

Time to Lend a Hand

Check out these national service groups

Compiled by Student Leader staff

Want to get your group involved with a community service project, but don't know where to start? With literally hundreds of options, it's difficult to know where there's the most need. Here are a few of the largest community service organizations geared toward students.

Who: America's Promise

What: This non-profit organization founded in 1997 makes America's youth a national priority by fulfilling "Five Promises" for young people—keep relationships with caring adults in their lives; safe places with structured activities during non-school hours; a healthy start and future; marketable skills through effective education; and opportunities to give back through community service. "If you're a student wanting to organize around the Five Promises, America's Promise's staff will make sure you have the help you need and will do their best to provide you with connections and resources," says Rocco Di Cicco, a senior at **Drexel University** involved in Philadelphia's Promise.

How: Go to America's Promise web site to find a program, get their electronic newsletter, or join the discussion board. No application is necessary to get involved, but you must sign up as a member.

Where: 909 N. Washington St., Ste 400 Alexandria, VA 22314-1556
1-888-55-YOUTH
commit@americaspromise.org
www.americaspromise.org -CE

Who: AmeriCorps

What: Part of the Corporation for National and Community Service, AmeriCorps often is referred to as the "domestic Peace Corps" because of its service work in education, public safety, health, and the environment. The organization is divided into three programs—VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America), NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps), and State and National. Volunteers spend 10 months to a year working with nonprofit, public, and faith-based organizations across the country assisting millions of Americans. "AmeriCorps provided me with an opportunity that no other internship, entry-level job, or graduate school could have," says Michael Bowen, AmeriCorps recruitment program specialist.

How: Volunteers earn education awards of up to \$4,725, which can be applied to

student loans or tuition at most colleges and universities and some vocational schools. Colleges and universities can apply to become a sponsor or AmeriCorps partner. Find out how to start a program at www.americorps.org/startaprogram.htm.

Where: 1201 New York Ave., NW Washington, DC 20525
1-800-942-2677
questions@americorps.org
www.americorps.org -CS

Who: Best Buddies International

What: Committed to creating a world where people with intellectual disabilities are



AmeriCorps members plan a community service project. More than 50,000 AmeriCorps members serve our nation through intensive community service while earning money for education.

successfully integrated into schools, workplaces, and communities, Best Buddies has 315 chapters nationwide. "Best Buddies gives students a chance to widen their social circles by making new friends while also learning about leadership, community service, and diversity," says Shane Hapuarachy, state director for California. Best Buddies educates students, corporate and community citizens, and employers about the needs and abilities of people with intellectual disabilities. Then, they're provided as friends for people with intellectual disabilities.

How: College students develop a one-on-one friendship with a person with an intellectual disability through the Best Buddies Colleges program. A student volunteer manages each chapter, with support from an administrator and an intellectual disability professional.



Find out more about community service involvement at www.studentleader.com

Where: 100 SE Second St., #1990
Miami, FL 33131
305-374-2233
lavernel@bestbuddies.org
www.bestbuddies.org -CE

Who: Circle K International

What: "Developing college and university students into responsible citizens and leaders with a lifelong commitment to serving the children of the world" is the mission of Circle K, a community service and leadership development organization with 500 groups and 11,000 members worldwide. Two hundred colleges and universities have their own chapter. By operating with the basic theme of "Service, Leadership, and Fellowship," Circle K members complete more than one million service hours annually. "Circle K provides college students with the unique opportunity to serve their community while creating a network that enables them to serve for a lifetime through Kiwanis International,"

says Shannon Lawson of **Virginia Tech University**, capital district governor.

How: Experiential training conferences, awards, scholarships, and leadership positions are available. To charter a Circle K club, you must complete a petition including securing a school sponsor, a Circle K sponsor, the required signatures, a membership roster indicating officers, and all membership dues. To find a Circle K sponsor, visit www.circlek.org/sponsor.

Where: 3636 Woodview Trace
Indianapolis, IN 46268
1-800-KIWANIS
cki@kiwanis.org
www.circlek.org -CS

Who: COOL

(Campus Outreach Opportunity League)

What: Founded in 1984, COOL's mission is to educate, mobilize, and connect college students and their campuses to strengthen communities through community service and action. Their ultimate goal: to bring

about a change in society. This might sound like a lofty aim, but COOL believes that community service can bring together diverse peoples in a way that respects their differences and similarities. For more than 15 years, COOL has run the first and largest annual conference on student community service and activism in the country. "The gathering of 1,500-2,000 students from around the country, which is held at a different member campus every year, is propelled by unique and dynamic student energy," says Tim Mosehauer, COOL's director of outreach. Some recent COOL projects include the COOL City Model, the Up For Action Program, and a National Student Union.



Maya DelVillar, a 1998 Teach for America corps member, now teaches 7th grade math in the South Bronx at CJHS145.

How: COOL has 140 member campuses nationwide. The membership program is available to colleges and universities who want to join COOL in promoting student involvement in community service at the campus level. Club membership is \$100 annually for each campus. With that annual fee, all members of the campus community are eligible for the COOL benefits without additional fees. Membership applications can be found on the COOL web site.

Where: 37 Temple Place, Ste 401
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: 617-695-COOL
Fax: 617-695-0022
inquiry@cool2serve.org
www.cool2serve.org -RM

Who: Teach for America

What: Instead of graduating from college and immediately entering the workforce, why not spend two years having the experience of a lifetime? Teach for America recruits recent college grads from all majors and places them in paid teaching positions in low-income communities to give students interested in education a chance to gain experience. Participants in Teach for America earn an annual salary ranging from \$22,000 to \$40,000, and most choose their geographical locations, grade levels, and subject areas. "With Teach for America, you'll have an immediate and direct impact on the lives of children growing up in low-income communities," says Elissa Clapp, vice president of national recruitment.

How: You must be a recent grad, have a 2.5 cumulative GPA, and be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Students can apply on-line. The best way to promote Teach for America is to become a Campaign Coordinator, which entails working with a recruitment team to develop and implement events and presentations and improve general awareness on campus.

Where: 315 West 36th St.
New York, NY 10018
1-800-832-1230
admissions@teachforamerica.org
www.teachforamerica.org -CS

Who: Break Away

What: Break Away: The Alternative Break Connection supports the development of quality alternative school-break programs. Groups have traveled across the country and completed projects including building homes in the Appalachian mountains, working with the homeless in San Jose, Calif., and registering voters in rural Mississippi. The goal is to help inspire and create lifelong active citizens

who value their community and make serving it a priority. An alternative break program can take place during spring, summer, fall, or winter breaks during which teams of students work on short-term community-service projects. Students learn about problems faced by members of communities who they might never have come into contact with. "As a practicing professional in the field of social work, I've attended hundreds of trainings and workshops concerning all aspects of working with others. Break Away has been the most rewarding training I have ever attended," says Janet Naish, an advisor at the **University of Saint Francis** in Indiana.

How: Break Away has chapter programs in 30 states at 60 universities and colleges. At the Break Away web site, many schools provide a links to their web sites with info on how you can get involved.

Where: 2121 W. Pensacola St., Ste E-543
Tallahassee, FL 32304
850-644-0986
breakaway@alternativebreaks.org
www.alternativebreaks.org -RM

Who: Dance Marathon

What: With 75 participating colleges and universities nationwide, Dance Marathon raises millions for the Children's Miracle Network. Dancers raise money through donations and pledges from national and local sponsors, and 100 percent of the proceeds go to area hospitals. The Marathon lasts 12, 18, or 36 hours, during which students stay on their feet dancing and enjoying drinks, food, music, and entertainment. Each year tens of thousands of students participate in Marathons.

How: Schools participating in CMN's Dance Marathon benefit from hosting an event at no cost by getting publicity and offering students the opportunity to partake in a community service event. Participating schools can attend the Dance Marathon National Summer Conference, and student committees have exclusive on-campus training to prepare. Contact a CMN representative at their web site to find out how to start a Dance Marathon at your school.

Where: 4525 South 2300 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84117
801-278-8900
help@cmn.org
www.cmn.org/web/programs/dancemarathon.htm -CS

Who: Youth Venture

What: Through Youth Venture, students seek out allies who work directly with young people to raise start-up money for youth ventures. The ventures are diverse, ranging from producing teen cable TV programs and educational plays to creating youth diabetes groups. What makes these activities "Youth Ventures" is that students come up with the ideas and control the projects themselves, with Youth Venture acting as a facilitator. "Young people are most effective at both identifying problems and developing creative ways to address them," says Leigh Seligman, director and executive counsel. "Youth Venture offers the opportunities to bring these bold ideas into action."

How: Youth Venture trains local ventures, partners, and allies, and supplies materials, support, and access to a national network of other Youth Ventures. Visit the Youth Venture web site to apply to start your own venture to become an ally or partner.

Where: 1700 N. Moore St., Ste 2000
Arlington, VA 22209
703-527-4126
info@youthventure.org
www.youthventure.org -RM **ST**