Community Service Ideas for SkillsUSA Chapters

Purpose: This list was compiled to provide chapters of SkillsUSA ideas and information about community service projects. Community service is an integral part of SkillsUSA that benefits both the chapter members and the community.

Things to keep in mind: When choosing a community service project, keep in mind the strengths of the chapter, and plan an event that chapter members will be able to accomplish. Also, arrange community service events that will benefit the most people, and that will include as many chapter members as possible.

Basic Ideas:
(These ideas are generally for everyone and can be set up in a short amount of time)

- **Campus Cleanup**
  - Select an afternoon in which chapter members meet up with trash bags and clean up an area of the school. Locations can include: entrances, parking lots, stands, sports fields, etc. The number of members available should determine how many areas the group should clean.

- **Can Food Drive**
  - Set aside a week or two in which you pass out paper bags to each chapter member or to teachers within the school. Encourage participants to collect as much canned, nonperishable food as possible, and specify a collection date. After all of the food has been collected, deliver it to a local food bank. Most canned food drives must be registered, which can usually be done by filling out an online form.

- **Volunteer for the Salvation Army**
  - The Salvation Army is always looking for volunteers for a wide variety of events, especially around the holidays. The Salvation Army needs volunteers for projects such as: Christmas events for the needy, distributing coats to children, collecting toys for children before Christmas, etc. All of these events are easy to get involved with and only require web registration.

- **Visit a Nursing Home**
  - Set aside an afternoon and take a group of chapter members to visit with the residents. Another option is to create bags of hotel toiletries and disperse them amongst the residents; they are always happy to receive these items. It is a good idea to call to find the best time to come.
Intermediate Ideas:
(These ideas may require advanced planning, and may have some restrictions such as age)

• Volunteer at the Food Bank
  - Contact the Volunteer coordinator at a local food bank and set up a time after school in which members can volunteer. Generally food banks prefer groups to stay around two hours and usually require a certain number of adults for children ages 12-15. Each member under 18 must have a volunteer form signed by his or her parents.

• Volunteer for local Parks and Rec.
  - Contact the Volunteer Coordinator at the local Parks and Recreation. Parks and Recreation almost always has projects that they leave to volunteers, such as: cleaning up a park, assisting with landscape changes, etc. This requires prior arrangement with the Volunteer Coordinator and usually requires members less than 18 years of age to have a volunteer form signed by his or her parents.

• Habitat For Humanity
  - Habitat for humanity is a great community service event for SkillsUSA members. They have many programs in which chapter members can get involved. They usually only allow members 16 and up to participate in building and deconstruction of houses, and it is a good idea to have members and advisors that have knowledge in the construction field (particularly for safety reasons). They have many other programs as well for members of all ages, such as: recycling programs, painting projects, etc. This event requires reservations long in advance, and they have many other rules and guidelines. All participants under 19 years of age must have their parents sign a liability waiver.

• Toys for Tots
  - Participating in a local Toys for Tots campaign is easy to get involved with and usually only requires an online registration. Toys for Tots collects new toys to distribute to needy children around Christmas time. The best way to get involved is to research local campaigns and to contact the coordinator. These events begin in October and typically last up until Christmas.

• Trunk-or-Treat
  - Locate a local organization that is hosting a trunk or treat event and set up a table to give out goodies. Trunk or treat is an event in which many participants meet Halloween night in a parking lot, decorate their cars, and distribute candy. This event is perfect for unsafe neighborhoods and everyone has a good time. Usually car decorating contests, and other small activities accompany these events.

• Running Events
  - Another good community service idea is competing as a group in a marathon or running type event, such as Relay for Life, or Race for the Cure. These running events usually require some form of registration and many times require “sponsorship” in which each individual must raise money to register.

SkillsUSA North Carolina State University Chapter
http://clubs.ncsu.edu/skillsusa
Advanced Ideas:
(These ideas require a great deal of planning, or a large time commitment)

• Adopt-A-Highway
  - This community service event is a great idea for groups that are committed to community service. This program usually requires around 4 years of commitment and the highway must be cleaned at least 4 times a year. The age requirement is usually 12 years of age or older, and there must be an adult supervising anyone under 17 years old. This service event can be set up by applying online in most states.

• Plan a Public Safety Day
  - Plan a day in which the main focus is safety and promote ideas to stay safe. Hold information sessions and pass our fliers encouraging the community to practice safety on a regular basis. Promote all types of safety, including: safety around roadways, wearing safety glasses when using power-tools, always wearing a helmet when participating in activities on wheels, avoiding dangerous areas, etc. This activity will require a lot of planning and you will need to be creative in choosing a location that is most effective.

Note: All of these activities are general and may be different from state to state. This list was created by SkillsUSA chapter members at North Carolina State University in order to help other chapters. If you have any questions or comments about this list, send us an email at: ncsuskillsusa@yahoo.com