



DO-IT-YOURSELF TOOL KIT

When families roll up their sleeves and participate in meaningful service projects, they quickly learn that they can make a difference in creating a better community– and a better world. We’ve put this tool kit together for instances in which your family can’t make it to Family Volunteer Day (Fall event), want to participate from home for Family Day of Service (Spring event), or when you simply want to get the family together to do some good. These volunteer opportunities are strictly DIY and can be completed from the comfort of your own home.

Some benefits to volunteering as a family include:

- Participating in quality family time.
- Strengthening family communication.
- Offering ways for family members to be role models.
- Giving families the opportunity to make significant contributions to their communities.

Parents who do service projects with their children say they do so in order to learn about their communities, to spend quality time with their family, and to be positive role models for their kids.

In this guide you will find:

- Family-friendly DIY project ideas and full instructions.
- General family-friendly project ideas.
- A helpful project checklist to help you stay organized in planning and executing your project.
- Sample social media posts with hashtags.
- Next step instructions on getting your projects to us for donating.
- Link to uploading pictures and videos, as well as a link to the donation form.

PLEASE NOTE: This tool kit will change, not often, but depending on community needs things may be added or taken off. So, please refer back to where you downloaded it from every so often to see if there have been changes.

HERE ARE SOME PROJECT IDEAS...

If you're an animal lover...

- Donate items that local animal shelters. Suggested items include: blankets and old towels; cleaning supplies: bleach, powder dishwasher detergent, antibacterial hand soap, spray bottles; pet food; newspapers. Refer to organizations website to see their immediate needs.
- Hold a bake sale or car wash to raise money for a shelter.
- Visit an animal shelter or zoo to help clean up and/or play with the animals.
- Donate to a shelter's Amazon wishlist. (Usually posted to the organization's website)

If you enjoy the outdoors...

- Decorate an old plastic bin for composting and discuss the benefits of composting for the environment.
- Clean Up the Neighborhood, Park or Stream - Spend an afternoon every couple of weeks cleaning up the litter from around your neighborhood. It can be your street, a nearby area, a local park, or wherever you see the need.
 - **Be sure to:** Wear gloves, masks, and keep a close eye on the kids. Warn them about needles, bandages, broken glass, rusty nails; the usual suspects. Pick an area and get it clean, then keep it clean as the weeks and months go by. Also, be sure to talk to your neighbors about it to get the word out and encourage others to participate. If the need is great, you can organize a neighborhood-wide event. Do it all yourself, or try contacting the local government for assistance. Cities generally want to encourage any community involvement like this, and will often be happy to provide items like trash bags, gloves, brooms, rakes, and even dumpsters.
- Plant a tree in your backyard.
- Get together with a few families in your neighborhood and start a community garden.
- Go to an elderly person's home and help them with their yard work.

If you like to be out and about...

- Join a Meal Ministry - Sign up at a local church who may have a meal ministry program or find a Meals on Wheels chapter in your community, a national organization dedicated to bringing meals to people with limited mobility. What a great way to show love to someone in need! Kids can be involved in meal delivery at any age.
- Volunteer at the Food Bank - Most of the time, the whole family can volunteer at that same local food bank where you donate your food.

**Within reason; there's not much for a toddler to do and they may end up in the way. Ask the volunteer manager, and use your judgment.*

If you love to read and write...

- Donate gently used books to a local shelter, school, or doctor's office.
- Create a reading space for children's books at a local prison. Prisoners can read to their children when they visit them, strengthening the parent-child relationship.
- Help a food bank include books in their weekly deliveries. Deliver books to food banks. Help the bank distribute books to families.
- Build a Little Library to put outside of your home.

If you like to organize...

- Donate gently used items to shelters and other organizations - Clean out a closet as a family and donate gently used items to a local homeless shelter. Suggested gently used items include: clothing, coats, furniture, sports equipment, suitcases, blankets.
- Donate food to a local food bank/pantry - While you are at home, the family can work together to clean out your canned goods cupboard and start a stockpile of donations. At the same time, start talking about the needs of others and how your donations can be used to bless them. Please don't give damaged, expired, or unlabeled items.

*For specific lists, be sure to check out your local food banks, schools, and churches' websites for pantry programs.

If you like arts and crafts...

- Send thank-you notes to service professionals - Even your youngest children can help with this. They can draw a hospital or fire truck and sign their art ("Olivia, age 3"). The recipients will love it! Writing thank-you notes as a family is a great way to cultivate thankfulness. At the same time, your notes will be a blessing and encouragement to those in your community who help to make the world a better place.
 - Teachers
 - Recycling and sanitation workers
 - Police officers
 - Pastors and church staff
 - Fire fighters
 - Postal and package delivery drivers (USPS, FedEx, UPS, etc)
 - Soldiers
 - Workers and volunteers at local charitable organizations
 - Hospital staff
 - Employees at any place you visit or shop at regularly



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PUPPY PLAYTHINGS

Make these simple, fun dog toys for the furry friends in animal shelters. Homemade dog toys are a simple way to let dogs know they're loved, while alleviating stress within the shelters. They are so easy to make, but most importantly will make pups happy.

MATERIALS:

- multiple t-shirts (the more t-shirts, the more dog toys)
- Scissors
- measuring tape (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Step 1: Cut three long strips of t-shirt and line them up next to each other, as shown below. Cut two small strips off the sleeves and set aside.

Step 2: Use one of the small strips to secure the three long strips together at the top by double knotting.

Step 3: Braid the three long strips together, leaving some space at the end.

Step 4: Use the other small strip to secure the end of the toy.

Tips:

- To make a thicker toy, for the bigger pups, double up on strips, or cut thicker strips.
- Secure the ends with multiple knots to avoid the toys coming apart.



For social media:

PROJECT NAME: Puppy Playthings

RECIPIENT: local animal shelters



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CLAY KEEPSAKES

In support of Samaritan Healthcare and Hospice, create clay heart keepsakes for hospice patients and their families.

MATERIALS:

- Sculpey-brand clay **only**. Other brands do not hold up. [Amazon Example](#).
- heart cutters - mini (1.5" wide) - please no bigger, and please do not hand form. [Amazon Example](#).
- baking sheet
- oven
- parchment paper

INSTRUCTIONS:

Step 1: Preheat oven to 275 degrees.

Step 2: Flatten clay out to less than 1/2cm. thick.

Step 3: Cut out the heart shapes with cutter.

Step 4: Lay parchment paper over baking sheet then place the cut out shapes over the parchment paper. Note: the clay will not expand

Step 5: Bake for 15 minutes.

Step 6: Let cool, and do **not** coat with any spray or glaze.

Tip: Blend different colors together to achieve a marble effect.



For social media:

PROJECT NAME: Clay Keepsakes

RECIPIENT: Samaritan Healthcare and Hospice



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LOVE LETTERS

Send a letter to an elder in an assisted living facility. The people who unarguably suffered the most during the pandemic are the seniors who were unable to socialize, or had little interaction since March 2020. Send them a letter and tell them they are missed, that they matter, that they are loved.

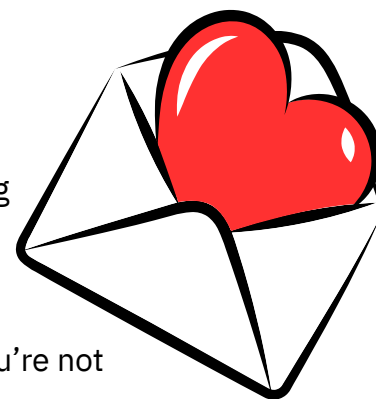
MATERIALS:

- paper (construction, computer, cardstock)
- crayons, markers, pens, pencils
- stencils
- stickers
- envelopes

Note: We ask that you don't use glitter or anything that has a risk of falling off the card.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Letters must be legible (large print) and handwritten. No worries if you're not artistic– make your card as what you'd like to receive.
- Avoid religion, if possible. Your letter should resonate with anyone.
- Exclude the date (day, month, and year).
- Embrace creativity! Recipients love it when the letters are personal. We encourage you to make your letters colorful and fun.
- Be kind & thoughtful. This is a one-way letter exchange, so you will not receive a letter back. Receiving nothing in return is part of the beauty of your act of kindness, and recipients aren't burdened by feeling obligated or unable to respond.
- Envelope your letters if you can! It's so much nicer to receive an enveloped card. If you're sending more than 1 letter, leave your enveloped letters unsealed and unstamped and send them in a larger envelope or box.
- Send us as many cards as you'd like!



For social media:

PROJECT NAME: Love Letters

RECIPIENT: local assisted living facilities



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CARE KITS

Make simple Care Kits to help support the less fortunate, homeless, and families who experience housing instability. Thousands of people are sleeping in shelters each night and thousands more are sleeping on the streets. Help provide them with everyday essentials no one should go without.

MATERIALS:

- 1-gallon storage bags
- granola bars, protein bars
- pairs of socks
- travel size shampoo/conditioner
- travel size hand sanitizer
- travel size hand wipes
- toothbrush
- travel size toothpaste
- lip balm
- band-aids
- travel size first aid kit
- small water bottle
- women's sanitary products
- small note of encouragement



Note: each bag does not need to contain every item on this list. These are examples of items we're looking for in the bags.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Include one of each item in a 1 gallon zippable storage bag.
- The small note should have a short message of love, encouragement, sympathy. Do not include any personal information.

For social media:

PROJECT NAME: Care Kits

RECIPIENT: local homeless shelters

Tip: Create an Amazon wish list of items you would need for this project to share with friends, family, and social media friends.



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LAP BLANKETS

In support of Samaritan Healthcare and Hospice, create lap blankets for hospice patients. Lap blankets provide warmth and comfort to hospice patients.

MATERIALS:

- fleece fabric (blankets should be roughly 30" x 40")
- scissors

Note: There is no color scheme or theme you have to follow when choosing fabric. However, we do recommend an uplifting pattern for one side and a matching solid color for the other side (as shown below).

INSTRUCTIONS:

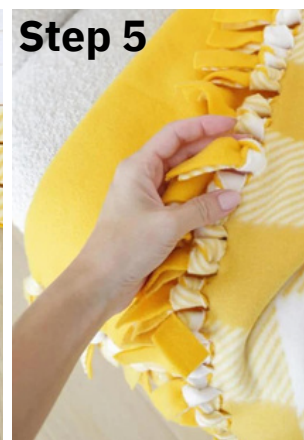
Step 1: Cut your two pieces of fleece to the same size and lay them flat on top of each other. Remember it should be about 30" x 40".

Step 2: Cut a 5" x 5" square off all four corners.

Step 3: Cut 1" strips around the whole blanket.

Step 4: Tie the top strip with the bottom strip.

Step 5: Continue tying the strips all the way around the blanket.



For social media:

PROJECT NAME: Lap Blankets

RECIPIENT: Samaritan Healthcare and Hospice

DIY PROJECT CHECKLIST

Keeping track of your project will help you stay organized and allow you to enjoy your project, here is a guide you can follow!

Project Details

| PROJECT NAME | DATE | LOCATION | START TIME | END TIME |
|--------------|------|----------|------------|----------|
| | | | | |

Team Members (who will participate with you):

| NAME |
|------|
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

Reflection:

- Why did you choose this project?
- Did you enjoy coordinating the project?
- Did your family enjoy the project?
- Will you do it again?

LET'S GET SOCIAL!



We encourage you to take lots of pictures and videos and share them with us. We want to ensure that family volunteering is visible in the entire state and that your projects inspire others to give back to their communities.

Please be sure to tag your local nonprofit and NJFDS Partners

Please be sure to **tag us @sjvolunteers** and your local nonprofit partners.

Note: Please refer to your project instructions to find the PROJECT NAME and RECIPIENT.

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA CAPTIONS

Our family is making a difference in our community today! We are creating [INSERT PROJECT NAME] to be donated to [INSERT RECIPIENT].

My family and I are so excited to volunteer together! Today we are creating [INSERT PROJECT] in support of [INSERT RECIPIENT]. The whole family is getting involved and VCSJ (@sjvolunteers) has made it easier than ever with their DIY project tool kit!

I'm thrilled to say we're participating in VCSJ's (@sjvolunteers) Making a Difference Together initiative! My family and I are creating [INSERT PROJECT] in support of [INSERT RECIPIENT]. We're working together to give back to our community.

Hashtags:

#FamilyVolunteering

#VolunteerNJ

#NJFamilies

#VCSJ



If you don't use social media, please scan or click this QR code to upload your photos/videos to us.**

DELIVERY

Now that you've completed your service projects it's time to deliver!

The final step in completing the service projects is getting your donations to us. We will handle all distribution to local animal shelters, homeless shelters, etc. There are two options to getting your donations to us:

- Shipping
- Drop-Off

Note: Please include your name somewhere with the donation so we can match the donation form (below) to the donation.

SHIPPING

Please ship items to
VCSJ

**Rowan College of South Jersey -Gloucester Campus
1400 Tanyard Rd. Sewell, NJ 08080
Education and Humanities Building, Rm. 410**

Note: Unfortunately at this time, we can not provide shipping labels.

DROP-OFF

Please drop items off to our office located at
**Rowan College of South Jersey -Gloucester Campus
1400 Tanyard Rd. Sewell, NJ 08080
Education and Humanities Building, Rm. 410**

If our door is closed, please put donations in the white box outside of the office. If you want to ensure a hand-off, our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9am-4:30pm. Please contact volunteer@sjvolunteers.org prior to drop-off to ensure we will be in office to accept.



Scan or click the QR code to fill out the donation form. Please fill out before donating.**