



Service Learning and Animal Protection

Start a Club



Service learning is a method of teaching and learning that combines academics with meaningful service in the community. Studies have shown that a skill learned with a practical purpose is more easily remembered. The potential benefits to animal care organizations that partner with school service learning programs are endless. Below are ideas on how students can volunteer for animals while learning about many of the subjects taught in schools today.

For more information on involving teens in animal sheltering work through service learning, see the article [Why Generation Y?](#) in *Animal Sheltering Magazine*.

If you have an activity to add to this list, please [email us](#).

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Art: visual or industrial arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, photography, film, woodworking, graphic design, etc.)

Students can

- paint the walls of the shelter, creating rooms with animals painted on the walls or an educational mural in a public area
- build climbing toys for cats
- create a video of shelter activities (e.g., a series of public service announcements for local TV spots or off-site presentations)
- make posters advertising the organization and special events
- create animal portraits or “paw print” art as a fundraiser
- create a film or video on proper pet care that can be shown to shelter visitors or other students
- build a magazine rack, shelving, cabinets, etc., for the shelter lobby or storage areas
- design, form, and paint receptacles for use in public venues as collection “boxes” for donations (can be made of wood, plaster, ceramic, etc., but should all have a theme centered around animals, whether in the actual shape of the containers themselves or in the motif applied to them)
- collect old and take new photographs of dogs and cats in different places, poses and situations. Place them in mats and frames along the walls in the shelter lobby and other public places. Whether dramatic, poignant, or cute, the photographs should make an impact, tell a story, or relate a specific message.
- create drawings, take photographs, or select photographs for use in organization’s website and publications such as brochures and newsletters/fliers
- submit original art for the organization’s fundraising calendar
- create a logo for the organization
- build benches, bookshelves, and other furniture for a children’s reading area in a public area at facility
- take before-and-after pictures of pets that have had major grooming make-overs and frame them for display in the entrance lobby
- video record or create a slideshow of the shelter in a tour-style fashion to be played at off-site presentations
- paint paw prints on the floor of the front lobby leading in the direction of the adoption areas
- assist in creation of humane education props such as designing and cutting out felt story board characters
- organize a coloring contest for younger children and help them with their projects
- design promotional items such as bumper stickers and t-shirts to be used at adoption events
- design and make leash holders or food bowl stands in metal or shop class to be auctioned or sold as a fundraiser
- sculpt bowls, vases, jewelry, etc., to sell as a fundraiser

Business/Marketing

Students can

- create a plan and materials for a public awareness campaign concerning spay/neuter, licensing, fundraising, etc.
- create a catchy slogan for the shelter to be put on t-shirts, magnets, or bumper stickers
- brainstorm fundraising ideas to raise money for the shelter; plan community events; create activities and assist with marketing (See the [Help Homeless Pets](#) project.)
- assist with writing grants (teens can do research and can write outlines or even rough drafts of grants)
- schedule meetings with various real estate agents, small business owners, veterinary clinics, and community service organizations to solicit sponsorships and partnerships
- contact local radio stations to inquire about live remote shows during organization events
- create an address label for the organization, including phone number; label all materials available to the public including literature and pet adoption kits.
- make bandanas that have shelter’s name, address, and phone for the adoptable pets to wear (dogs can be taken to walk-a-thons, the park, etc.)
- set up a shelter information booth at county fairs and other community events to market organization

- write public service announcements concerning topics that are important to the community
- create an ad for the local newspaper or magazine promoting organization events
- market and sell a book created by youth or the shelter, which educates about proper animal care, dog bite prevention, etc.
- conduct a ‘movie theater’ showing ½ hour videos on dog bite prevention and humane education topics
- distribute fliers in libraries, grocery stores, and privately owned businesses; pamphlets can either be generalized regarding responsible pet ownership or can relate to the shelter’s policies, programs, and/or needs

Drama/Theater

Students can

- form a theater group in which the students perform for other classes or give demonstrations at the shelter; the demonstrations can include proper pet care tips (These skits can be taped and used in schools or community organizations.)
- develop and perform puppet shows centered around a theme pertaining to humane education, responsible pet care, or the life of an animal in the shelter; book time at school assemblies, First Night celebrations, holiday pageants in the mall, kids camps, etc.
- organize a summer children’s play camp that teaches about humane issues

Language Arts (e.g., English, reading, literature, writing, speaking)

Students can

- develop and present humane education presentations for students their age and younger
- read current events on animal and environmental issues and write to elected officials, newspapers, newsletters, etc., to express opinion
- review books and create a list of humane books for various grades levels
- write poems or short stories about animals, nature, wildlife, working in the animal shelter, etc.; collect the poems into an anthology to be placed in the library or shelter as an educational tool
- form reading circles in organization’s conference room, local elementary schools, after school programs, youth groups, and church groups in which students read to younger children; conduct reading hour with a humane book at library or organization
- write lyrics for jingles promoting the adoption of shelter animals on local radio stations; ask stations to play them as public service announcements
- collaborate with the drama students and write script for humane themed plays; present these to the community or younger grades
- write animal descriptions or individual “stories” to attach to cages for each pet available for adoption; write “happy ending” adoption stories for shelter website
- write and present an educational speech to be given in conjunction with a spay/neuter campaign or other humane education topic
- write and design educational booklets to be handed out in conjunction with shelter tours
- facilitate an elementary school essay contest and act as a judge
- research different animals and their habitats, in books and online; create a picture book highlighting the animals (These can be displayed in the lobby or sold.)
- write a children’s book dealing with proper care of domestic animals, dog bite prevention, or respect for wildlife (These can be given to schools, placed in the shelter lobby, or sold.) [This could develop into a larger

Business/Publishing project.]

Health/Physical Education

Students can

- develop a presentation, pamphlet, or video on health benefits associated with pet ownership, to be shared in the community or as a public service announcement
- organize a community walking program such as “Walk Your Dog in the Park” day and log heart rates of both humans and companion animals
- plan or participate in a pet walk to raise funds for the organization
- create a pet agility class that provides activities for kids/pets
- create, plan, and present public education seminars on animal health. Cover topics such as weight management, proper nutrition and special needs diets, heartworm prevention and treatment, grooming, the importance of vaccinations, etc.
- create pet first aid kits or emergency evacuation kits to be distributed to the public
- research and develop a diet program for older or diabetic pets at the shelter
- organize a pet health fair at shelter, school, or community center
- give presentations to younger children about dog bite prevention

Living Skills

Students can

- research and design a pamphlet or public service announcement comparing the care, time, and money required for babies and companion animals to promote an understanding of the responsibilities associated with owning an animal for life
- work with the animal shelter, local food bank, schools, and veterinarians to set up a program where donations of pet food and care products are raised to help families in need
- sew cat toys and animal beds for homeless companion animals
- research organizations, scholarships, funds and other avenues of financial aid available for spay/neuter; compile list for those in need of assistance
- make pet food/treats for shelter animals; research any health benefits to homemade food/treats rather than store bought food/treats
- socialize litters of kittens and puppies and keep a “socialization journal” to allow potential adopters to track progress and see what the animal has learned or how they have progressed
- create various companion animal care fliers/posters that can be given to the public
- create and maintain a feeding schedule for sheltered animals
- hold fundraising dinner where students learn dish place settings, food preparation, budgeting, and the benefits of a vegetarian diet (See the [Help Homeless Pets](#) project.)
- sew clothes and coats for shelter animals (These could be used in a fashion show fundraiser where humans and animals wear the creations.)
- measure amount of fencing, wall board, etc. that is needed to build animal housing for use by an animal sheltering organization or animal control officers

Mathematics/Statistics

Students can

- collect data and develop a presentation or public service announcement concerning pet overpopulation and the benefits of spay/neuter
- research and collect data for organization use (e.g., spay/neuter, the number of registered animals in the community, dog bites, stray dogs, number of pets in household, etc.)
- research the cost of a license versus the fees when ticketed for compliance failure and the statistics of licensed pets who are returned to owners; create a flier to promote licensing of pets
- develop statistical charts and graphs to illustrate numbers of animals brought in to the shelter, numbers adopted, average age and stay of animals, etc.; can be used by staff and for educational purposes
- create an age appropriate feeding schedule for animals and measure appropriate amounts of food for each animal
- learn about animal cruelty laws in your state; create a community flier showing the statistical connection between those who hurt animals and those who hurt humans (See the [Combat Cruelty](#) project.)

Music (e.g., choir, marching band, jazz band, orchestra)

Students can

- coordinate or perform in a musical concert or dance as a fundraiser
- write music to accompany shelter radio jingles, videos, PowerPoint presentations, or public service announcements; facilitate the performance and recording of jingles
- sing or play music at outreach events
- write songs that teach children about proper pet care, dog bite prevention, etc., for use in humane education lessons
- create a classical music mix CD to be played in animal areas to help ease stress
- work with school football boosters to dedicate a halftime show to the presentation of adoptable companion animals
- create a music CD to be sold as fundraiser

Science (e.g., biology, chemistry, physics, earth science, ecology)

Students can

- contact local veterinarians or shelter veterinary technicians to learn about various shelter viruses and zoonotic diseases and create an informational brochure to be placed in shelter lobby
- research the ways in which people can cope with and conquer their allergies to pet dander; include medicines, homeopathics, air filtration systems, and foods; create a brochure to help allergy sufferers and for public information
- research the wildlife at a sanctuary or waterway and create a lesson for younger students about the importance of protecting habitats and endangered species (See the [Shoot to Save Wildlife](#) project.)
- create a habitat at the school, park, or shelter to attract wildlife, insects, or birds and learn the benefits of these species
- research and design a model environment with pet care items for a small animal (e.g., a guinea pig: include the proper shavings, wood block, water bottle, food dish, and interactive toys) (These can be used as displays in the community.)

- learn about the needs of various wildlife species and develop plans to enhance environments at local wildlife center or rehabilitation center
- research eco-systems and companion animal friendly plants; landscape the shelter after learning appropriate plants for climate, size, area, foot traffic, etc.
- hold a park clean up to benefit wildlife; research indigenous animals and plants
- research animal and eco-friendly products and create a directory of products for shelter and public use
- research indigenous animals and hold a walk through a park with guides telling about the animals (funds raised benefit wildlife organizations) (See the [Shoot to Save Wildlife](#) project.)

Social Studies (e.g., history, government, geography, psychology, sociology)

Students can

- write to state legislators to express opinions on bills concerning humane issues
- study state legislature voting records on humane topics and prepare leaflets so the community knows where a candidate stands on issues based on past votes
- study the origin and importance of animal related laws, such as leash laws, licensing laws, etc., and create a public service announcement
- research the vaccination and quarantine policies employed by the two locales in which there are no reported cases of rabies (Hawaii and England). Create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast. Present to animal care and control for use in developing public policy.
- study local, state, and federal laws and other nations' legislation concerning humane and anti-cruelty laws; present findings to other high school students (See the [Combat Cruelty](#) project.)
- research the history of the shelter and create a timeline to be placed in the lobby and/or create a history scrap book to be placed at events
- research animal advocates of the past (such as George Angell, Mahatma Gandhi, Leo Tolstoy, Thomas Paine, or Abraham Lincoln) and create a book of quotes to be placed in shelter lobby or at educational events
- study the connection between abuse of animals and interpersonal violence (use historical documents and court cases); write letters to the editor concerning the connection or create a public service announcement (See the [Combat Cruelty](#) project.)
- research and write about how animal treatment in the U.S. differs from other countries and create a display for local schools or the public library

Technology Education/Computer Science

Students can

- assist with web publishing for organization; help create a teen or kids page
- upload photos and descriptions of adoptable pets to websites such as petfinder.com and pets911.com
- create a MySpace or other online social networking page for the shelter
- help update databases such as license renewal
- create and produce public service announcements concerning dog bite prevention, rabies laws, spay/neuter, etc.
- create an online book for young people and post on organization's website
- create PowerPoint presentations or slide shows to be used by the shelter in public education

World Languages/English as a Second Language

Students can

- translate shelter literature, videos, humane education materials, etc., into other languages to make the literature more accessible to those for whom English is not their first language
- design fliers and posters to post in neighborhood schools and community center where Spanish (or other language) is the primary language
- research animal protection issues and organizations in different countries and explore the need for translators in those areas
- create a public awareness campaign for the local shelter written in another language or using pictures for non-readers
- participate in mobile spay/neuter clinic as a translator
- present seminars on humane education (e.g., spay/neuter) to non-English speakers

***A special thank you goes out to all of the humane educators who contributed to this list. ***

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