre-K-8), representing 65 percent of the country’s largest school system. Over the last decade, NYC students have transformed their pennies into \$4 million dollars. With this money, they have made more than 10,000 grants to schools. Common Cents New York is currently assessing replication models for national expansion to bring the Penny Harvest Program to other sites outside of New York City.

Intended Outcomes

Program staff members are in the process of working with faculty from the Department of Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences at Columbia University Graduate School of Arts and Science to evaluate the impact of the program on youths.

Updated March 2004

Communities In Schools

www.cisnet.org

Communities In Schools (CIS) describes itself as “the nation’s leading community-based organization helping kids succeed in school and prepare for life.” For over 25 years, CIS has championed the connection of community resources with schools. By bringing adults into schools to address children’s unmet needs, CIS provides the link between educators and the community. The intended result is that teachers are free to teach, and students — many in jeopardy of dropping out — have the opportunity to focus on learning.

Since 1977, CIS has grown from a small local operation to a national organization, including approximately 2,600 schools and alternative education sites in 200 local programs in 31 states. CIS reaches over 1.9 million students and their families.

All CIS local programs and state offices are independent, community-based nonprofit organizations that share a common dedication to bringing the CIS Five Basics to young people. These “basics” are directly parallel to the America’s Promise five promises, and include:

1. One-on-One Relationship with a Caring Adult;
2. Safe Place to Learn and Grow;
3. Healthy Start and a Healthy Future;
4. Marketable Skill to Use upon Graduation; and
5. Chance to Give Back to Peers and Community.

Local CIS affiliates work with public schools to garner support from businesses, government, social service providers and volunteer groups to identify needs and assets. They then bring a broad range of stakeholders together to support the Five Basics. In some cases, local CIS programs provide a hands-on “case management” approach to ensure that youth receive the Five Basics.

Service-Learning in Communities In Schools

Community service and related service-learning opportunities lie at the heart of the fifth basic objective of CIS, and relate to all of its programming. Thus, the vast majority of CIS local programs have engaged in service-learning and/or community service. In Central Texas, CIS AmeriCorps members lead community service-learning projects with public school students. In 2003, the CIS Academy at the Century III Mall in West Mifflin, PA, was one of 150 organizations that received a “State Farm Good Neighbor Service-Learning Grant” award administered by Youth Service America.

In addition to its locally initiated efforts, CIS National and some of its state offices promote service-learning throughout the CIS system. For example CIS National recently received a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to support the development of sustainable service-learning at ten CIS local programs. (The ten sites are in North Carolina (3), South Carolina (2), Pennsylvania (1), Michigan (1), Texas (1), Georgia (1), and Indiana (1).) These ten sites are developing a range of service-learning initiatives.

Scope of Service-Learning

During the 2001-2002 school year, 82 percent of CIS local programs offered students service-learning and/or community service opportunities.

Intended Outcomes

CIS recently completed the planning phase of a national evaluation of all of its efforts that should produce more precise information about the extent of service-learning and the effects of CIS service-learning.

Updated March 2004

Constitutional Rights Foundation

www.crf-usa.org

Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) is a non-profit, non-partisan, community-based organization dedicated to educating America's young people about the importance of civic participation in a democratic society in the areas of citizenship, government, politics, and the law.

Service-Learning in Constitutional Rights Foundation

CRF's service-learning curricula and programs support the design and implementation of school- and community-based programs, providing technical support to a wide range of practitioners.

Active Citizenship Today (ACT) is a civic participation program, in collaboration with the Close Up Foundation, for middle and high school students.

CityYouth uses service-learning to integrate civic education into the core academic subjects: social studies, language arts, science, and math. CityYouth's interactive lessons support team teaching, cooperative learning, portfolio assessment, and service-learning projects. CRF supports two versions of CityYouth: a 7th grade curriculum, "Today's Communities," in which students identify and analyze school and community issues and plan, complete, and evaluate service-learning projects around four themes: crime and safety, harmony, health and well-being, and environment; and an 8th grade curriculum, "U.S. History," which links a theme to a historical era. A CityYouth (Grade 6): World History curriculum is pending for 2004.

Civic Engagement Training and Technical Assistance (CETTA). In 2001, CRF contracted with the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to provide three years of citizenship training and technical assistance including the development of a service-learning curriculum: The "Effective Citizenship Guide," "Evaluation Guide," "A Facilitator's Guide for By the People," and "A Guide to Effective Citizenship through AmeriCorps."

Service-Learning NETWORK newsletter examines issues in civic education and service-learning, provides real-world project profiles and other service-learning resources. Underwritten by a grant from the Ford Foundation, Service-Learning NETWORK is distributed free of charge to 14,000 K-12 educators nationwide.

Youth For Justice works to initiate and strengthen law-related education programs that address problems of violence committed by and against youths. Through service-learning, youths participate in and take responsibility for their communities, and develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to become effective citizens.

Youth Leadership For Action (YLFA) is a program for Los Angeles youths who want to make an impact in positively altering of their city. Members put together an annual workshop or youth conference.

Scope of Service-Learning

ACT is applied to social studies and language arts programs in more than 30 school districts across the United States. CETTA's training and technical-assistance services and its "Building Effective Citizens" curriculum are available for use by over 50,000 AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America program participants. Over 1 million students and 16,000 teachers participate in the national Youth for Justice program. YLFA is active in 13 Los Angeles-area schools, serving an estimated 220 students.

Intended Outcomes

ACT teaches problem-solving skills and increased civic engagement, among other outcomes. A Brandeis study found that the majority of ACT teachers modified their teaching strategies as a positive response to the ACT program. Youth for Justice conducts research on its programs, including effectiveness studies and a sequential study with the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools.

Updated March 2004

Do Something®

www.dosomething.org

Do Something is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to “Inspire young people to believe that change is possible; and we train, fund and mobilize them to be leaders who measurably strengthen their communities.” Do Something promotes community change projects that are identified, designed, and executed by young people and linked to explicit curricula. Projects are mentored by “community coaches,” typically teachers or guidance counselors who help young people plan and carry out activities. The first students recruited in a school typically become project leaders who provide youth leadership to all Do Something activities.

Do Something has been a pioneer in the utilization of the Internet to bring young people together, and to plan and operate a national service-learning program. It has involved musicians such as Christina Aguilera to draw young people to the Internet where they can participate in moderated chat rooms that address community needs and programming, list their success stories, and learn more about opportunities for service. Do Something also uses the Internet to allow educators to download curriculum, connect with other Community Coaches, or record their students’ skill-building efforts.

Service-Learning in Do Something

Service-learning is integrated throughout Do Something activities through a number of mechanisms, including explicit curriculum materials developed by the national staff and the utilization of the Path to Change© process as the foundation of all activities: see it – believe it – build it – do it – reflect on it.

In many instances, the initial steps in this process involve young people developing and running a “Speak Out,” a town hall-like meeting that focuses on community challenges that can be addressed over the course of the year. Activities are typically followed by celebrations that promote reflection on accomplishments and other lessons learned.

The Path to Change is also a means of problem-solving that young people learn, apply more broadly, and utilize for a lifetime. (In 2002, Do Something was asked by the Wisconsin Department of Education to develop a pilot program to integrate the Path To Change curriculum into social studies programs at the elementary, middle and high school levels in Wisconsin public schools.)

Scope of Service-Learning

At the high point of the Internet-based approach there were roughly 200 Community Coaches who oversaw ongoing activities in their schools. Do Something has trained Community Coaches in 400 schools in 27 states, with a concentration of 155 schools — primarily in New Jersey and Wisconsin.

The most recent data suggests that approximately 18,000 young people participate in ongoing Do Something activities, with as many as 20,000 students in all 50 states participating in their Kindness and Justice Challenge.

Intended Outcomes

Do Something fosters leadership, citizenship, and character. Recently, Do Something engaged Brandeis University researchers to work with them to develop and implement a system that will provide objective quantitative data on their activities and outcomes. Initial data suggest that Do Something has shown positive effects on participant skills and attitudes, including civic competencies and attitudes towards service.

Updated March 2004

Earth Force

www.earthforce.org

Earth Force is a national education organization that involves young people in service-learning activities pertaining to environmental issues in their communities. Established in 1994 with the support of The Pew Charitable Trusts, Earth Force began as a sponsor of national campaigns such as the Kids Choose Vote, Go Wild For Wildlife!, Team Up for Trees!, Pennies for the Planet, and participated with other organizations in Nickelodeon's Big Help initiative by organizing 350 local action sites around the country.

In 1996, Earth Force shifted its focus to encourage young people to act in deeper, more meaningful ways to address environmental problems by taking part in Community Action and Problem Solving (CAPS) civics-related service-learning projects. Earth Force now operates local offices in nine metropolitan areas around the country and supports programs in about 400 schools nationwide. The nine metropolitan regions are: Charleston, SC; Chicago, IL; Denver, CO; Erie, PA; Houston, TX; Philadelphia, PA; Tampa Bay/St. Petersburg, FL; Washington, DC; and West Palm Beach, FL.

Service-Learning in Earth Force

Earth Force focuses its efforts on helping youth in grades 5 through 9 acquire the knowledge, skills, and experiences to take civic action, leading to long-term improvement of the local environment. A critical component of the Earth Force process is enabling young people to direct their own community problem-solving process by choosing action projects that work to change local policy (school, government, or private policy), or effect a widespread change in community residents' behavior or practices.

Community Action and Problem Solving (CAPS) combines the best practices of environmental education, civic engagement, and service-learning in a classroom setting. Using CAPS materials, middle school youths explore and take action on environmental issues.

The Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN) helps young people protect the rivers, streams, and other vital water resources. GREEN offers educators and watershed organizations integrated services and tools to engage youths in improving water resources.

Earth Force After School adapts Earth Force's CAPS for use in after-school programs. At the core of the program is a self-contained kit of materials and information to guide students through the study of local issues and development of action projects.

Scope of Service-Learning

About 35,000 students in about 400 schools around the country participate in Earth Force programs each year. Programs are located primarily in the nine metropolitan communities where Earth Force operates regional offices.

Intended Outcomes

Since 1997, CAPS field offices, educators, and youths have participated in a national program evaluation conducted by researchers at Brandeis University. A combination of on-site visits, observations, interviews, questionnaires, and pre- and post-program surveys has provided Earth Force a wealth of information. These results address both what is working well, suggestions for improvement in the areas of training, program materials, and program delivery. Self- and teacher-reported studies have shown that Earth Force students make substantial gains in civic action, problem-solving, ability to use community resources in the classroom, leadership, commitment to the environment, and an ability to talk and work with adults.

Updated March 2004

Eco Education

www.ecoeducation.org

Eco Education is an environmental education organization based in St. Paul, Minnesota. Its mission is to “foster within young people the appreciation, knowledge, values and skills necessary to inspire ecologically sound decisions and actions.”

Service-Learning in Eco Education

Eco Education focuses on training and supporting teachers in implementing the two environmental service-learning curricula it has created: City Connections and Urban Stewards. The City Connections curriculum emphasizes ecological content knowledge, understanding of values and attitudes towards the natural and urban environment, familiarity with community organizations working for progress in environmental areas, and the development of research and presentation skills. The Urban Stewards curriculum builds on the skills gained in City Connections, and students design and implement action projects in their communities. Eco Education’s “model schools” implement the two curricula in two consecutive years.

Program Coordinator Christopher Feider says that teachers from a wide range of disciplines come to Eco Education because they are interested in environmental education, and/or they are interested in infusing Eco Education’s curriculum into their subject. Most teachers come to the program with enthusiasm for using a curriculum that emphasizes student voice; other teachers are skeptical at first, but become advocates of Eco Education’s student-voice emphasis.

Eco Education asks all teachers to participate for a minimum of two years. Participating teachers receive an intensive training in August, and continuing support and training throughout the school year. Eco Education’s program coordinators meet with participating teachers at least every three weeks, attend classes, and facilitate connections between classes and community organizations.

In return for their participation, teachers receive stipends, resources (including guidebooks and other supporting materials), funding for field trips, and access to mini-grant funding, which students must apply to receive. In the past, Eco Education students addressed habitat restoration, rainwater control, removal of toxic household waste, and other urban environmental issues.

Scope of Service-Learning

This year, 30 teachers from 14 middle and high schools in Minneapolis and St. Paul participated in Eco Education’s programs, involving approximately 1,200 students. Several years ago, Eco Education had to go to schools to recruit new teachers. Today, there is a waiting list for Eco Education programs.

Intended Outcomes

Feider emphasizes the importance of quality in meeting outcome goals. The program is rigorous and requires teachers to try new methods.

While teachers are ultimately responsible for assessing student performance in the program, Eco Education has done pre- and post-tests with students and teachers. Teachers report that students have increased self-confidence, greater ecological knowledge, better understanding of issues confronting their urban environment, increased familiarity with the roles of local nonprofit and government agencies, and better communication skills as a result of Eco Education programs.

Feider says that Eco Education has “found that the service-learning method is an effective way for teachers and students to both learn about environmental education, and take meaningful and lasting action in their communities.” In essence, Feider says, “we use service-learning because it works.”

Updated March 2005

FirstCall

www.firstcall211.org

FirstCall is the information, volunteer, and referral center for Larimer County in Fort Collins, Colorado. As the information referral service for all of Larimer County, FirstCall is familiar with its community's needs.

Service-Learning in FirstCall

In 1999, at a forum FirstCall held for area volunteers, a group of area youths expressed their wish for a better way to access service opportunities. Because FirstCall also has a passion for making volunteering meaningful, FirstCall responded to their challenge with a service-learning initiative "to promote an ethic of service, foster youth leadership, build community, and enhance education."

FirstCall began its service-learning initiative in Poudre School District "from the bottom up." From the start, young people contributed ideas and enthusiasm to the project. As a result, many teachers became advocates of service-learning.

In the development process, FirstCall collaborated with teachers, curriculum specialists, AmeriCorps*VISTA volunteers, and the University of Colorado to develop teacher training materials. FirstCall then held three-day teacher trainings, where teachers created standards-based service-learning curricula.

After several years of hard work in the Poudre School District, the district embraced FirstCall's service-learning initiative. In 2003, the District passed a resolution describing service-learning "as an integral strategy for meeting the educational goals of every school in the district." For FirstCall, this resolution signals a transition to the school district implementing service-learning projects.

Maddie Snow, FirstCall's Youth Volunteer and Service-Learning Coordinator, says FirstCall owes its success to its passionate staff and its emphasis on tailoring projects to people's needs. Snow emphasizes that FirstCall's Youth Program has never wanted to be only a volunteer referral service; from the beginning, it has advocated for real service-learning, complete with youth-driven projects and in-class reflection.

In its teacher trainings, FirstCall stresses two key service-learning concepts: civic engagement and youth voice. According to Snow, FirstCall's service-learning initiatives "are all about giving youths a voice to help them develop their full potential." Ultimately, Snow hopes that FirstCall will help youths become engaged citizens.

Scope of Service-Learning

Many curriculum-based service-learning projects have occurred throughout Poudre School District and across grade levels as a result of FirstCall's efforts. For example, a second-grade class created a play for their community about water conservation, and a seventh-grade class made a presentation to their city council about fluoride levels in the city water supply.

Now, with the support of the Colorado Department of Education, FirstCall is beginning to introduce service-learning in nearby Big Thompson School District.

Intended Outcomes

Poudre School District officials believe that its service-learning programs have demonstrated remarkable results. The District's recent resolution notes positive impacts on students' engagement in school community life, increases in academic achievement and graduation rates, and enhanced youth civic responsibility as a result of service-learning. For example, at Lincoln Junior High, officials linked increases in students' graduation rates and test scores to service-learning programming.

Updated March 2005

Girl Scouts of the USA

www.girlscouts.org

Girl Scouts of the USA provides a framework for girls to experience personal growth, leadership development, and community service. Girl Scouts' National Director of Program Services, Chris Bergerson views the Girl Scouts' primary role as "informal education, where girls gain skills and confidence by trying out an array of activities, and then applying their new skills and knowledge to 'make the world a better place'." This is based upon an ethical belief system, called the Girl Scout "Promise and Law," which every member shares.

Service-Learning in Girl Scouts of the USA

Although Girl Scouts do not use the term "service-learning," many of their programs include service projects with key elements of service-learning, including an explicit learning component, and an active role for reflection and youth leadership.

One major way that Girl Scouts serve their communities is through achieving leadership awards at different age levels that focus on community service at different age levels. In order to receive the Girl Scout Gold Award, the highest award in Girl Scouting, high-school-aged girls research needs, connect with the community, enlist and direct the work of others, and complete more than 65 hours in accomplishing their a project. Examples of Girl Scout Gold Award recipient projects include establishing a community recycling program or a community library. Girl Scouts of the USA emphasizes that, in the leadership program, girls should address issue areas that they feel passionate about and/or that they have a career interest in pursuing.

A second way that girls may learn through service is through "destinations" where girls ages 11-17 travel to participate in apprenticeship programs. [www.studio2b.org/escape/destinations]. Through destinations apprenticeships, GSUSA emphasizes partnerships with organizations that match the Girl Scout philosophy, such as Outward Bound, which trains girls to challenge themselves and to work with others in the outdoors. Girl Scouts is currently hoping to expand the destinations apprenticeship program to include international organizations and more national service groups.

Girl Scouts also engage in service-learning in other activities, by working with adult mentors to complete projects to earn insignia, by participating in the Girl Scout Cookie® Sale, and through community service projects.

Although most activities occur outside of schools, many Girl Scouts coordinate with their schools to satisfy their schools' service or credit requirements.

Scope of Service-Learning

Today, 2.8 million girls participate in Girl Scouts of the USA programs in all fifty states and through USA Girl Scouts Overseas.

Intended Outcomes

The Girl Scouts Research Institute (GSRI) has documented impacts of the Girl Scout program, demonstrating that the activities have an impact on girls, helping them to become happy, resourceful, and involved citizens. In 1997, the Girl Scouts Research Institute (GSRI) conducted extensive pre-testing and focus groups and found that outcomes of Girl Scouts programs include self-reliance, self-competence, social skills, respect for others, feelings of belonging, values and decision-making, helpfulness/concern for the community, teamwork, and leadership. Ongoing research measures outcomes of program participation at different age levels across the country. Girl Scouts of the USA emphasizes girl/adult partnerships in its assessment process; girls and their adult mentors complete project evaluations together.

Updated March 2005

KIDS Consortium

www.kidsconsortium.org

KIDS Consortium (KIDS) is a New England-based non-profit organization that was incorporated in 1992 and works with teachers, administrators, and students to involve students in addressing real challenges faced by their communities. KIDS provides tools and training around its KIDS as Planners service-learning model for educators and community organizations, and assists local education and community leaders to sustain and integrate service-learning into local culture, practice, and policy.

KIDS has received support from the Corporation for National and Community Service, Gulf of Maine Council, U.S Environmental Protection Agency, Academy for Educational Development — National Service-Learning Partnership, Carnegie Corporation, the Center for Civic Education, the Education Commission of the States Horizon Foundation; Surdna Foundation; W.K. Kellogg Foundation and several state agencies and foundations in Maine, as well as individual donors.

Service-Learning in KIDS Consortium

The KIDS as Planners Service-Learning Model is based on three key principles: academic integrity, apprentice citizenship, and student ownership.

Academic Integrity: KIDS projects grow out of community needs yet are carefully connected to state learning standards and local curriculum requirements.

Student Ownership: KIDS projects are student-driven. Students select the projects, plan them, and implement them, but work with adults (teachers and community members) as equal partners. Students practice making decisions through small group work, classroom meetings, and one-on-one interactions with adults. The adults share in learning, acting more as partners than experts. By working alongside students and providing role models, community members can enhance students' aspirations.

Apprentice Citizenship: The KIDS model views young people as vital community members who can apply their knowledge, skills, and energy to local and regional challenges. Students work successfully with local institutions and professionals to design products and services with lasting benefits. In the process, they develop civic competencies and skills needed for effective citizenship: critical thinking, conflict resolution, attentive listening, information-gathering, cooperation, decision-making, advocacy, and problem-solving.

To help local schools and communities implement these core principles, KIDS staff provide workshops and trainings for teachers, community members and students; host forums and events; provides awards to local programs and provide tools (such as the KIDS as Planners workbook).

Scope of Service-Learning

The KIDS As Planners service-learning model is currently being employed in nearly 50 school districts in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut and Rhode Island. KIDS has also expanded its efforts into Florida, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Texas in recent years. Annually, over 12,000 students, 750 teachers, and thousands of community partners, parents and volunteers participate in KIDS projects.

Intended Outcomes

KIDS Consortium has collaborated with the National Center for Student Aspirations at the University of Maine at Orono to develop a student survey instrument to help gauge the impacts of KIDS service-learning projects on participating youths. The survey, called “KIDS Speak,” was created to provide information on the extent to which KIDS projects impact five areas: motivation to learn; attitudes toward community; communication, decision-making and problem-solving skills; attitudes toward self and working with others; and career awareness.

Updated March 2004

Lions-Quest

www.lions-quest.org

Lions-Quest is a program of Lions Clubs International Foundation dedicated to creating family-school-community partnerships for positive youth development. Their mission is to empower and support adults throughout the world, in their efforts to nurture responsibility and caring in young people. For more than 20 years, Lions-Quest has assisted educators and other adults in guiding young people's healthy development through program materials and staff development workshops in life skills, character education, drug and violence prevention, and service-learning.

Lions-Quest programs provide sequential, grade-specific classroom materials that teach competencies such as self-discipline, communication, problem-solving, cooperation, resistance, and conflict management skills.

Service-Learning in Lions-Quest

Lions-Quest programs help students discover the roles they can play in their communities while reinforcing positive social behavior and developing essential citizenship skills. Through their international Lions Youth Outreach Initiative, Lions Club members assist schools in service-learning efforts.

Three of the eight underlying principles for Lions-Quest guide ongoing research and development to ensure that programs are effective service-learning:

- Collaboration and partnership between home, school, and community;
- Programs are values-based; and
- Programs are community-based.

In addition, Lions-Quest ensures linkages to learning objectives by providing curricula, products, training, and services to support adults in helping young people deal with the complex issues they face every day.

- Lions-Quest Skills for Growing is a K-5 program focusing on life skills, service-learning, and character education. Skills for Growing incorporates positive prevention strategies and an implementation process for linking the home, school, and community in teaching essential life and citizenship skills.
- Lions-Quest Skills for Adolescence is a comprehensive life skills and drug prevention curriculum for grades 6-8 that emphasizes character development, communication, decision-making skills, and service-learning.
- Lions-Quest Skills for Action is a curriculum for grades 9-12 that builds essential life and citizenship skills through community- and school-based service-learning experiences.

Scope of Service-Learning

The Lions-Quest program has been supported by more than 50 grants with a total of more than \$8 million to expand or establish programs in all 50 U.S. states and Puerto Rico, and over 30 other countries, encompassing over a quarter of a million teachers and touching the lives of more than ten million young people over the past two decades. In 2002, about 1.4 million students participated in Lions-Quest worldwide, nearly 60 percent of whom were middle school students; 30 percent were elementary school students; and about ten percent were high school students.

Intended Outcomes

Incorporating risk, resiliency, and asset-building research, Lions-Quest programs engage families, schools, and community members in working together to increase the protective factors that promote young people's healthy development and reduce those factors that put children at risk for problem behaviors.

In evaluation results from more than 60 surveys and studies, Lions-Quest Skills for Growing (grades K-5) have demonstrated effectiveness in changing the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs that lead to violence and substance abuse, and in strengthening the factors that protect young people from harmful, high-risk behaviors.

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National 4-H Council

Growing to Greatness: CBO Profiles

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National 4-H Council is the private, non-profit partner of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 4-H headquarters. It brings private sector support to 4-H programs and initiatives at the national, state, and local levels. It also operates the National 4-H Youth Conference Center and the National 4-H Supply Service. The Council's mission is "to advance the 4-H movement, building a world in which youths and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change."

Service-Learning in the National 4-H Council

Don Floyd, National 4-H Council President and CEO, explains that in its simplest form, the 4-H is a "community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills." Part of being community-focused, Floyd explains, is encouraging local programs' autonomy. Together with the National 4-H Headquarters, the National 4-H Council provides leadership for 4-H programs, but each state, county, and local 4-H club implements its own curriculum and goals.

Although individual 4-H programs design activities and curricula that match their groups' developmental needs and their local communities' issues, several commonalities exist across programs. All 4-H programs have youths and adults working together; all focus on experiential learning; and all programs are connected to land grant universities. In addition, all 4-H programs use the 4-H emblem, which symbolizes a "whole person" approach — head, heart, hands, and health — to serving and learning.

While many 4-H programs incorporate elements of service-learning, service-learning objectives are perhaps most obvious in National 4-H Council's Youth in Governance initiative, in which young people receive training to "become equal partners in leadership and authentic decision-making" in their communities. "I love it when young people and adults can sit at the table together," Floyd says. "That's when magic happens."

4-H in Minnesota

Every year at the Minnesota State Fair, 7,000 to 8,000 4-H participants present their work, and are recognized for their efforts. At the state level, Minnesota 4-H has developed best practices, essential elements, and model curriculum for 4-H clubs. The state has also conducted extensive survey research showing that 4-H participants exhibit fewer risk behaviors and more pro-social behavior than their peers.

Scope of Service-Learning

Participation in 4-H clubs has grown over time. Today, more than 7 million young people in every county in the United States participate in 4-H programs. To date, 4-H programs have developed more than 1,400 different curricula, which are available for all 4-H groups to use.

Intended Outcomes

4-H programs' primary goal is community-youth or positive youth development. In 1999-2000, 4-H implemented the first national evaluation of 4-H programs, the National 4-H Impact Assessment Project. The Project's final report presents findings from surveys of 2,467 young people and 471 adults. It concludes that both youths and adults positively reflected all critical elements of positive youth development.

National 4-H Council has also conducted control group studies in various states and has found that 4-H participants have higher perceptions of their competence and life skills than non-participants, and that involvement in 4-H is positively associated with higher scores on communication, leadership, and other skills.

Updated March 2005

The National Indian Youth Leadership Project

www.niylp.org

The National Indian Youth Leadership Project (NIYLP) is a national non-profit organization whose mission is “to engage Native youth in challenging activities and meaningful experiences in the community and the natural world preparing them for healthy lives as capable, contributing members of their family, community, tribe, and nation.” NIYLP is based on traditional Native American values and concepts, including the Tsa-la-gi (Cherokee) people’s call for “Gadugi” — a call to bring people together to help one another.

Service-Learning in the National Indian Youth Leadership Project

- Project Venture is a youth development approach developed by NIYLP for Native youths and communities being replicated in at least twenty locations across the country. In 2003, Project Venture underwent the process to become officially recognized as a Model Program by NREPP and the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.
- Walking in Beauty is a youth development program tailored to adolescent girls. Walking in Beauty uses the traditional Navajo “Kinalda” ceremony and other culturally derived rites of passage.
- Web of Life is an experiential approach to healthy development. Web of Life emphasizes outdoor adventure, service to the community, cultural discovery, health, wellness, and native values.
- Turtle Island Project (TIP) is a multi-state effort to incorporate service-learning into schools that serve Native American youths and colleges that are training Native teachers, and developing policy to support service as a culturally appropriate teaching methodology.
- Sacred Mountain Learning Center on Turquoise Mountain (Mt. Taylor) is undergoing renovation. NIYLP completed work on the Turtle Amphitheater, which will seat about 200 people. The shape honors Turtle Island, the traditional Native American name for North America. They also completed the first of several hogans (traditional Navajo structures) to be used as dormitories.

Scope of Service-Learning

Over 3,000 youths participate in NIYLP programs. The Project Venture Model is being replicated in 27 locations in 11 states, serving an additional 2,500-3,000 youths. Walking in Beauty provides direct service to 70 young women in two schools in New Mexico. Web of Life has 250 youths participating in three schools in three communities in New Mexico. 21st Century Program subcontracts with the Gallup McKinley School District to provide after-school academic and enrichment activities to 60 students in three schools.

Since 1995, foundation funding supported the TIP’s engagement of over 500 students in service-learning in more than 15 native community schools and tribal colleges. TIP provides technical assistance primarily in the southwest region. Project Venture K-6 and Project Venture Middle School have 250 youth participants in their programs.

NIYLP publishes the Journal of Native Service-Learning and recently completed a book on the “Gathering of Elders” that has been conducted each year since 1993 at the National Service-Learning Conference.

Intended Outcomes

Results from NIYLP’s program evaluations since 1990 indicate consistently positive outcomes for youths in terms of personal and social competence, and prevention of risk behavior. These outcomes have resulted in Project Venture being named a “Promising and Effective Program” by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Updated March 2004

National Urban League

www.nul.org

The National Urban League is “the nation’s oldest and largest community-based movement empowering African Americans to enter the economic and social mainstream.”

Service-Learning in the National Urban League

The National Urban League has been involved in service-learning and related youth development programs for more than 15 years. In the late 1980s, the National Urban League created the National Urban League Incentive to Excel and Succeed program to bring African American youths together in conferences. In 1990, NULITES held its first conference for youths.

Now, NULITES holds an annual four-day National Leadership Summit. Summits are hosted by colleges and provide NULITES participants with leadership workshops, career exploration activities, and opportunities for networking and showcasing their talents.

NULITES chapters are sponsored by local Urban League affiliates and have their own youth officers who develop and implement activities with guidance from adult advisors. While NULITES is grounded in African- American pride and history, young people of many cultural backgrounds now participate in NULITES chapters. All NULITES chapters have a service component, and roughly a quarter of the chapters also have an explicit focus on academic outcomes. Through educational seminars, service projects, and other activities, NULITES participants reach NULITES goals of high achievement, educational and character development, and leadership qualities.

Program example: The NULITES Houston Chapter

The Houston Area Urban League is a model for other NUL chapters. At last year’s NULITES National Leadership Summit, the Houston NULITES chapter won “chapter of the year.”

The 160 Houston “NULITERS” encounter job opportunities as they visit businesses and their state capital. They receive scholarship help and SAT practice. They also design and complete service projects, and receive awards at an annual end-of-year banquet. In order to encourage participants to become well-rounded leaders, John Robinson, Director, Education and Youth at the Houston Area Urban League, explains that NULITES incorporates service projects in order to “build participants’ mindset of being community servants.”

Robinson believes that NULITES should be regarded as the most important program at all National Urban League chapters “because it’s about our future, and it’s about getting our young people to become leaders...The Houston NULITES chapter will have a President of the United States coming out of it soon.”

Scope of Service-Learning

Today, 57 NULITES chapters exist in 26 states. Each chapter looks in its “own backyard” to decide what issue area it wants to address. Chapters address various social or community issues, usually with explicit or implicit learning objectives. For example, the newest NULITES chapter, in Memphis, Tennessee, formed, in part, because youths wanted to renovate a park in their community.

Intended Outcomes

NULITES’ goals include improving academic achievement, and providing opportunities for personal and leadership development for African American and other urban youths. To ensure that NULITES’ goals are met, all chapters collect information via intake forms and other surveys.

“We are in an era of challenge,” says Renita Carter, National Urban League Manager for the Education and Youth Division. She adds, “In order to become great, young people need to expect greatness of themselves and have goals for their futures. But someone needs to expect [greatness] of them, first.”

Updated March 2005

National Youth Court Center

www.youthcourt.net

The concept of youth courts is simple: instead of receiving sentences from adults, youth whose cases are heard in youth court programs are sentenced by their peers. Youth court programs emerged throughout the United States in the late 1960s, with a handful of programs and few resources. In 1994, the American Probation and Parole Association, with support from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, began actively supporting youth court programs. In 1999, OJJDP established the National Youth Court Center, which is managed by APPA. Today, with the resources they receive from the NYCC, youth courts are thriving.

Service-Learning in Youth Courts

Although explicit service-learning objectives are not typical in youth court programs, Tracy Godwin Mullins, NYCC Director, says there is a trend toward more explicit service-learning programming. The NYCC encourages youth court programs to develop service-learning objectives. "I think it is only a matter of time before more youth court programs adopt principles of service-learning," says Godwin Mullins.

No set model exists for youth court programs. Justice system agencies manage some programs, while schools and non-profit organizations operate others. Program models differ, but all successful youth court programs require community partnerships. For example, programs run by justice system agencies often involve schools in recruitment and training. In turn, many youth court programs operated by schools (e.g., as part of a civics course or as an extra curricular program) gain support from community organizations, including law enforcement and justice agency officials.

There is also no specified model for young people's roles in youth court programs. Youth court participants serve as attorneys, jurors, bailiffs, clerks, and even judges. In addition, young people sometimes volunteer as youth advisory committee members or assist in training efforts.

Service-learning fits within the goals of the youth courts construct. Participants make a substantial commitment, learn about the justice system, and help reduce recidivism. Along the way, youth courts are transforming the traditional view of community service from merely punitive, to something positive that engages young people in meaningful service to their communities.

Scope of Service-Learning

In 1994, approximately 78 youth court programs existed in the United States. Today, with support from OJJDP and NHTSA, the NYCC acts as an information clearinghouse and provides training, technical assistance, and resources to more than 940 youth court programs in 48 states and the District of Columbia. The NYCC estimates that 70,000 or more youth volunteers participate in youth court programs.

Intended Outcomes

Youth court programs teach young offenders about the effects of their actions, with the ultimate goal of reducing recidivism. Youth courts also provide real-world learning experiences for youth volunteers, with the goal that young people learn about the justice system, and improve their leadership and public speaking skills.

OJJDP funded an evaluation of youth courts and found positive impacts, including reduced recidivism, and increased parent and youth satisfaction. The 2002 evaluation report showed average recidivism rates of the four sites studied to be eight percent for youth court participants, compared to rates of 18 percent for control groups.

Updated March 2005

PeaceJam

www.peacejam.org

PeaceJam was founded during Denver's summer of violence in 1996, and was inspired by one founder's encounter with Denver gang members. These young people embodied a paradox: the gun-wielding youths lived in a culture of violence, yet they highly regarded Archbishop Desmond Tutu, a peace activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner. The founders envisioned leveraging the power of peacemakers' stories to transform young people and their communities. They traveled to India and presented their ideas to the Dali Lama, who said he would join their effort if other Nobel Peace Prize winners would also join the cause. Eight years later, this notion is a reality; Nobel laureates now work with young people internationally on peace-oriented service-learning projects.

Service-Learning in PeaceJam

PeaceJam's program consists of three primary components: 1) a standards-based curriculum for K-12; 2) service-learning projects that students design and implement in their communities; and 3) an annual conference where participants spend a weekend with a Nobel Peace Laureate, learning, sharing, and being inspired.

High school-level PeaceJam participants study the PeaceJam curriculum, focusing on the lives and works of Nobel Peace Prize winners who will attend their region's annual conference. As part of the curriculum, students plan and implement peace-oriented service-learning projects and then present their projects to the Nobel Laureates at the conference.

In each region of the world where PeaceJam operates, it has a local university affiliate, which hosts and trains college students to be small group facilitators at conferences, and leverages local resources to support the program.

PeaceJam Juniors offers a standards-based educational program for K-6th-grade students. While PeaceJam clubs for older students sometimes exist separately from school programs, PeaceJam Juniors programs are integrated into the school day.

Dr. Cumbo, PeaceJam Foundation Program Director, adds, "PeaceJam is trying to create a new generation of peacemakers who have the civic and leadership skills to make a difference in their local communities. Service-learning plays a crucial role in creating that leadership."

Scope of Service-Learning

Today, the 13 Nobel Peace Prize winners who work with PeaceJam inspire youths in 21 states and countries throughout the world, including South Africa, Costa Rica, India, Guatemala, Kenya, Argentina, and Mexico. Nearly 100,000 students currently participate in PeaceJam's high school program, and a growing number of younger students participate in PeaceJam Juniors.

Intended Outcomes

PeaceJam participates in Learn and Serve Colorado's annual Service-Learning Evaluation conducted by RMC Research Corporation. Results from this evaluation indicate that PeaceJam Juniors participants gain academic, personal, problem-solving, civic responsibility, leadership and social skills as a result of their participation. In addition, 97 percent of high-school-aged conference attendees report that, as a result of their experience in PeaceJam, they will be peacemakers for the rest of their lives.

PeaceJam Juniors teachers report that their students are more engaged as a result of the program, and parents who are typically un-involved in their students' education often become involved because the PeaceJam curriculum excites them.

Updated March 2005

Philadelphia Youth Network

www.pyninc.org

The Philadelphia Youth Network engages businesses and youth-serving organizations to create summer and year-round programs that encourage work-readiness, academic skills, and college awareness for more than 7,500 young people annually in Philadelphia. PYN participants include youths in and out of school, court-involved youths, and youths aging out of foster care. In 1999, PYN was created as a separate organization to sustain the school district's school-to-career efforts, and now manages substantial government, private and foundation investments in youth workforce development.

Service-Learning in Philadelphia Youth Network

It is possible for students to "advance" in PYN programs, from initial focus on academics, to pre-work experiences in the middle school, to internships in the high school years, to eventual employment and higher education post-graduation. All participants in YouthWorks, one of PYN's major program strands, must complete a project as part of their participation, most of which are service-learning projects.

All projects are designed to meet the school district's multidisciplinary project graduation requirement. Youths who successfully complete YouthWorks programs are also eligible for elective credits. In addition to meeting a community need, service-learning projects must meet the district's academic content standards in two disciplines and their "cross-cutting competency" for citizenship education. Each project must include an "essential question" to guide the work, reflection, and assessment (by the student, and the teacher or mentor). Students also involve the participation of "experts" to lend real-world expertise. Projects must result in tangible products or performances.

PYN promotes service-learning as a best practice and essential component of the continuum of youth workforce development programs it supports. PYN also trains and hires district teachers to assess student projects to ensure that projects meet district standards. "By building a cadre of educators in the schools who understand project-based learning, PYN is seeding pedagogical change," PYN Vice-President Melissa Orner says.

Serving-learning's philosophy of youth engagement is reflected in PYN's Youth Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of the Workforce Investment Board's Youth Council. The YAC is comprised of past and present student participants, whose voices inform the program's direction. YAC members learn research methods and conduct customer satisfaction surveys.

Scope of Service-Learning

Approximately 2,571 PYN students received academic credit for service-learning projects in the past year: 2,167 students through summer-only projects at 14 different organizations, and 584 through year-round programs at 15 organizations. The service-learning projects are as diverse as the partnering organizations. Students created public art, tutored in academic subjects, gardened, taught literacy and computer skills, and addressed public health issues. Students also improved housing, organized age-appropriate activities for children at local parks, served as camp counselors, and assisted with sports leagues.

Intended Outcomes

The following information summarizes outcomes for YouthWorks programs for years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03. Youths achieving academic goals by earning school credit: 70 percent. Youths achieving work-readiness goal: 78 percent. Youths retained throughout program: 75 percent. Attendance: 82 percent. Worksite quality rated by youths as "good" or higher: 92 percent. Youth satisfied with program experience: 71 percent.

Updated March 2005

Points of Light Foundation

www.pointsoflight.org

Founded in May 1990, the Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer Center National Network is a national non-profit organization whose mission is “to engage more people more effectively in volunteer community service to help solve serious social problems.” As part of its mission, the Foundation promotes service programs and service-learning curricula.

Service-Learning in Points of Light Foundation

The Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer Center National Network’s 2004-2009 strategic plan anticipates “a heightened demand for service-learning opportunities” in the United States, which The Foundation’s Youth and Family Outreach department aims to meet by “building the knowledge and skills of organizations and institutions to create meaningful service and leadership opportunities.”

The Foundation has multiple roles in promoting high-quality service-learning programs. It provides technical assistance, training, and products. It also plays an important role in developing “turnkey” programs, which it then can use nationally, across its large network.

The Foundation develops and promotes service-learning partnerships and curriculum through its programs. For example, the Foundation operates a community-based program called Service-Learning Impacting Citizenship Curriculum, which includes issue-based service-learning modules related to social problems such as hunger.

The Foundation’s Patrick Doyle explains that, through this curriculum, the Foundation aims to use service-learning as a springboard for getting students to be active citizens, including teaching them basic civic skills and structures of government.

The Foundation supports the diverse roles community-based organizations can play in service-learning programs with schools and on their own. In the school/agency partnerships model, schools have important roles in driving service-learning programs’ education agendas. Additionally, many community-based organizations incorporate all of the critical elements for successful service-learning with little or no assistance from schools.

The Foundation supports diverse models of community-based service-learning which cover a variety of issues. The Foundation’s Cynthia Scherer says that they have identified commonalities across the varied service-learning models that it promotes. From those identified commonalities, the Foundation has codified critical elements of successful service-learning. While not all offerings are explicitly called “service-learning,” Scherer stresses that effective youth service actually has the benefits of service-learning if it incorporates those same critical elements.

Scope of Service-Learning

Today, more than 350 volunteer centers throughout the United States are members of the Foundation. In addition, 1,200 local Points of Light Youth Leadership Institute trainers have been certified and, in turn, have trained over 15,000 young people in the Foundation’s service-leadership curriculum.

Intended Outcomes

Through its Youth Leadership Institute, Kids Care Clubs, Service-Learning Impacting Citizenship, Youth Ready to Respond, and other programs, the Foundation hopes to instill a “spirit of service and philanthropy” in young people.

In addition to individual program evaluation, the Foundation measures the impact of its efforts by conducting a survey of its network members every other year, measuring the preparedness of the infrastructure that supports service-learning and the engagement, funding levels, participation rates, and number of partnerships with schools. The survey has documented increased participation in service-learning across the Foundation’s network. The survey also shows that youths are the largest group of people participating in volunteer center programs.

Updated March 2005

YMCA of the USA

www.ymca.net

Since 1844, the YMCA has grown into an inclusive, ecumenical organization with more than 2,500 sites across the U.S. and 130 countries. The YMCA has devoted considerable resources and energy toward building strong kids, families, and communities. In recent years, the YMCA has focused its efforts on community development and efforts to reach out to more teens, dovetailing with an emphasis on community service and service-learning.

Service-Learning in the YMCA

The YMCA collaborates with organizations that leverage resources towards the greater social good and emphasis on teenagers.

YMCA Earth Service Corps: For the past ten years, the YMCA has operated the Earth Service Corps, a service-learning program for teenagers to make a difference in their communities. Grounded on the building blocks of leadership development, environmental education and action, and cross-cultural awareness, this program works in communities, allowing teens to use their talents develop new skills, and learn more about themselves and their surroundings.

YMCA Learn and Serve America Project: In 2000, YMCA of the USA received a three-year grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service to institute service-learning at five local YMCA sites. The project's overall goal was to engage teens to help children (ages 5-11) increase their readiness and respect for, and commitment to learning. The teen participants were guided in developing and implementing innovative projects in underserved neighborhoods to develop "social capital" in the neighborhoods surrounding the YMCA chapters.

Civic Engagement Initiative: In 2002, YMCA of the USA began a civic engagement initiative, with support from the Pew Charitable Trusts, to build on previous Pew-funded efforts by promoting service-learning and civic engagement activities throughout the entire YMCA system in the United States. The initiative began with a symposium attended by representatives of over 40 YMCA chapters and their community partners to "jump-start" planning for new and/or enhanced civic engagement activities. It involved 24 local YMCA staff as "Civic Engagement Fellows" who jointly developed a training curriculum on civic engagement.

Scope of Service-Learning

The YMCA Earth Service Corps operates in more than 140 YMCA chapters in 30 states, and continues to experience growth as a national program. In its ten-year history, the program has involved close to 20,000 young people in well over 1,000,000 hours of service.

Based on interim data, 23 (out of 24) Pew-sponsored Civic Engagement Fellows provided training to promote youth civic engagement to more than 2,700 adults and 4,800 youths in 19 states.

Intended Outcomes

An external evaluation by Search Institute found high impact on YMCA Earth Service Corps' ability to strengthen leadership skills, increase the commitment of future volunteerism, and provide the tools necessary for healthy, competent, and caring lives.

A recently completed evaluation of the Learn and Serve project by Brandeis University shows that the YMCA model has succeeded in engaging teenagers in ways that lead to a wide range of personal growth indicators and benefits for their communities. The activities have led to solid progress in utilizing service-learning to develop or improve relationships among YMCA chapters and other community agencies.

Updated March 2004

Youth as Resources

www.yar.org

The National Crime Prevention Council developed the concept for Youth as Resources in the mid-1980s, and launched a successful pilot program for the YAR model in 1987. In 1995, the Center for Youth as Resources was incorporated as an independent, national nonprofit organization. Today, it operates with a simple mission: Youth as Resources recognizes youths as valuable community resources and engages them as partners with adults in bringing about positive community change.

Service-Learning in Youth as Resources

CYAR is a national-level umbrella organization serving local YAR programs. It promotes a philosophy of engaging young people as resources, and advocates three core principles in its work: youth-adult partnerships in governance, youth-led service, and youths as grant-makers.

Community organizations such as schools and nonprofit organizations host local YAR sites. Each local host organization recruits a youth-adult board, which is responsible for administering grants. For host organizations, benefits of participation include the ability to reach out to their communities through grant-making and service. Shuan Butcher, CYAR Director, explains that the YAR model has two major strengths: First, its programs are for all young people, including people who are at risk or marginalized. Second, YAR programs move beyond “picking, planting, and painting,” to address a wide variety of interesting issue areas and types of activities.

CYAR’s role is to provide resources and support to local YAR sites, which implement service-learning programs at the local level, either through partnerships between schools and community-based organizations or solely through community-based organizations.

Scope of Service-Learning

Today, 70 local YAR sites exist throughout the United States and New Zealand. Nationally and internationally, the YAR program model is gaining popularity. To date, YAR has enabled a total of 400,000 young people to serve their communities, and the numbers of participating young people continue to grow.

Intended Outcomes

On the individual student level, CYAR hopes that its service-learning programs increase civic engagement and an ethic of service among young people. On the societal level, CYAR’s goal for its service-learning programs is that they will transform society’s view of youths into a view of youths as assets in their communities.

CYAR certifies and assesses local YAR programs. Through its National Advisory Council and its annual conferences, it has used information from the field to create standards for service-learning, including essential practices and best practices. CYAR requires that all YAR sites meet 100 percent of CYAR’s stated essential practices and at least 50 percent of the best practices in order to maintain their certification.

Updated March 2005

Youth Service America

www.ysa.org

Youth Service America (YSA) is a resource center that partners with and supports thousands of organizations committed to increasing the quality and quantity of volunteer community service and service-learning opportunities for young people, ages 5-25, in neighborhoods, nationally, and globally. Founded in 1986, YSA's vision is to create and nurture a powerful network of organizations committed to making service and service-learning the common expectation and experience of all young people in America.

Service-Learning in Youth Service America

Service-Learning in Youth Service America YSA sponsors and collaborates with other organizations to involve youths in service-learning through several initiatives, including:

- National and Global Youth Service Day, considered the largest service event in the world, it mobilizes young people to identify and address community needs; supports youths on a lifelong path of service and civic engagement; and educates the public, media, and policymakers about the year-round contributions of young people as community leaders.
- A Service-Learning Curriculum Guide, published by YSA to provide an educational link between service projects and K-12 curricula for National and Global Youth Service Day, and convenes the Working Group on National and Community Service to advance new knowledge on service-learning topics.
- Co-sponsorship of the National Service-Learning Conference where YSA conducts an annual forum on Youth in Decision-Making, offers a number of skill-building workshops, and co-hosts an awards ceremony.
- Project Plan-It!, YSA's online interactive project planning tool, helps young people develop a plan for their service projects, allowing them to print their plan, timeline, budget, funding proposal, press release, service-learning reflection plan, and other helpful resources.

Scope of Service-Learning

Over 200 national and global partners organize thousands of projects based on a service-learning approach each year in the United States and abroad. Millions of youths from 50 states and 127 countries participated in National and Global Youth Service Day in 2003.

Intended Outcomes

Highlights of 2003 program impact include:

- Over 320 million media impressions (readership) from 951 radio, television, and newspaper stories highlighting youths' positive role during NYSD and year-round, and an average 1 million hits a month on SERVENet.org.
- Participation of approximately 300 government officials in NYSD and GYSD, including the Presidents of Brazil and the Philippines, helped legitimize and disseminate the key role of youth service and service-learning in community and national development.
- Unanimous passage of United States Senate's Resolution 112 declaring April 11th as National Youth Service Day.
- 150 youths, teachers, and organizations received \$125,000 in grant funding to support their service-learning projects for NYSD, including 50 grants of \$500 for students and 50 grants of \$1,500 for teachers made available through The State Farm Good Neighbor Service-Learning Award.
- 40,000 "Service-Learning Curriculum Guides," in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, were distributed for use in National and Global Youth Service Day projects.
- Approximately 60 youths, representing at least 12 states, participated in YSA sponsored events at the National Service-Learning Conference in Minneapolis, MN.
- More than 6,600 students used Project Plan-It in as a resource to develop service-learning projects.

Updated March 2004

Youth Volunteer Corps of America

www.yvca.org

First launched in 1987, the Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC) model has been established in numerous communities nationwide in partnership with community-based organizations, school districts, and municipalities. Foundations, corporations, individuals, United Ways, and governments provide funding. While each local community's YVC program is tailored to meet unique needs, all programs meet 12 "National Program Standards."

YVC provides service-learning opportunities for youths, ages 11-18. YVC's mission is to create and increase volunteer opportunities to enrich America's youths, address community needs, and develop a lifetime commitment to service. It offers communities a proven, cost-effective youth service program to engage diverse groups of young people in service projects designed by local government and non-profit agencies. Programs include the "Clown Corps" in Arizona, in which participants entertain at senior homes, hospital, and childcare centers; oral history projects; programs to serve children and youths; as well as physical community development projects.

Recruited from inner cities, suburbs and rural areas, youth volunteers, ages 11-18, reflect the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the community. This rich mix of participants enhances ethnic appreciation, teamwork, and civic responsibility.

Service-Learning in Youth Volunteer Corps

During the school year, YVC program directors are expected to work closely with young people and their teachers to develop service-learning programs. Moreover, two out of the 12 standards for all Youth Volunteer Corps activities emphasize service-learning:

- Providing leadership opportunities for youth volunteers, and
- Establishing an integrated process of education and reflection for participants.

Scope of Service-Learning

More than 40 YVC programs operate in 22 states and are sponsored by community-based organizations such as Volunteer Centers, the YMCA, United Way, and RSVP offices. Other sites are sponsored by schools and school districts and by local government. Last year, YVC programs recruited just over 40,000 youths. Its smaller programs involve 100 youths per year. Larger programs involve approximately 2,000 youths per year.

About 75 percent of the youths serve during the school year, but 50 percent of hours are completed during the intensive summer program, averaging about 30 hours of service. The project duration ranges from half a day up to four weeks of fulltime service. The average youth volunteer serves on three projects during the course of one year.

Intended Outcomes

The YVC model is based on research conducted in 1985 by the current YVC president, who visited existing service corps and interviewed leaders in the then-newly forming youth service field. YVC reports that several studies have demonstrated the program's effectiveness in reaching young people and helping them develop a sense of confidence in their own abilities as well as greater empathy for others.

Two intensive independent evaluations have been conducted on YVC. The first was funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and conducted by Dr. Lynne Ford of the College of Charleston from 1992 to 1995. Results included impacts on youth attitudes regarding the experiences, learning and growth, and impacts on community. For 2003-2005, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation has hired the Youth Policy Research Group to evaluate YVC impact.

Updated March 2004