**Key Elements of Service Learning**

**Preparation**
Take a look at your community and plan projects to meet the needs you see. Set goals for what they volunteers will learn. Prepare volunteers with the knowledge and skills they'll need to carry out the service.

**Service**
To help make the service meaningful, set goals; make sure you have needed resources; map out logistics; and anticipate barriers you may face.

**Reflection**
Take time during and after the service to reflect on the experience. What did you do? Why was it important to you? What did you learn and what will you do with the knowledge?

**Celebration**
You've worked hard, helped the community, and learned something along the way. Celebrate—you deserve it! Be sure to include the beneficiaries of the service in your celebration. Now, start planning your next project!

**For More Information**
For more information on 4-H SEEDS OF SERVICE, contact your local Agricultural Extension Service office or the Tennessee state 4-H office.

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Or check us out on the web!
www.utextension.utk.edu/4h/sos

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A State Partner in the Cooperative Extension System
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**WHAT IS SERVICE LEARNING?**

According to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, service learning is a method whereby participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that

- Is organized in and meets the needs of the community
- Helps foster civic responsibility
- Enhances the education component of the community service agency
- Provides structured time for participants to reflect on the service experience

As they partner with adults to meet real community needs, 4-H’ers can reinforce 4-H project work and learn valuable life skills such as communication, problem solving, and concern for others.

**FACT**

Youth who participate in service just one hour a week are half as likely to engage in risky behaviors such as binge drinking, problem drug use, daily cigarette use, vandalism, and skipping school.

*Source: Search Institute*

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**WHY 4-H S.O.S.?**

4-H is a youth development organization that reaches over 186,000 children and teens in 94 Tennessee counties. 4-H’ers are members of local clubs, project groups, special interest clubs, Honor Club, All Stars, Sigma Lambda Chi, and more.

Many of these 4-H groups are already involved in community service. However, with just a little extra planning, their service projects can become something more—a true learning experience for the volunteers.

4-H S.O.S. is designed to help Tennessee 4-H’ers turn their community service into true service learning. The program provides training, resources, funding opportunities, recognition for outstanding service efforts, and assistance with planning and implementing high-quality service learning projects at the local, district, and state level.

**HOW?**

The 4-H S.O.S. goal is to engage **150,000** 4-H’ers in **1300** service learning projects in **75** counties.

To help achieve this goal, service learning will be a part of state events such as Congress and Teen Adventure Weekend. 4-H S.O.S. has also developed evaluation tools, a 6th grade activity poster, a statewide service learning scrapbook contest, and more.

In local communities, Extension staff and adult volunteer leaders can work with youth to plan, serve, reflect on, and celebrate their service efforts.

One tool to help this process is “Helping Hands,” a set of six lesson plans designed to guide 4-H’ers through the service learning cycle as they plan and participate in projects to help their communities. Download a free copy from the 4-H S.O.S. website.

Also download “Ready, Set, Serve!” for four quick but meaningful service learning projects to incorporate into club meetings.

4-H groups are encouraged to report service learning activities using the Service Activity Report Form. These forms should be mailed, e-mailed, or faxed to the state 4-H office. They may also be entered through the interactive form on the “Tell us!” page of the 4-H S.O.S. website.

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**UT Agricultural Extension Service**

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