

One-Time Group Service Events: Introduction

What is one-time service?

One-time service:

- Is a specific activity or project which can be done in a specified block of time (a morning, an afternoon, etc.)
- Is designed to meet a specific community need that is expressed or desired by an agency or community partner
- Begins with preparation – a planned activity or discussion that prepares the individual or group for the experience they are about to have (it may be done prior to the day of the activity)
- Concludes with reflection – a planned time to debrief or process the experience and to identify what was learned, raise questions and/or, if desired, determine next steps.

One-time service events are an excellent way to introduce a group or individual to community service. If done well, students have the opportunity to learn something about a part of their community and can meet a need in the city. Students often leave one-time service events excited to volunteer again. It is the hope of the Center for Community Service and Justice (CCSJ) that participation in one-time service events will lead to further, more sustained involvement in ongoing community service. We believe that it is these ongoing partnerships that allow students to learn more fully about the community and themselves. There are many ongoing opportunities from which to choose; visit www.loyola.edu/ccsj to find out more.

Why this resource packet?

This packet is designed to help you and your group plan and implement your project effectively. When planned well, one-time service projects can have beneficial results for both Loyola students and community agencies. This packet includes the framework and information to make this experience one that meets the needs of the community, strengthens Loyola's connection to our neighbors throughout Baltimore, and functions as a positive learning experience for all.

Preparation and reflection are essential components of any service experience. When volunteers are prepared and have the opportunity to reflect on their experience afterward, the results can be incredibly beneficial to both the volunteer and the community. When volunteers aren't prepared, or aren't given the opportunity to reflect, one-time service events can potentially have a negative effect on the Loyola student, the community agency, or both. Consider the following situation. A resident assistant invites his/her first-year resident students to spend an afternoon handing out sandwiches in downtown Baltimore. The students aren't prepared for the experience before they leave, and they don't talk about the experience once it's over. During the afternoon of service, the students witness several arguments among the guests, a drunken man who harasses everyone around him, and personally fend off lewd comments from a lingering passerby. By the end of the afternoon, they can't wait to get back to campus. They return to campus harboring reinforced harmful stereotypes, possibly wondering, "Are all people who are homeless like this?" In fact, no, not all people who are homeless are like this. With good preparation and reflection,

volunteers can learn about societal pressures and issues that contribute to behaviors that they might observe. Volunteers will also hopefully learn that each individual – whether homeless or not – is different, and learn to not jump to conclusion or rely on stereotypes.

Read through the following pages, and as questions arise, feel free to contact any staff member in the Center for Community Service and Justice (x2380). We wish you all the best in your desire to do community service, and we hope that your service event is a positive and productive experience for all!