

COVER STORY: SERVICE TO AMERICA

Project Ideas

- Form a chapter of middle school S.A.D.D.
- Assist in Community Cleanup days: help paint over graffiti at schools and other public places.
- Adopt a fire hydrant: repaint it, clean up brush around it, shovel and mow.
- Work with a local auto oil/lube shop to dispose of used oil, tires, and batteries in your community.
- When heavy winter or severe weather is on the way, think about the older people in your neighborhood and volunteer to help them shop for food to be prepared for the storm.
- Provide an Honor Guard for flag ceremonies in your community.
- Create awareness about Leave No Trace.
- Collect baby clothes for local women's shelters.
- Create a local historical trail.
- Collect: shoes, coats, clothing for needy.
- As a troop, present a "Get Acquainted With the Internet" training evening to your community.
- Be prepared and willing to assist in case of national or local emergency.
- Sponsor a toy repair clinic and donate fixed toys to church day care centers.
- Put together a booklet on your town's best features, history and things to do around town.
- Raise Donor Awareness: organs, bone marrow, blood.
- Organize or volunteer in a community health fair.
- Help clean up a section of your streets or highways by adopting a highway.
- Start a craft program at a community senior citizen center; help build craft projects there.
- Adopt a monument in your area. Keep it clean and decorate it with flowers.
- Learn about the water pollution levels in your area lakes and streams.
- Fingerprint the kids in your neighborhood.
- Encourage your Scouts to let leaders, teachers, and authorities know if they see illegal drugs being sold.
- Collect aluminum cans and donate the money.
- Earn money and use it to adopt a child in a needy country. Become a pen pal with the adopted child.
- Help disabled and handicapped: change batteries in smoke detectors, change burned-out light bulbs, and do minor home improvements.
- Collect used Bibles and work with a group of local churches to help distribute them to the needy.
- Organize a neighborhood walk-a-thon.
- Create a Good Turn Day each month in your unit.
- Put on a youth protection "It's OK to Tell" demonstration with local Cub Pack.
- Volunteer to send post cards to veterans, and promote being a pen pal with a veteran.
- Take a bite out of crime—McGruff.
- Walk the dogs at your local animal shelter.
- Build floating nests for waterfowl.
- Contribute to third-world orphanages.
- Volunteer your time at a local hospital.
- Do volunteer work in a crisis center (suicide, drug, teen, etc.).
- Commit to visiting your grandparents once a week.
- Learn about how your Scout unit can volunteer to be a part of the Year 2000 Census.
- Join D.A.R.E. and help put on a demonstration at your school.
- Visit nursing homes, hospitals, children's homes other residential facilities with your pet.
- Create awareness for Toxins in Society.
- Form or volunteer to help in a Neighborhood Watch program.
- Have a living Christmas tree this year, and replant it outside after the holidays.
- Volunteer to do readings at the local library, church, homeless shelter, or hospital.
- Create drug abuse posters and ask local billboard owners to donate space for your artwork.

FAMILY AND SELF

"To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight." What was Baden-Powell thinking when he made "Duty to Self" the third part of the *Scout Oath*? How can a young man be of service to others if he hasn't become a good Scout himself? The best service a youth can give to himself is to live by the *Scout Oath* and *Scout Promise*, and to regard the *Scout Laws* as he does the laws of society. These laws should not be considered arbitrary and should be taken as seriously as the laws of our society. If a Scout decides that he is going to follow only eight of the twelve *Scout Laws*, can he really call himself a Scout? Only by becoming strong, improving his mind, and keeping his morals high can he fulfill his "Service to Self," by becoming a valuable part of his family, community, troop, and nation.

- A Scout can do something for his family, beyond his regular chores, that requires prior planning, has "structure," possibly involves other family members, and is of value. Perhaps he could start a vegetable garden to help curb the family's food budget; repair a broken fence; build flower boxes for a family garden; or perhaps just make a commitment to his grandparents that he will visit them once a week. Service to Family is, for the most part, a Scout just doing thoughtful things and being helpful to his family.
- Your Scouts can do a service to their families by doing genealogical research on their ancestors. They can talk to aunts, uncles, grandparents, and family friends and find out and record their family histories. They can keep scrapbooks of pictures and events attended by their families. Perhaps they could plan family reunions or get-togethers.

CRIME AND VIOLENCE

The Boy Scouts of America has long been concerned about the youth of America and the problems they face today. There are many challenges and temptations for our youth, and with two income families, single parenting, and less family supervision, these children can sometimes get into trouble. It is more important than ever that we protect our children by teaching them first, how to stay out of harm's way, and second, what to do if they get into trouble. It is our challenge and responsibility to teach our youth the morality of traditional family values and the problems associated with gangs and violence. Our youth need to know how to recognize bad situations in order to avoid them. They need to know what to do if approached by someone wanting to harm them. They need to be able to react quickly to situations where people may do something bad to them.

- Create awareness and importance of "It's OK to Tell"—Have Scouts create a program to show to younger Scouts or Cubs. Use the resource material and videos available from your council office. Go to a Cub Pack meeting or Church Youth Group and present this program. Show the video "Yell It, Tell It" and discuss it in groups afterwards.

National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
P.O. Box 1182 • Washington, DC 20013
703-821-2086
<http://www.calib.com/nccanch/>

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
1835 K Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006
1-800-843-5678
<http://www.missingkids.org>

ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

Learning how to practice conservation of our outdoor resources is important to Scouts. Conservation of soil, water, forests, minerals, grasslands, wildlife, and energy will secure these resources for future generations. A great need for education and implementation of taking care of our natural resources has been a strong part of Scouting since its beginnings. Scouts should practice being conservation minded as outlined in the "Outdoor Code."

- Hold a **Leave No Trace** demonstration at a camp-o-ree, jamboree, or Scout Show. Look at the requirements for the National "Leave No Trace" Award and arrange for Scouts to earn it at this demonstration. Information for this award can be found at <http://www.lnt.org>
- Work with your local **Humane Society** to help find homes for animals. Create a **Pet Fair** where they can arrange adoptions, kitten and puppy spaying, pet immunizations, and pet care. Tie it in with the "Pet Care" Merit Badge. Work with local veterinarians to help.

American Humane Association
<http://www.amerhumane.org>

A.S.P.C.A. <http://www.aspc.org>
(American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)

The Greyhound Project
<http://www.adopt-a-greyhound.org/>

Rails to Trails <http://www.railtrails.org/>

The National Parks Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program
<http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/rtca/>

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION

Preservation of our historical landmarks and treasures is a vital part of preserving our national heritage and history. Your Scouts can become a part of the process of helping preserve local landmarks and buildings. Find a place, building, or item in your community that has significant historical value and arrange for your Scouts to clean, repair, or renovate it for prosperity. Have them work through local historical societies or the city to help identify needs and projects.

- Many local cemeteries are in disrepair or have been vandalized. Have your Scout unit volunteer to **clean up, repair, and in some cases, replace headstones and grave markers**. Each cemetery should have a map of who is buried there. Make sure the right gravestone has been placed at each grave. (Vandals sometimes move them as a joke). Some grave markers get overgrown or have sunk into the ground, only to be forgotten. This is a great project not only to do a service to your community, but also helps the Scouts learn of the history of your area.

National Trust for Historic Preservation
Learn about the importance of historic preservation.
Resources for Cubs, Scouts, and Scouters.
www.trustkids.org/ (good for Cubs)
www.nthp.org/ (Scouts/Scouters)

African American Discovery Trail
Troop 82, Washington, D.C.
Explore African-American heritage churches, schools and neighborhoods. You can bike, drive, walk, or take public transportation to the various landmarks.
www.gscnc.org/mosaic/african.htm

SAFETY AND PREPAREDNESS

The word "Safety" brings up many connotations. Home safety, bike safety, gun safety, safety belts, and a much more. Safety begins at home though... more accidents happen there than any other place. The fact that most people spend a majority of their time at home probably has a lot to do with it, but that doesn't mean you can't make your home more safe.

Once you have a "safe" home, it's time to take a look at your neighborhood and your community.

- Have your Scout Unit **make a list of safety related items** and go home and see how many violations they can find. Make it like a scavenger hunt, only this game will be to identify unsafe conditions in your house. Use the *Safety Merit Badge Book* as a guide. (Heck, you could even try to fill a few of the requirements for the merit badge at this time!) Include a checklist and schedule of repairs or solutions along with this game
- **Hold a bike rodeo** for your local community. Invite Cub Scouts, church youth, and school mates to a bike-a-thon, *Helmet Safety*, *Bike repair*, *Bike Stunt*, *Bike Rodeo*. Make it lot's of fun for the whole family and get local merchants, your police and fire department, and any other local bike clubs or organizations involved.
- If you've ever been to Philmont, you know that Mt. Baldy is a very beautiful place. It can also be very dangerous during lightning storms, however. The U.S. Scouting Service Project has a page dedicated to **lightning safety**, and tips on service projects to help educate the public on the hazards of lightning.
www.uscscouts.org/profbvr/lightning_safety/index.html

POVERTY AND HUNGER

Poverty will always be a problem in our communities. Getting your Scouts and volunteers involved can bring an awareness to this problem and help those in need. This is one of the targeted areas the Boy Scouts of America has identified on a national scale in which their members should be involved. With a little help from the Scouts, many people can benefit from our efforts.

- **Scouting for Food:** Make this a priority each year! This is a national service project that Scouts and adult leaders can do to help the homeless and needy in their communities.
- **Collect baby clothes, coats, jackets, and give them to local women's shelters.**
- **Toys for Tots:** While Marines organize, coordinate and manage the program, the ultimate success depends on the support of the local community and the generosity of the people who donate toys. The Marines are always looking for volunteers to help collect, sort, and distribute the toys they collect for youth at Christmas time. Call your local Marine recruiting station to find out how your unit can help with this service.
- When a community or neighborhood starts to suffer from urban blight, it becomes unsafe and unsightly to live in that neighborhood. Your Scouts unit can make a huge difference in either **cleaning up a neighborhood**, or keeping it from becoming a victim of this plight. Have your Scouts pick a day when they can organize a clean-up of a neighborhood. Clean the streets, remove graffiti, paint what's needed and do necessary repairs. Get newspaper and local TV coverage.