

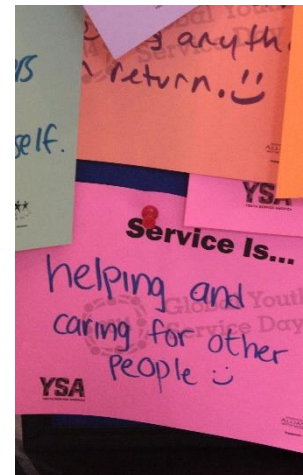
## Service Projects from Past Fellows

### Making blankets and engaging with children in need.

Taking advantage of her involvement in an art class, this Fellow led her youth in creating fleece tie blankets, which they later donated in person to the Ronald McDonald House. Several of her youth found inspiration in the project. The Fellow noted that *"one student in particular who is often disengaged in her school work was very persistent and determined to fully complete her blanket and even opted to work on it outside of the normal class time."*

When it came time to donate the blankets, the Fellow organized a field trip to the Ronald McDonald House, so her youth could meet and interact with the children they were serving.

*The day of the field trip we had 9 students choose to attend. I was a bit nervous about how everything was going to turn out, however the students exceeded my expectations in every way. When we arrived they were respectful and jumped right in playing with the children. It was amazing! Some of the most challenging students in a classroom setting transformed into these gentle and caring youth who were tenderhearted and compassionate with the kids. I believe that through this experience, many of the students gained a new perspective about themselves. Whether it is explicitly stated or not, many of them are used to hearing themselves labeled as "at risk" and it is a rarity that their strengths are the focus of a conversation. However, **that afternoon, the students got to see themselves in a new light. They got to experience one of the many joys of service; feeling like you have something valuable to offer others.***



### Trading youth artwork for food donations.

This Fellow challenged her youth to propose and decide, as a group, what kind of service project they would pursue. They chose to create works of art to exchange for non-perishable food items, which they would then donate to a local hunger organization. Here's her initial account of their plan:

*The students will spend the next several weeks creating art to stock a "store" that they will staff. Patrons of our "store" will exchange a certain number of food donations in order to buy various kinds of art— for example, a small drawing or painting can be purchased for one food donation, and a larger sculpture can be purchased for five donations. Students will also distribute information and facts about local hunger and how to take action at the store.*

In a later entry, the Fellow reported that the project was a great success. Her youth raised 128 food donations, well surpassing their original goal of 100. The 'action phase' of the project was then followed by three further steps, each of which helped to deepen the impact of their service.

**First**, the youth led a discussion in which they reflected on their project, considering "What was successful? How did we help our cause? What could we do differently next time?"



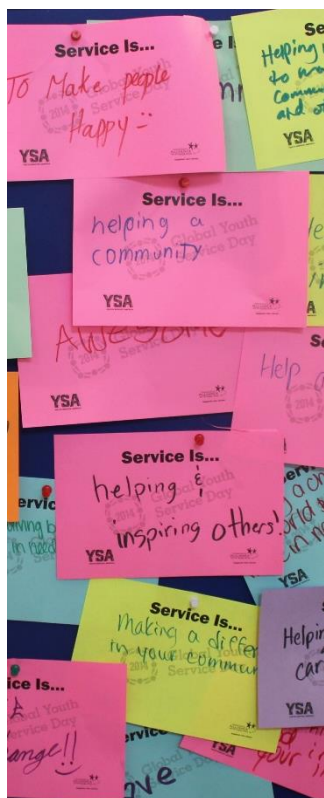
**Second**, the group went on a field trip to a food shelf that they had chosen, to deliver their food donations in person: "[We] learned first-hand about the amazing services [the food shelf] offers, and then did a few volunteer activities on-site. We even got to see patrons of the food shelf take some of our donations home!"

**Third**, the Fellow helped her youth stage a school-wide presentation of their service project, where they were able to inform their peers about the issue of hunger in their community and the opportunities available to make a difference.

## Creating and presenting a video about refugee-students.

This Fellow led her youth in producing a video that they used to educate young people in their community about the barriers that refugee-immigrant students face in pursuing higher education. The Fellow reported that she was impressed by the level of teamwork and focus that her youth brought to the project.

One especially formative experience for them occurred when the youth were presenting their video at two local high schools and received "some push back from their peers about college."



*One student said he didn't value college because it cost too much money and wasn't worth it. I watched how my students stood their ground and made their arguments for college. We had rehearsed the presentations over and over but [we never practiced] such a scenario... I was very worried but saw how [well] my students handled it. This was one of the proudest moments for me. I saw how my students stood up for their values and articulated [them to their peers].*

Following the presentations, the Fellow led her youth in a group discussion in which they considered the impact they had made and what this impact revealed about their own capacity and responsibility to affect social change.

*...my students admitted how scared they were but also how good it felt to just say what they wanted to say. None of them had presented to such big crowds and now they have proved that they can do it. One of my favorite quotes from a student was, "Now we are really leaders. We are role models in our schools now because everybody knows who we are, because we stood up there and said what we believe. Though our words may not really show that college is possible for immigrant-refugee students, our actions will. Now as leaders we are responsible for acting out what we said."*