



NATIONAL WEEK OF SERVICE

Suggestions for Planning and Executing a Successful Service Project.

The motto of the Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity is, "The Great Joy of Serving Others." These are not empty words, but something that we all strive for and value. Of course, performing a service project with a group of your closest friends should at least be fun; but the knowledge that you made a difference -- that you changed someone else's life for the better in even a small way is one of the most rewarding and uplifting feelings one could ever hope to experience.

With this in mind, chapters across the country work to put together philanthropy projects in order to give back to their communities. This mission is critically important as agencies and community organizations are constantly grappling with reduced donations and varying governmental allocations from year to year.

Whether we are raising money through fund raisers like walk-a-thons, spaghetti suppers and raffles, or we are rolling up our sleeves to pitch in building houses, raking leaves or picking up trash, the community service we ask our members to participate in needs to be well thought out, well prepared and ultimately a good experience for all involved. For many of your members the event you plan may be their first time serving others and, if handled poorly, it may be their last!

Our hope is that these suggestions will provide you with a road map to maximize the potential for a positive experience of executing a service project; or any event for that matter. It's your job as the event planner to make sure everyone walks away with a positive experience; the agency you are serving, the community and the members who participate. Here are some tips to help your next community service event run more smoothly.

Line Up a Planning Committee:

Identify a lead person: This person will be coordinating the event and will need to be willing to take the lead and make sure things get done. They will manage resources, ideas and information to make the project work for their group and campus.

Create a team: The team should also consist of people willing to take a lead role in making this project happen. They will need to be able to work together and take on different roles and jobs to make sure that all the different parts of the project come together.

Determine team roles: Each member of the team should be willing to take on a certain objective such as coordinating transportation, coordinating lunch, etc. They should make it their personal objective to get that task completed for the day of service. They could find other people to help them as well.

Select a charity or agency:

This may be the most critical step in the process.

Choosing the person or agency you serve will determine the level of success you achieve. If you casually choose a beneficiary, you will casually support it. If you carefully select an organization you will carefully plan and execute your event. The more you personally invest in this choice, the more you will eventually give back.

Do your homework – you may ask, "Where do you start?"

1. Search the internet or local newspaper and look for agencies in need. There are stories every day about groups getting the news about budget cuts.
2. Talk to your volunteer coordinator at your institution. They receive emails and updates about needs in the community.
3. Call your local United Way office. They also have lists of projects and agencies in need.
4. Find your local service club and volunteer your service. *Rotary International*, *Lions Club* and *Kiwanis* all have chapters in your community and they all have service projects they support.

5. Call your local park district. They can turn you on to youth programs, park improvements or other projects in need.
6. Call your local church. Churches work directly with families and agencies in need and can tie you into projects already in development.
7. Stop by the YMCA. YMCA's serve thousands of youth and families.
8. Call your local school district office. School districts need mentors, teaching assistants, coaches, referees and supervisors. They also have their own projects that need manpower and money.
9. Contact your local government, city council, etc. to coordinate on how you can assist with community projects or problems that are not being addressed currently.

More on making it personal:

Choosing the charity or agency you support can be an easy. Everyone knows there is a need for money with the American Cancer Society or Muscular Dystrophy. You can stage your event, raise the money and cut the check and be done with it; or, you can make the service be truly meaningful for you and for your members.

No matter whom you choose to serve, one of your roles as the group leader is to facilitate introducing your members to a lifetime of serving others. By this time in your life, you likely have already experienced that when you are able to connect personally to an issue it becomes a much more meaningful venture. For example, go and watch a professional baseball game and you will enjoy the experience; go out to dinner with Derek Jeter after the game and you will probably never forget that day! Your job is to create "Derek Jeter moments" in your service projects.

So, how do you do that? Simply put, connect with someone in need and bring them to your chapter. If you plan to support *Coaches vs. Cancer*, invite the coach to come meet the chapter in advance of the event. Let him or her tell you why they are involved. Better yet, find a cancer survivor through your local *American Cancer Society* agency and have them talk about how research has saved their life. Every organization has a personal story.

Muscular Dystrophy Association has families with children getting local help. If you are doing a *Habitat for Humanity* build, meet the family and let them share how your work will change their lives forever. The key is, ask the organization "how can I make this event more personal for my members?" They will point you in the right direction and once you go down that path, staging the event will be easier and participation will be greater. Your members will not only know what they are working for, but also WHO they are working for. And they will be more willing to do it next year and the year after as well if you make it personal.

Select a Project/Event/Theme:

Determine whether there are any existing or "legacy" events of either the organization or your chapter that can be used for the current purpose. For instance, if your chapter has an annual fundraising event – like a Phi Psi 500, or a mud volleyball tournament – make your selected organization the beneficiary of that event.

If your selected organization has its own legacy event, determine how your chapter can best participate considering its size and ability. If their community event conflicts with your school calendar or other activities, consider having your own fundraising event with the proceeds going to the organization.

There are an infinite number of organizations that would welcome your dedicated involvement and an infinite number of ways to be involved. Choose something your chapter enjoys. The key is, if it is fun for you, you will be more willing to put in the time it takes to organize it properly. Keep in mind the focus on serving others. Again, it can be very easy to host an event and cut a check. Developing a culture of serving others within the chapter is much more difficult. Take the time to discuss the event and how it will impact the chapter and individual members.

Service Event Planning:

Planning your own event may prove to be the most challenging part of the whole project, because it will need to be a very deliberate process to make the most of the experience.

Create a notebook: Create a notebook (e.g. an Excel Spreadsheet) that can be passed on from project leader to project leader with contact info and a history of what's been done and attempted; and of what has worked and what didn't work.

This will save hours of time and planning energy if members know what has happened in the past. If you plan to do the same thing again, or work with the same organization or project again, take the necessary time afterwards to outline any "lessons learned." Include the agency staff if you can. Their perspective is important.

The best way to get a good start on the next event is to resolve any issues from the last one. You don't want to make the same mistake twice.

Defining the project: You will need to define the goals of the project, as well as the nature of what the group will be doing to achieve these goals.

Over-Deliver on your commitment:

Local agencies, especially in college towns, get frustrated when groups lay out a plan to help and then don't deliver on their promises. When you are in the planning process don't promise that 50 guys will show up, just because you have 50 members who *may* show up. If you expect that 10 will be there, plan for 10 and then plan extra jobs in the event more show up. Ultimately you should expect to "over-deliver" so the agency will be excited to work with you again, and eager to take the call of next year's service or philanthropy chair.

On the other end, if you are planning to bring 10 and 100 show up, you haven't done your job either. While the strong showing looks good, it will end up creating frustration for both you and the group you are helping. If you have planned "extra jobs" you can handle extra people. And you will be over-delivering!!

For example:

Survey the chapter at your regular meeting before contacting the agency you are looking to work with on a project. Follow up with potential members who are interested later in the week to get a better sample size and use this to project the commitment you can make to the organization.

Recruit volunteers: If you are really ambitious you could turn this task into a campus-wide event. Reach out to other chapters, councils, and student groups that you are familiar with to gauge volunteer interest.

Arrange for resources: If the project requires resources, gather them in advance to make sure that everyone will be able to participate. Ensure that you are planning on these expenses beforehand and working with appropriate committees and Treasurer to allocate accordingly.

Resourcing:

Your job is to make sure everyone who wants to serve gets the opportunity to serve. One of the worst things you can do is plan an event, have 100 people show up willing to serve and then have half of them stand around waiting for something to do. People who volunteer are there because they want to work.

If participants aren't asked to do anything, they will assume they aren't needed and then go home, maybe never to return again for community service. It's your job to make sure they have a great experience serving others.

Whether you are raking leaves, building a house or picking up trash, make sure you have a job for everyone. If you plan on having 100 volunteers, plan 125 jobs. In planning the job, make sure you have all of the equipment you need. Paint brushes, paint, drop clothes, rollers, roller pans... make a list and check it three times. Have someone else look at the list and double check it in case you have overlooked something.

Don't assume the organization has the supplies you will be working with to get the job done. Many don't have the resources to provide basic supplies. Plan to bring everything you need and make it part of your overall contribution.

This is where the committee system truly helps you deliver great results.

Things to consider:

1. Plan transportation:
 - a. How many people will be involved?
 - b. Will you all be driving or using public transportation?
 - c. Will you be able to get college vans?
 - d. Will you need to get a bus?

- e. Be sure to have enough transportation for all those volunteering. Do you have maps to the event site? Have you arranged special parking?
2. Do you need food or water?

Strongly consider making arrangements for food and drinks—everyone loves food. If it's a day-long event, try to plan a lunch in the middle of the project. Get together and pack lunches the day before or order some food to be delivered for lunch. Either way, this is a great time to reflect and discuss a little about the project and what you are doing.
3. Do you have all of the equipment you need (i.e. rakes, shovels, gloves. Etc.)?
4. Consider whether designing a cool t-shirt for the participants would add to the event – this also creates separate sponsorship fundraising opportunities.
5. Do you have emergency plans in case of bad weather or in case someone is hurt?
6. Will there be someone from the organization there to help or greet the members?
7. Assign a photographer to memorialize the event and your participation.
8. When will you and the group reflect on the lessons of the event? Does that occur at the site following the conclusion of the program or at a meeting later in the week? It's key to make sure you discuss the impact you made and how it affected the participants in the service project.

Execution of your Plan: Communication is the key in the execution of any plan.

Orientation FIRST! You definitely want to have an orientation before the –event to give background information about the Common Commitment, the social issue you will be dealing with, and our history and mission as it relates to *The Great Joy of Serving Others*.

Outline your plans, expectations, safety, and other important info so everyone has a general idea of what to expect. Consider doing this in the days leading up to the event.

Anything you can do to answer all of the questions members may have when they first arrive will be beneficial. Even taking 5 minutes to tell everyone as a group “this is what we are doing, how we are doing it, and why we are doing it” will make it start and run smoothly.

Orientation is often times overlooked but can lead to great success!

Perform a post-event evaluation: Evaluate the success of your event and the resources you used with ALL the participants, including the organization.

- Connect the event to the larger national fraternity philanthropy initiatives -- discuss the big picture, and make the group realize they are part of something much bigger.
- Include contacts for resources – within the organization and the community.
- Include lessons learned with participants AND the Chapter as a whole – what things went well, and why; and what did not work out, or how future projects might be improved.

Tell the world about it: Finally don't forget to tell the world about your service. Not about your personal involvement, but about your chapter's commitment to the community!

- E-mail your local or campus newspaper or your local television station news director and let them know where you plan to serve, who you plan to serve and when you plan to serve. Give them your contact information and an outline of your event.
- Assign someone to take photos so you can post pictures and videos on your chapter website, Facebook page, Twitter, or Campus Snapchat story and be sure to have members and friends of the chapter share them..
- Include photos and videos on your alumni newsletter as well to create a strong alumni support system. While you're at it, send photos and a short story to the national office for inclusion in the Shield. You can send those photos to shield@phikapppsi.com.
- Further helpful guidelines for successful public relations are available on the Officer Portal.

Your members will love to see their efforts recognized and be more willing serve again if they are noticed!

Model Planning Timeline for Service Events:

60 days before the event (suggested minimum)

- Line up committee
- Choose leader(s)
- Choose members
- Talk to staff about getting help with resources
- Set out roles for each individual team member (transportation, food, etc.)

45 days before the event (suggested minimum)

- Verify feasibility of proposed event
- Ensure the size of the group is not a problem

30 days before the event (suggested minimum)

- Event plan is outlined in writing in notebook
- Transportation plan in place
- Supplies / resources identified
- T-shirts are made/ordered
- Meals are planned/arranged

15 days before the event (suggested minimum)

- Confirm day of event management details
- Confirm orientation of the event site
- Plan reflection session for during or after the event

Execute Event.

Within 3 days of the event conclusion (suggested maximum)

- Reflect on the experience

