

FIRST RESPONDERS

YOUTH ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD OBESITY
THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING

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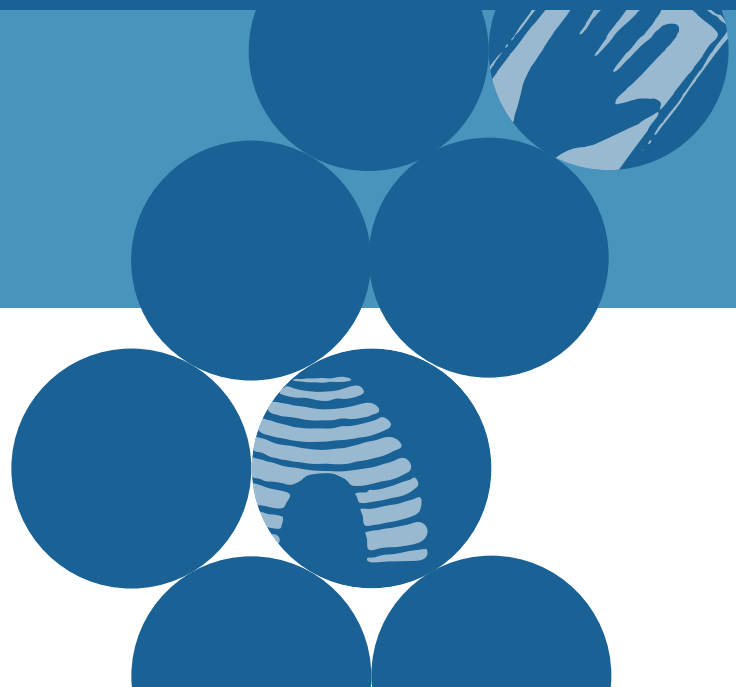


TABLE OF CONTENTS

TWO UNITEDHEALTHCARE

THREE YOUTH SERVICE AMERICA

FIVE PEDIATRIC OBESITY: A NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

SIX THE RESPONSE

EIGHT SERVICE-LEARNING: A FOUR STEP PROCESS

STEP 1: PREPARATION

STEP 2: ACTION

STEP 3: REFLECTION

STEP 4: DEMONSTRATION AND CELEBRATION

THIRTEEN ABOUT THE AUTHOR

FIFTEEN ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY



UNITEDHEALTHCARE



UnitedHealthcare (www.unitedhealthcare.com) provides a full spectrum of consumer-oriented health benefit plans and services to individuals, public sector employers and businesses of all sizes, including more than half of the Fortune 100 companies. The company organizes access to quality, affordable health care services on behalf of more than 25 million individual consumers, contracting directly with more than 560,000 physicians and care professionals and 4,800 hospitals to offer them broad, convenient access to services nationwide. UnitedHealthcare is one of the businesses of UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH), a diversified Fortune 50 health and well-being company.

About AmeriChoice

AmeriChoice, a unit of UnitedHealth Group, and its Unison Health Plans facilitate access to community based, culturally sensitive and quality health care for more than 2 million beneficiaries of Medicaid, Medicare, Children's Health Insurance Programs and other government-sponsored health care plans in 22 states and the District of Columbia. AmeriChoice believes that health care cannot be provided effectively without consideration of the environmental factors that affect a person's life, and through its unique Personal Care Model, emphasizes a holistic approach to health care, with practical programs to improve its members' living circumstances as well as their health. Visit www.americhoice.com for more information.





YOUTH SERVICE AMERICA

Youth Service America (YSA) improves communities by increasing the number and the diversity of young people, ages 5-25, serving in substantive roles. Founded in 1986, YSA is an international nonprofit resource center that partners with thousands of organizations in more than 100 countries to expand the impact of the youth service movement with families, communities, schools, corporations, and governments. We work towards that mission through three core strategies:

- **Public Mobilization Campaigns;**
- **Tools, Information and Training; and**
- **Incentives and Recognition.**

Our Programs and resources include:

Global Youth Service Day, the largest service event in the world, mobilizes youth to identify and address the needs of their communities through service, recruits the next generation of volunteers, and educates the public about the year-round contributions of young people as community leaders. Global Youth Service Day takes place concurrently in more than 100 countries. Curriculum Guides and Tool Kits help teachers, youth leaders, and young people plan quality service projects, recruit volunteers, identify costs, raise funds, generate media attention, and incorporate service-learning practices into their community service projects.

Semester of Service encourages youth, teachers, and practitioners to develop semester-long service-learning projects that launch on Martin Luther King Day in January and culminates on Global Youth Service Day in April. During the Semester of Service, young people will tackle large, strategic problems facing the world, linking their service to the academic curriculum.

ServiceVote is a campaign to engage young people in the full spectrum of civic actions. Building on the recent growth in both youth volunteering and voting, ServiceVote challenges young people to recognize political and electoral participation as a means to serving their communities and to connect the critical issues they work to address through service with the range of institutions and activities that make our democracy work. ServiceVote mobilizes young people to advocate for service and service-learning, to engage leaders and build public support for service-learning policies and programs.

Global Youth Service Grants (GYSG) and Awards are available to motivate children and youth to organize Global Youth Service Day projects and participate in ongoing service throughout the year. Grants include the State Farm Good Neighbor Service-Learning Grants, Disney Minnie Grants, other micro-finance programs, and the prestigious Harris Wofford Awards.

National Service Briefing (NSB) is the most widely distributed and read publication for the service and service-learning field. As a weekly email publication with more than 45,000 subscribers, it highlights up-to-date information such as effective practices, funding, awards, legislation, corporate initiatives and calendar events. Additionally, it includes an “Everyday Heroes” segment, which profiles various youth leading innovative service initiatives around the world.

Service-Learning Project Planning Resources and Modules are comprehensive guides that support the planning of strategic service projects and enhance learning. Focused on specific social issues and themes, they include project examples, class activities, timelines, and connections to educational standards.

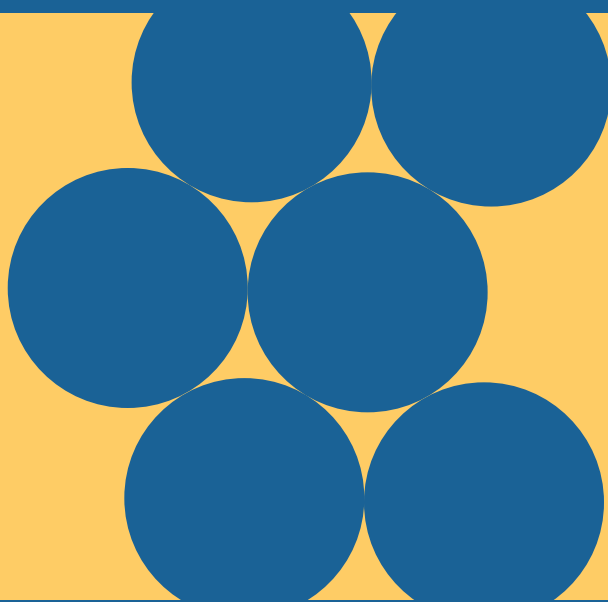
The Youth Service Institute is an annual gathering of practitioners convened to share effective practices in their work to increase the scale and impact of youth service.

servenet.org is an award-winning website and the most comprehensive site on the Internet dedicated to service and volunteering. Home to a broad national database of local volunteer opportunities, events, jobs, news, effective practices, and quotes, servenet also matches the skills, experiences, and enthusiasm of volunteers who wish to help with organizations that need them.



FIRST RESPONDERS YOUTH ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD OBESITY THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING

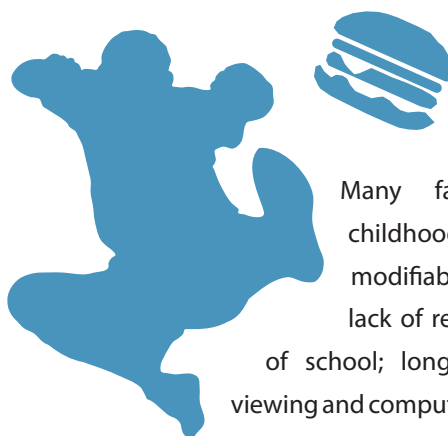
The primary audiences of this module are classroom teachers, service-learning coordinators, students in the health professions, and staff in community and youth development organizations who are seeking to engage middle and high school-age youth as “first responders” to the critical American issue of childhood obesity. The module uses service-learning to move beyond the textbook, explore real world issues, and address systemic factors that contribute to childhood obesity.



PEDIATRIC OBESITY: A NUMBER ONE HEALTH PRIORITY

An editorial cartoon that ran in newspapers in 2008 depicted a young couple sitting under a tree and the wife simply saying, **“Before childhood obesity, I used to wonder what our kids would look like.”** That was all it said. But that was more than enough to send a message.

In the Columbus, Ohio Dispatch, August 20, 2008, a headline asked, “Is Ohio losing the fight vs. obesity?” The article noted that “the government is doing too little to slim America down.” Whose shoulders the responsibility of addressing childhood obesity? A quote from the director of the Institute for Active Living in the Columbus Public Health Department says, “The choices that people make are based on the choices that they have.” This raised the question: Who, if anyone, is responsible for providing access to healthy activities and food options?



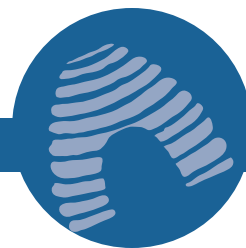
Many factors contribute to childhood obesity and most are modifiable. These factors include lack of regular exercise in or out of school; long periods of television viewing and computer usage; over-exposure to advertising that promotes high-calorie foods; lack of recreational facilities; and high consumption of high-calorie foods.

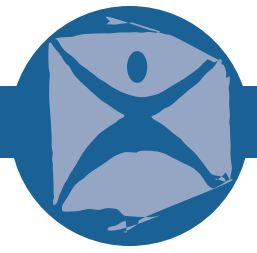
Teaching healthy behaviors must begin at a very young age since lifelong habits are developed early. Physical activity and good nutrition are the cornerstones for preventing obesity and parents and guardians are the most important role models for their children.

The good news is that this problem is attracting the attention of government, health, science, and education communities as well as food and beverage industries, and consumers. Additionally, this module promotes change by asking children and youth to take the lead in reducing rates of childhood obesity.

ACCORDING TO THE OFFICE OF THE SURGEON GENERAL:

- **Obesity has more than doubled (and in some case tripled) among children and youth who fall between the ages of 2-19.**
- **More than 17% of youth, ages 2-19 years of age, are overweight in the United States.**
- **Overweight adolescents have A 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.**
- **Overweight children and adolescents are more likely to have risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and Type 2 diabetes.**





THE RESPONSE

“THE ANSWER IS CLEAR: CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE ON THE FRONTLINES, AND WITH THE APPROPRIATE RESOURCES, HAVE THE ABILITY TO FACE THIS ISSUE HEAD ON.”

WHO ARE THE FIRST RESPONDERS?

Who are the First Responders in this critical situation that affects so many young people from coast to coast? The answer is clear: children and youth are on the frontlines, and with the appropriate resources, they have the ability to face this issue head on. Youth are leaders in their families, communities, and peer groups both inside and outside the school. As First Responders, youth have the opportunity to further develop their leadership abilities and to fulfill their potential as assets to their community.

Youth Service America invests in and promotes thousands of children and youth who improve the lives of others every day. Through its work of leading public mobilizing campaigns, offering incentives and recognition, and providing tools, information, and training, Youth Service America believes that young people are positioned to be First Responders.

WHAT CAN FIRST RESPONDERS DO THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-learning is a teaching method that combines meaningful service with curriculum or program-based learning. Schools and organizations use service-learning as a tool to help youth build stronger academic skills, foster civic responsibility, and develop leadership skills. Students reflect on their experiences as they seek to achieve real objectives for the community and deeper understanding and skills for themselves.

THE FIRST RESPONDERS SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS CAN INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF SERVICE:

Direct Service: Firsthand service that provides youth with personal connections to specific individuals and causes in need. For example, teaching peers how to pack healthy lunches.

Indirect Service: Emphasizes service through fundraising, awareness, and strategic operation. For example, translating brochures about healthy eating habits into other languages.

Advocacy: Focus is on writing and communication skills for public purposes. For example, writing letters to your school board that outline the need for healthier school lunches.

ADVOCACY is an excellent way to incorporate research, raising awareness of an issue, and civic responsibility.



SERVICE-LEARNING OCCURS WHEN SERVICE ACTIVITIES ARE DIRECTLY, AND MEANINGFULLY, TIED BACK TO THE ACADEMIC CURRICULUM.

Service-learning projects connect to all areas of the curriculum through writing and art projects, social studies, language arts, science and math, health and physical education. Far from being an added layer of responsibility for teachers, service-learning is a tool to increase students' level of engagement with the subject matter, increasing the potential to achieve educational goals.

For example, teachers can connect subject standards to basic service-learning activities as in the examples below:

	BASIC STANDARD	ACTIVITY
SPANISH	Read & understand consumer materials	Learn about dietary practices among Hispanic communities and translate brochures to promote healthy eating for distribution at a local community center.
HEALTH	Synthesize & evaluate health information and products	Walk around the neighborhood and assess businesses' marketing strategies to promote active or sedentary lifestyles. Write a letter to the local paper with findings and recommendations.
MATH	Understand interrelationships among sets of numbers	Set up a booth at school to calculate students' Body Mass Index (BMI) and hand out brochures with information about appropriate BMI in relation to age and sex.

The National Youth Leadership Council and RMC Corporation conducted extensive research on the characteristics of high quality service-learning models that resulted in the “**K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice**” (www.nylc.org). Keep these standards in mind while planning and implementing a service-learning project:

Duration and Intensity: Sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes **

Meaningful Service: Meaningful and personally relevant service activities

Link to Curriculum: Intentional use as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and curriculum content standards

Reflection: Ongoing reflection activities that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society

Diversity: Diversity and mutual respect among all participants

Youth Voice: A strong youth voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences

Partnerships: Partnerships that are collaborative and mutually beneficial

Progress Monitoring: Ongoing assessment of the progress toward meeting goals

** Youth Service America and the Corporation for National and Community Service encourage students of all ages to develop a semester-long service-learning project that begins on Martin Luther King Day in January and ends on Global Youth Service Day in April, or during other extended periods throughout the year. During the 12 weeks, young people from elementary schools to graduate schools will identify a problem or unmet need that affects their community, the nation, or the world. They prepare a plan, take action to implement their solution, reflect on their progress and develop next steps, and celebrate their success. To explore how your work as Childhood Obesity First Responders can be part of this initiative, visit www.SemesterOfService.org.

SERVICE-LEARNING: A FOUR STEP PROCESS

Successful service-learning activities follow four steps: preparation; action (which can be direct, indirect, or advocacy activities); reflection; and celebration/demonstration.

STEP 1: PREPARATION

As with any new learning initiative, service-learning requires preparation in the form of strategic questions and planning activities. Students should be engaged in identifying key aspects of the problem and in laying out possible solutions.

HEALTHFUL HINT: As a group, discuss the various commonalities you have when it comes to the battle against childhood obesity. Break into groups by shared interests. For example, group students who want access to healthy food options in their cafeteria. Put another group together who share an interest in daily exercise. Have each group write a paragraph about their shared concern. Combine them all to create your First Responders mission statement.

In the Preparation stage, first steps are fact finding and research. Planning includes identifying a real community need, investigating and analyzing the need, and making a plan of action. Students can investigate the issue by using surveys, making observations, analyzing reports from the media and other information sources, and collecting data on the physical health of their family, school, or community.

Use the following questions to stimulate conversation:

Finding Personal Relevance:

- What are my favorite foods? Why?
- What are my favorite physical activities? Why?
- What enables / prevents me from eating healthy food?
- What enables / prevents me from participating in healthy activities?

Collecting Data:

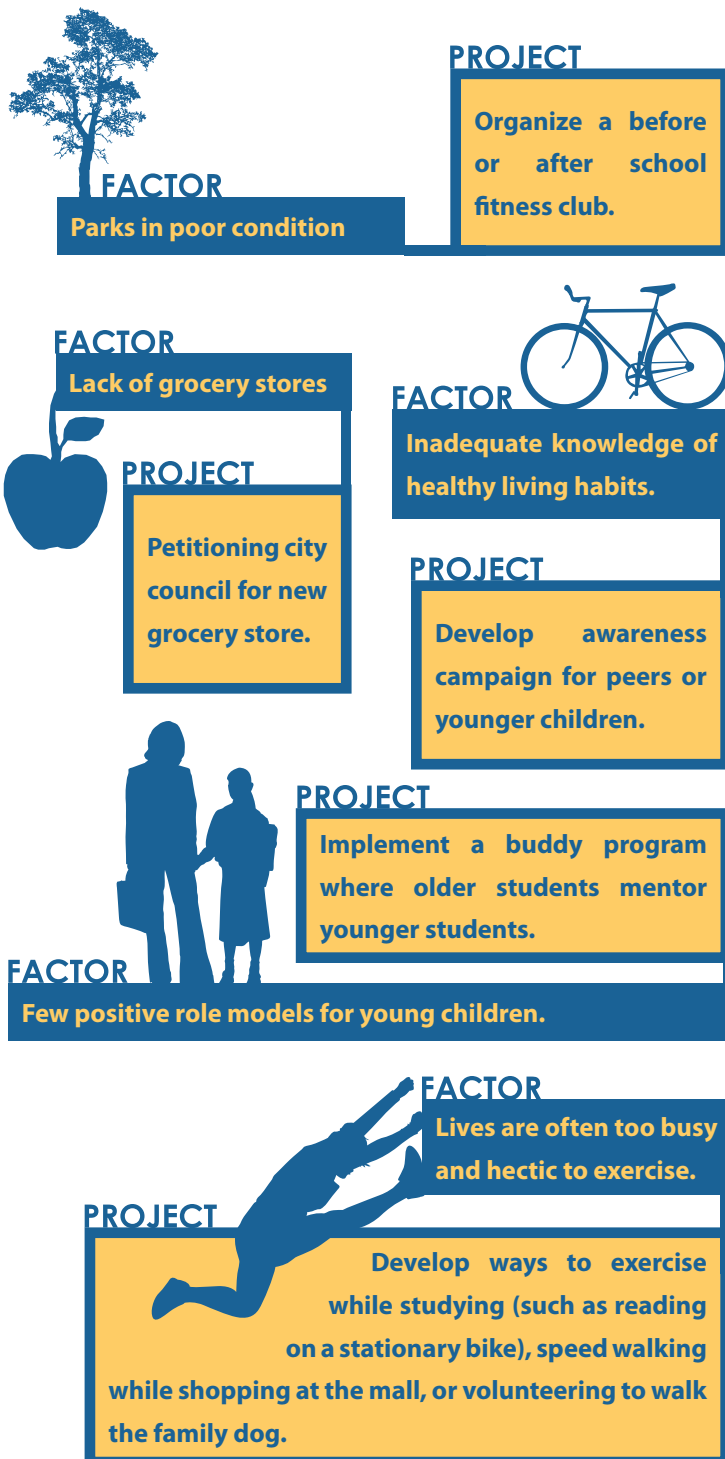
- What is the prevalence of childhood obesity in your community? In your state? Nationally?
- What are the trends in childhood obesity?
- Are all children at risk for childhood obesity? Are some children more at risk?
- How do the prevalence and risk vary? What does this tell you?

Linking Our Shared Experiences:

- What can we do in our community? What can we do right here in this school? What can we do about the problem in our own families?
- What is the government doing to slim youth down? Is it the government's responsibility? Is it only the government's responsibility? If so, which government – local, state or federal?
- What choices do people have? Who is responsible for making these choices? Who is responsible for providing options? How do these options change based on community?
- Why do you think childhood obesity has increased over the years?
- Who in your community is working on this problem? What are they doing?

STEP 2: ACTION

The following chart displays some examples of factors that lead to childhood obesity and projects that address those factors.



THE BODY MASS INDEX (BMI)

Learning how to calculate the Body Mass Index (BMI) not only reinforces students' math abilities, but it also serves as an early opportunity for students to detect potential health risks related to obesity.

Some Brief Background Information

The Body Mass Index (BMI), a number calculated from a person's weight and height, is a reliable indicator of body fatness for most children and teens. BMI does not measure body fat directly, but research has shown that BMI correlates to direct measures of body fat.

The BMI Percentile

After BMI is calculated for children and teens, the number is plotted on BMI growth charts (for either girls or boys) to obtain a percentile ranking. Percentiles are the most commonly used indicator to assess the size and growth patterns of individual children in the United States. The percentile indicates the relative position of the child's BMI number among children of the same sex and age. The growth charts show the weight status categories used with children and teens (underweight, healthy weight, overweight, and obese).

To calculate your BMI, visit the Centers for Disease Control BMI Calculator at:

<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnpabmi/Calculator.aspx>.



MANY STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS DEVELOPED SERVICE-LEARNING RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS.

The following direct and indirect actions have been drawn and/or adapted from Florida's 4 Practical Resources for Linking Service-Learning and the Florida Sunshine State Standards resource document. Check with your state education department to find comparable resources.

Additional examples of youth-led service-learning projects include:

- **Research childhood obesity in your community and start an awareness campaign** to introduce more nutritional food to youth community centers and schools.
- **Write “op ed” columns and letters to the editors, or make phone calls, and make your position known.** Advocate that adequate funds be provided by local, state, and federal sources to ensure the development of healthy eating habits.
- **Create an interactive information and snack station in conjunction with Healthy Kids Day** to make the community aware that health and well-being is based on nutrition and exercise.
- **Team up with the American Diabetes Association to provide multicultural information about the health risks associated with obesity** that may cause the onset of diabetes.
- **Organize a health fair expo for elementary school children at a nearby elementary school.** The expo addressed the importance of healthy living. The stations included a cooking station emphasizing the use of fresh fruits and vegetables and a “cool-off” corner where students discussed the importance of rest and relaxation.

IDEA: Reading books to younger children about leading healthy lives and discussing with them the messages the books convey is a great way for students to learn healthy habits and provide service. See Appendix for exciting reading list options.

- **Start an after-school health club.** Get a workout by participating in a program as a means of improving eating habits and encouraging physical activities such as team sports and calisthenics.
- **Create presentations or performances on positive health practices** to prevent illness and teach them to peers and younger students.
- **Research how cultural background, life styles and family history are related to the cause and prevention of disease.**
- **Research information about obesity and conduct community presentations** about your findings.
- **Develop plans to work with children to improve their self-esteem** which often is a factor in obesity.
- **Develop videos and brochures on obesity-related conditions** such as diabetes.
- **Conduct community-wide fitness walk-run-or bike-a-thons** to raise awareness of and money for obesity prevention programs.
- **Set fitness goals and learn how to organize and maintain a wellness journal** and create individual wellness plans.
- **Design and construct an exercise trail** for your school and/or community.
- **Develop a new active game or physical sport** and teach it to others.
- **Create bookmarks and coloring books for younger children** on health issues.

STEP 3: REFLECTION

Reflection allows students to internalize information learned during and after service-learning projects. Reflection is an individual or group activity that asks the learners to consider an experience systematically that challenges the student to make broader application of the lessons learned.

REFLECTION INVOLVES STRUCTURED, AS WELL AS SPONTANEOUS, ACTIVITIES OCCURRING IN EACH SERVICE-LEARNING STAGE. Reflection questions, such as those below, should solicit more than simple “yes” or “no” responses. They should provide room for analysis, elaboration, and interpretation, and be focused on the “what comes next” question. Here are some reflection questions to consider:

During Preparation

- Why should we undertake this project? What will happen if we do not address this issue?
- What are the obesity rates in our community? What are the implications of those rates?
- What are some of the expectations for this service-learning project?
- What specific skills are needed to plan and implement this project and do we feel we have these skills?
- What do we believe we still have to learn to accomplish our goals?
- What will change in our community because of our project and how will we change?

During the Service-Learning Experience

- How are we meeting our goals?
- How are we accomplishing what we set out to do?
- How are we working as a group and what are we learning about each other?
- What are we learning about our community and key stakeholders?
- What additional skills do we need?
- What surprises have we encountered?
- How will our gained knowledge be useful later?
- How does this experience relate to other experiences we have had?
- What might need to change about what we are doing to make it work better?

Following the Service

- What did we do? How did it go? What went well? What did not?
- What did we learn from this experience that we didn't know before?
- What was special about this experience?
- Were there things that we might have done differently?
- What advice would we pass on to others taking on a similar project?
- What is important to remember for our next service-learning project?
- What do we think we will remember from this experience five years from now?
- How should we celebrate the successful completion of the project?

A KEY ELEMENT OF THE POST-PROJECT REFLECTION IS THE EVALUATION ITSELF. Use this time to guide youth in a discussion of accomplishments and compare results with the data collected before the project:

- **Do families know how to make healthier snack choices with a limited budget?**
- **Are students taking breaks from TV watching to exercise?**
- **Is there a healthier menu at the school cafeteria?**
- **Are any of the local businesses promoting active lifestyles in their advertising?**
- **What changed in the community because of our intervention?**

In addition to reflection questions, there are a wide variety of reflection activities, such as role playing, writing poetry or plays, creating art projects, and compiling a guidebook of how to help fellow students or younger ones develop healthy lifestyles. Many service-learning initiatives have used journal writing as a key reflection activity.

For more information on reflection activities, see the Reflection Toolkit at: <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/files/legacy/filemanager/download/615/nwtoolkit.pdf>



STEP 4: DEMONSTRATION AND CELEBRATION

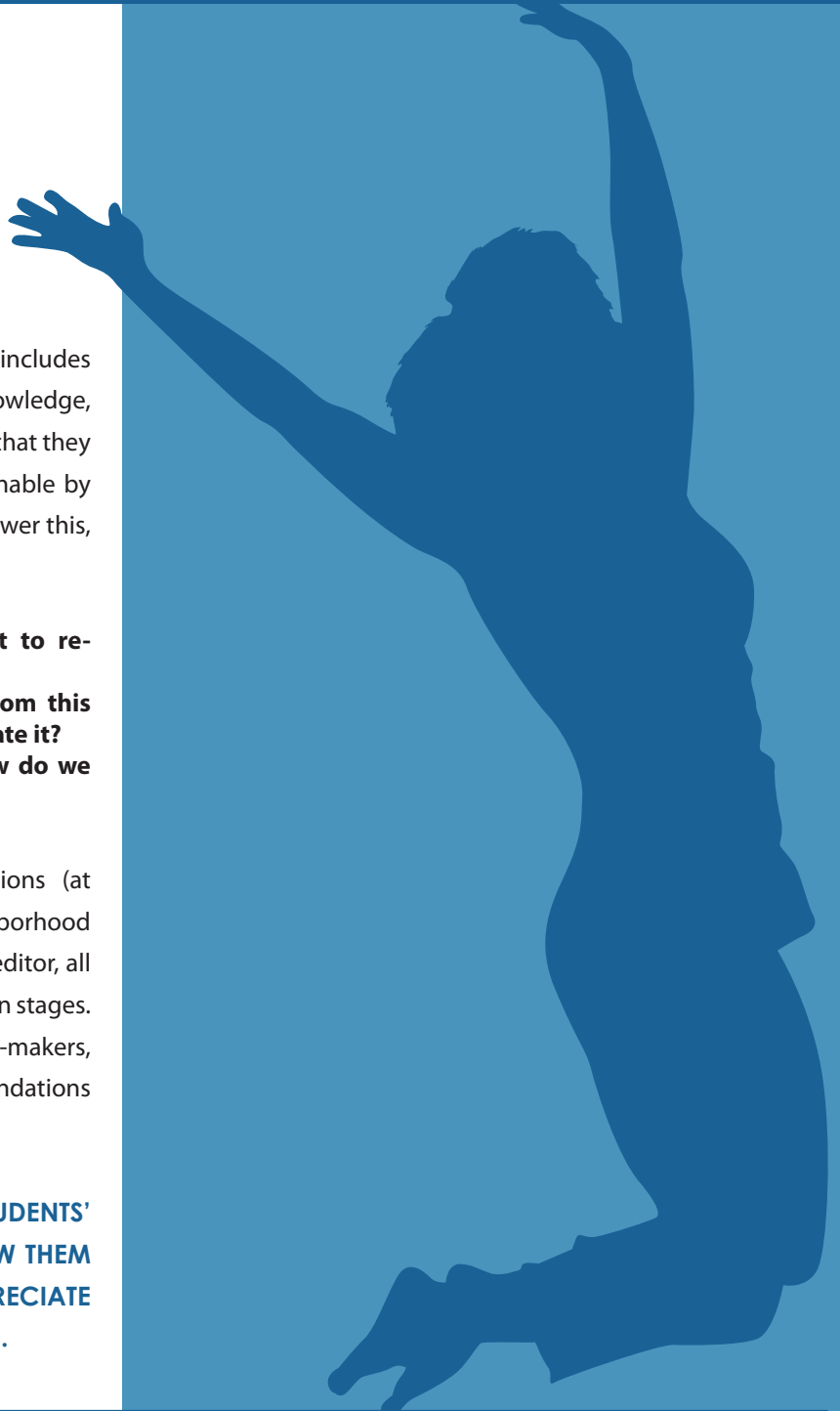
The final step of service-learning is Demonstration, which includes providing evidence that the students have gained knowledge, acquired new attitudes, and accomplished their goals so that they can scale up their work and make their progress sustainable by teaching others. So a key question is: What's next? To answer this, students would discuss:

- **What needs to happen for the problem not to re-occur?**
- **How do we teach others what we learned from this experience so that they can expand it or replicate it?**
- **What policies should be put in place and how do we achieve that?**

Vehicles for demonstration include public presentations (at school assemblies, civic organizations' meetings, neighborhood councils), performances, "op ed" pieces or letters to the editor, all of which draw from the preparation, service, and reflection stages. Especially important is communicating with policy-makers, making them aware of the project results and recommendations for youth to reduce the childhood obesity problem.

CELEBRATION ACTIVITIES RECOGNIZE THE STUDENTS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN A PUBLIC WAY AND SHOW THEM THAT THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY APPRECIATE WHAT THESE YOUNG CITIZENS HAVE CONTRIBUTED.

A NOTE ON FUNDRAISING: Service-learning does not have to be expensive and many successful service-learning projects are carried out with small budgets. Local businesses and organizations can provide in-kind donations or funds in exchange for recognition (e.g. using their logo on all handouts). Typical fundraising events such as artwork sales or raffles are also effective. In addition, YSA and other organizations offer grants to support youth-led service projects. Having students fill out these grant applications is useful in itself, since it helps them to clearly explain their project to an outside audience while learning the art of proposal writing and project planning. Visit www.YSA.org/awards for this information.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob Bhaerman is a former elementary school teacher, college instructor in curriculum development and the social foundations of education, and associate dean of research. He also has held a number of positions in educational research and development and is the author of over 100 publications. He now works as a consultant primarily in service-learning. From 1998 to 2004, he served as coordinator of school-based service-learning in Learn and Serve America at the Corporation for National and Community Service. More recently, Bob developed four manuals on service-learning and senior/culminating projects for Educational Service District 112 in Vancouver, Washington. In 2007, the manuals received the Seal of Excellence Award from the National Service-Learning Exchange. In 2006, the National Service-Learning Partnership announced the formation of the Trailblazers in Service-Learning. Bob was one of five persons recognized in the initial group. Bob also served as co-author with Sejal Hathi on the 2008 YSA publication, *Effective Practices for Engaging At-Risk Youth in Service*. He received his Doctor of Education degree in 1965 from Rutgers University.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A very special thanks to Silvia Golombek, Angeline Mutima, Sarah Guy, and Brandon Gryde for their contributions to this module.



“BEGIN TODAY. TODAY IS THE DAY IN WHICH EVERY MOMENT COUNTS. WE CAN OFFER OUR LIVES IN LOVING JOYOUS SERVICE TO THE WORLD. OUR LASTING LEGACY IS THE LIFE WE LEAVE BEHIND. ONE DOES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE. YOU ARE THE ONE. AND YOU ARE NOT ALONE. TOGETHER, AS ONE, WE ARE CHANGING THE WORLD. CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU.”

Julia Butterfly Hill



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES. A K-8 tool for school-based after-school programs that guides students through the process of develop service-learning projects that promote healthy behaviors and combat childhood obesity.

www.childrenforchildren.org/index.php?q=node/179

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT OBESITY: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES, PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT by Walter Burniat, Tim J. Cole, Inge Lissau, and Elizabeth M. E. Poskitt. Cambridge: UK: Cambridge University Press. 2006. This book covers all aspects of obesity from epidemiology and prevention to recent developments in biochemistry and genetics. The authors focus on who is responsible for preventing childhood obesity and what actions should be taken to prevent childhood obesity.

ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SETTINGS AND RACE, ETHNICITY, AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS AND PARK-BASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN DIVERSE COMMUNITIES OF TWO U.S. CITIES. Reports show how income level and access to community recreation facilities impact weight.

www.rwjf.org/news/special/activityspace and www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=29974

CHILD OBESITY: A PARENT'S GUIDE TO A FIT, TRIM, AND HAPPY CHILD by Goutham Rao. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books. 2006. Dr. Rao addresses the causes of obesity and explains the steps individuals can take to develop and maintain healthy eating habits.

www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2248/is_/ai_n27077605

CHILDREN, OBESITY AND EXERCISE: PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENT OBESITY by Andrew Hills, Neil King, and Nuala Byrne.

New York: Routledge. 2007. This practical guide to understanding and managing childhood and adolescent obesity covers such topics as psycho-social aspects of childhood obesity, physical activity behaviors, and eating behaviors. For a brief overview, see:

www.routledgesport.com/books/Children-Obesity-and-Exercise-isbn9780415408844

CHILDREN'S SERVICE RESOURCES: THE WHYY CHILDREN'S SERVICE (a Philadelphia radio station) has worked on a number of fronts to bring the issue of childhood obesity to light. For resources that are helpful in understanding this health concern, see:

www.whyy.org/childrenservice/obesity.html

HEALTH ISSUE: CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN THE UNITED STATES by Bridget Webb. March 2004. Webb's comprehensive on-line resource touches on factors that are responsible for childhood obesity including the home environment, poor nutrition, large portion sizes, and a lack of governmental and food company regulation. Family involvement is crucial because the "family provides the child's major social learning environment."

www.unc.edu/~bewebb/servicelearningproject.pdf

HEALTHY EATING AND ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. This 2006 publication of UnitedHealthcare by Dr. Deneen Vojta. The author has written a valuable guide to help families adopt healthy eating and activity behaviors that take families from passive to active participation in their health. The guide is based on proven methods that have demonstrated promising results for children and their families. The ten chapter titles are: Influences on eating and activity, Strategies for behavior change, Prize behaviors, Introduction to the five Core Categories, Food Choices, Portions, Triggers, Patterns and Habits, Physical Activity, and Maintaining your Healthy Eating and Activity behaviors. Available in the “Resources” area at:
www.YSA.org

PREVENTING CHILDHOOD OBESITY: HEALTH IN THE BALANCE by the Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth. Jeffrey P. Koplan, Catharyn T. Liverman, and Vivica A. Kraak. Washington, DC: Institute of Medicine. 2005. The Committee’s action plan lays out explicit goals and recommendations for preventing obesity and promoting healthy weight in children and youth. It also explores actions needed to initiate, support, and sustain the societal and lifestyle changes that can reverse the obesity trend. For a brief summary of the report, see:
www.iom.edu/?id=22623

PROMOTING HEALTHY HABITS THROUGH SERVICE-LEARNING. Youth Service America developed the module to complement the Global Youth Service Day Service-Learning Curriculum Guide, a tool for helping youth develop project management skills. The resource provides background information on service-learning as well as resources and service-learning project ideas on such healthy lifestyle habits as obesity, eating disorders, sexual health, mental health, diabetes, smoking and substance abuse, and respiratory disease. The module notes that obesity can result from a lack of physical activity, overeating or genetics, but starting healthy habits at an early age can prevent obesity. Available in the “Resources” area at:
www.YSA.org

UNDERSTANDING OUR SERVICE-LEARNING COMMUNITY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF PARENT, TEACHER, AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS ABOUT CHILDHOOD OBESITY. Massey-Sokes, Marilyn and Meaney, Karen S. Health Educator, v38 n2 p53-60. Fall 2006.
<http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=EJ769696>

RESOURCES CONTINUED...

Children's books teach positive attitudes that help prevent obesity from celebrations of healthful eating and exercise to acceptance and respect for people of all sizes. As Ben Peterson wrote:

“BEING DIFFERENT, ESPECIALLY PHYSICALLY DIFFERENT, CAN BE A SOMETIMES PAINFUL EXPERIENCE FOR A CHILD. CHILDREN WHO ARE HEAVIER THAN AVERAGE CAN BE THE SUBJECT OF RIDICULE FROM THEIR CLASSMATES AND OFTEN END UP HATING THEIR DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTIC.”

The following books are excellent resources to encourage healthy lifestyles and positive body-images.

MR. SUGAR CAME TO TOWN/LA VISITA DEL SR. AZUCAR by Harriet Rohmer & Cruz Gomez. Grandma Lupe is the best cook in the neighborhood with her delicious tamales. But when Mr. Sugar and his magical sugar truck come to town, young Alicia and Alfredo begin to stuff themselves instead with his tasty sweets. As they eat the sugar-filled goodies, they begin to get fat and develop holes in their teeth. Grandma Lupe saves the day when she unmasks Mr. Sugar as the monster that he is and sends him away, telling the children that although they may love Mr. Sugar, he doesn't love them. Ages 6-9. (Children's Book Press, 1989)

OLIVER'S FRUIT SALAD AND OLIVER'S VEGETABLES by Vivian French. Like many children, Oliver is not a very adventurous eater. In both of these stories, Oliver learns from experiences with his gardening grandparents that fruits and vegetables can be delicious.. Both stories attempt to inspire children to eat—and perhaps even enjoy—vegetables and fruit. Ages 4-7. (Oliver's Fruit Salad, 1998, Oliver's Vegetables, 1995, Orchard Books)

TODDLEROBICS by Zita Newcomb. "Hats off, coats off, all rush in—everybody ready for the toddler gym." This book for young children follows a multicultural group of babies as they cheerfully demonstrate exercises such as "Heads, shoulders, knees, and toes." Although not an exercise manual, it does promote healthy living by demonstrating how much fun exercising can be. Ages 3-7. (Candlewick Press, 1996)

CHEW ON THIS: EVERYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT FAST FOOD by Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson. This adaptation of Schlosser's Fast Food Nation, uncovers the history of the fast-food industry. The book explores how the fast-food restaurants studied childhood behavior and how soda pop is linked to obesity. Ages 9-12. (Sandpiper, 2007)

GET UP AND GO! by Nancy Carlson. This picture book teaches children about the parts of the body, how exercise helps, and how being active can lead to athletic achievements and making new friends. Ages 4-8. (Puffin, 2008)



PLAYING SAFE, EATING RIGHT : MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES by Tamra Orr. This book offers personal stories about pressures that can affect girls' self-esteem. It offers "Talk About It" sidebars with critical-thinking questions and professional advice from "Dr. Vicki." Young Adult. (Essential Library, 2008)

THE EDIBLE PYRAMID: GOOD EATING EVERY DAY written & illustrated by Loreen Leedy. Children in preschool through third grade will enjoy the tale of animals who arrive for the grand opening of a restaurant and receive a menu that connects the entrees with the food pyramid. Ages 4-8. (Holiday House, 2007)

THE HEALTHY BODY COOKBOOK: OVER 50 FUN ACTIVITIES AND DELICIOUS RECIPES FOR KIDS by Joan D'Amico, Karen Eich Drummond ; illustrations by Tina Cash-Walsh. This cookbook offers 56 healthy recipes arranged according to parts of the human body they benefit. In addition to the recipes, it also offers activities, safety rules for cooking, and arranged instruction on how to read food labels. This cookbook is for grades four through six. Ages 9-12. (Topeka Bindery, 1998)

ARTICHOKE'S HEART by Suzanne Supplee. Supplee's novel is about Rosemary Goode, an overweight binge eating who feels self-conscious around her peers. Dealing with pressures from her aunt and helping her mother through cancer forces Rosemary to deal with heavy issues. However the novel handles each issue with gentle humor and sensitivity. Young Adult. (Puffin, 2009)

THE GULPS by Rosemary Wells; illustrations by Marc Brown. For children in preschool through second grade, The Gulps tells a story of a family that encounters many mishaps on a trip to a theme park. Realizing that being overweight prevents them from enjoying life to the fullest, their healthier child, Dawn, serves as a positive example to the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables and engaging in physical activities. Ages 4-8. (Little, Brown Young Readers, 2007)

DINOSAURS ALIVE AND WELL : A GUIDE TO GOOD HEALTH by Laurie Krasny Brown, Marc Brown. Dinosaurs give advice on topics such as diet, stress, and exercise in this instructional book. Geared to children, this book offers a creative way to teach healthy lifestyles. Ages 4-8. (Little, Brown Young Readers, 1992)

THE MONSTER HEALTH BOOK: A GUIDE TO EATING HEALTHY, BEING ACTIVE AND FEELING GREAT FOR MONSTERS AND KIDS! by Edward Miller. This book features a monster determined to make healthy choices, providing information about food, exercise, and health. It teaches children how to read and understand food labels, choose healthy food options, and tips for exercise. Ages 9-12. (Holiday House, 2008)



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