

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) celebrates and mobilizes the millions of young people who improve their communities each day of the year through service. Established in 1988, Global Youth Service Day is the largest service event in the world, and the only day of service dedicated to children and youth. GYSD is celebrated each year in more than 135 countries, with young people working together to address the world's most critical issues and change their communities.

Since 2012, KY YMCA has partnered with Youth Service America to promote GYSD as it is our hope that you might not only participate in Global Youth Service Day, but expand it into a weekend full of projects. Here's a quick and easy guide to planning a full weekend of service with your students.

Friday- Kick off your weekend of service with an afternoon event in which you invite the whole school to participate. This is an excellent time to do pre-work for a Saturday project. For example:

- If serving in a soup kitchen, you could organize cans.
- If visiting a nursing home, you could create cards or crafts to give to the residents.
- If working in a community garden, you could organize items collected in a supply drive.

Friday is also a great time to do a school based project like campus beautification or a game day for your local elementary school.

Saturday- Ideally, this is the time to do a large-scale spring project, perhaps one that you prepped for on a previous day, or work with a partner organization (see the partner organization guide for ideas). You may find that your community is already focused on service for the weekend, but if not, here are some cool ideas to get you started:

- Host a build-a-bed workshop for families who have recently transitioned out of homelessness.
- Offer to do a spring clean up for a soup kitchen, shelter, or donation center- organize pantries and clothing closets, check expiration dates on donated food, and deep clean facilities.
- Host a game day for local kids with soccer, kickball, softball, capture the flag, etc.
- Clean up a local park- pick up trash from trails and waterways and remove invasive species.
- Offer to do property maintenance for the elderly- paint houses, maintain gardens, and repair structures.

Sunday- An integral part of service is celebration, and so Sunday is an excellent time to debrief the weekend and celebrate the service you've done throughout the year. A pizza party, bonfire, or a mixer with other Student Ys would all be excellent ways to celebrate. Be sure to highlight all the impressive statistics from your weekend of service (How many people were served? How many hours did you complete?) and give shout-outs to the folks who went above and beyond. Also, be sure to fill out your service report form and inform your local media outlets about the cool stuff you've done!