Guide to Hands-on Learning
Section 1: Introduction to Service Learning

The following can be used as a lesson plan prior to weaving service learning into your classroom.

Service learning is a method of teaching and learning that combines formal instruction with a related service in the community. Service learning integrates meaningful community service with instruction, student leadership and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, encourage lifelong civic engagement, and strengthen communities for the common good. Service learning empowers youth to transform themselves from recipients of information and resources into valuable, contributing members of a democracy.

The Difference Between Service Learning and Community Service

Although they may seem similar, service learning and community service are different concepts. Both emphasize developing civic responsibility, meeting authentic community needs, and creating strong collaborations with the community. Both value students’ personal, social, career and ethical growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Learning</th>
<th>Community Service</th>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional strategy; a way of teaching classroom content.</td>
<td>Does not emphasize school curriculum.</td>
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<td>Uses reflection as a means for interpreting experiences.</td>
<td>Does not require a component of reflection.</td>
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<td>Often takes place during the school day and sometimes on campus because of its integration with curriculum.</td>
<td>Typically takes place off-site and outside of school hours.</td>
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<td>Emphasis on the experience rather than the hours because of its integration both within and outside the classroom.</td>
<td>Emphasis on a designated number of hours.</td>
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<td>Incorporates youth voices as a driving factor in the effort.</td>
<td>Often a pre-established activity.</td>
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<td>Lends itself to full class projects or large group participation.</td>
<td>Often involves students, as individuals, serving in local non-profit agencies.</td>
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**Community service example**
A teacher explains to the class that there is a food shortage at a local food shelf and asks the students to bring in canned food. The students bring in 500 pounds of food and the teacher delivers it to the food shelf. This is good and important work that meets a real community need.

**Service learning examples**
A student brings to a class’s attention that there is a lack of food at the neighborhood food shelf. Students are asked to write a pre-flection, “What I think I know about hunger.”

The students in social studies examine who is hungry, why they are hungry, and where they are hungry. In health class, the teacher examines what a healthy body needs. In a math class, the homework includes examining how much food costs. In art class, students make posters publicizing the need for a food collection. In an English class, students write a letter to be sent home explaining the need and request for food and funds for the local food shelf. In a technology class, students research local need and local resources.

The teachers invite a guest to talk to students about their local food shelf. After a Food & Fund Drive, students deliver the donations and talk with the staff about who is hungry, why they are hungry and what else they can do to help. Students reflect on the experience in their language arts class.

**Preflection on your service activity with Second Harvest Heartland**
With your class, consider these thoughts on service and discuss which ideas resonate with you:

- What does service mean to you?
- What are your roots of service?
- What encourages you to consider serving others?
- What do you remember from growing up that makes you think of service?
- We all have opportunities to give and receive. Examine the times when you have given and when you have received.
- Three ways to give service—time, talent and treasure.
- A service action includes head, heart and hands.
- Service gives meaning to life.
- Everybody can serve because everyone has something to give.
- Service is reciprocal.
- Everyone is a giver and everyone is a receiver.
- Service can be around the world and in our own back yard.
• Service expands your circle of care and concern.
• Service is an “other” focused action.
• Service transforms the giver.
• Service is a way of life.
• Service-learning is a response to a need and a solution to a problem. It’s not a project.