

Kids in Action Guide

“Even the smallest person can make a big change.”

—Eleanor Ann, (nationally recognized volunteer, age 8)

BY
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WITH
Amanda, age 8
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This booklet will help you, a young person, make a change in your world. It is like a road map you can follow to help make your idea come true. We know that kids have great ideas and want to make the world a better place. Let's get started!

Here is the road you will be following. The rest of the booklet will tell you what to do at each step.



1

YOU
You are starting the change.
What you like to do and what change you want to make.



YOUR TEAM

Adults, friends, and community leaders.

2



THE COMMUNITY NEED

How you can help.

3

4



YOUR IDEA

Time to make a decision!

8

CELEBRATE!



Tell people about what you did and ask them to join you in your next project!



YOUR PLAN

All the things you need to do.

5



YOU ARE READY!

Making it happen.

6

7

YOU DID IT! HOW DID IT GO?



What went well and what would you change next time?



1

YOU

Do you want to do something to make a difference? Whether it is a new project idea, joining something that is already being done or something else, this booklet can help.

If you want to change the world the best place to start is in your own school, your neighborhood or your city.

It is **VERY** important to make sure you find something that is *really* needed and a job that you can *really do*.

THEN talk it over with an adult: a parent, a teacher, a counselor or another older person who can help you. It is much easier to get things done with the help of others and adults you trust are perfect partners.

Think about what you like. Who or what do you want to help?

*Need some
inspiration?
Flip to the next
page for
some ideas.*

What do you like to do?

Now think about what you like to do.

Maybe you like to:

- Swim, play soccer, and other sports
- Dance, practice gymnastics, or karate
- Garden, help the earth, birds and animals
- Learn about science, math
- Read, tell stories

You can use just about anything you like to do to make your world better.

How do you want to help?

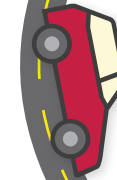
There are many ways to make a change!

For example:









- Talk to as many people as you can, or create and display posters, to share what you think needs to change and why
- Spend time at the place or with the people you want to help
- Start a club with your friends and have an adult help you write letters to a newspaper or a community leader about what you want to change
- Collect money and give it to the organization you want to help

Here are some other ideas you can add to your own:

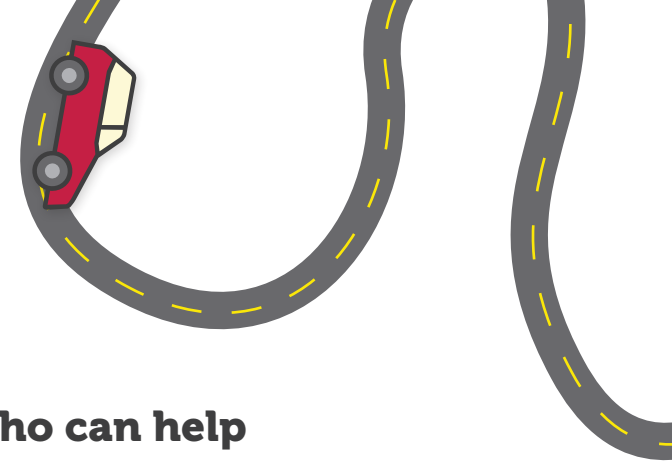
- Helping pets who are abused or homeless
- Protecting the earth by saving water or electricity, recycling, planting trees or gardens
- Helping people to get better at reading, math, or something else
- Caring for neighbors who don't have a home by collecting food or clothing for them
- Visiting elderly people and drawing pictures or playing games together
- Making "Welcome Home" posters and goodie bags for soldiers



Here are some examples of how you might put your idea together.

I am interested in:	I like to:	Project Idea
 People's Health	Teach	Host a story hour at a library, community center, or bookstore to read books to younger children about staying healthy.
 The environment	Organize	Have the different grades in your school be responsible for things like recycling paper, saving water and electricity, and re-using things instead of throwing them away.
 Protecting animals	Share information	Create messages about an endangered species and ask an adult to share them on their Facebook and Twitter. Organize a one day camp to teach others about pet care.
 Outdoor places to play	Draw	Have a poster show for kids to give ideas for new ways to use open spaces in your community. Hang the posters in a public place and invite local leaders to meet with the children to discuss what ideas could be done with the space.
 Education	Play Soccer	Organize a contest between your soccer team and another team to see which team can improve their grades more. Help your team members in subjects that you are good at, and ask others to help you before or after practice.
 Safety	Act	Put on a play to teach kids about not talking to strangers.
 Hunger	Garden	Grow a kid garden and donate the vegetables to food pantries.
 Current events	Be around people	Interview family members, friends and neighbors about things going on in your school or your community. With their permission, write a story for a neighborhood or school newspaper about what you find out.

YOUR TEAM



Adults

Let's face it: you are not old enough to drive or to do many things without an adult's help or permission.

You will need to get your parent's or guardian's OK to do what you want to do. Start by explaining why you want to do your project and ask them if they are willing to support you from start to finish. Ask them questions, get their advice, listen to their ideas – but also help adults understand that this is YOUR project and they cannot take over!

Your friends

Let other children know about your idea and invite them to help you.

Do you have brothers, sisters, and cousins that can be on your team?

What about the other kids in your sports league or after-school class?

Of course you'll want to ask your friends to help on your project. Think about classmates you are not close friends with; inviting them to help you is a good way to get to know them better and have a stronger team.

Other adults who can help

There are two important groups of people who can help you: **reporters** and **people who make decisions in your community**.

The job of **reporters** in TV, radio, newspapers, and websites is to tell people what is going on around them. They can help you get the word out about your project.

Leaders who make decisions (the mayor, local officials, your school principal, a member of congress, and others) can support you by giving money, recruiting volunteers, or even changing laws to make the difference you are looking for.

How can you get in touch with reporters and community leaders?

- Think about the shows you watch or the things you read.
- Think about who makes decisions in your school, your city, and your state.
- Ask an adult to help you contact those reporters and leaders
- Call them and tell them about what you are planning to do. Invite them to visit your project, take pictures, and interview you and the other kids who are working with you. Get permission from an adult before you do this.

THE COMMUNITY NEED



It is important to make sure that what you want to do is something your community needs and wants. Find out if someone is already doing your idea too...you may be able to join them.

Also, call or visit the organization you want to work with and ask to speak to the director or manager. Find out what they need and what you are thinking about doing for them. Make sure that whoever you are planning on helping, really **NEEDS** and **WANTS YOUR HELP**. Don't get upset if someone says "no". Just find someone else you can help.

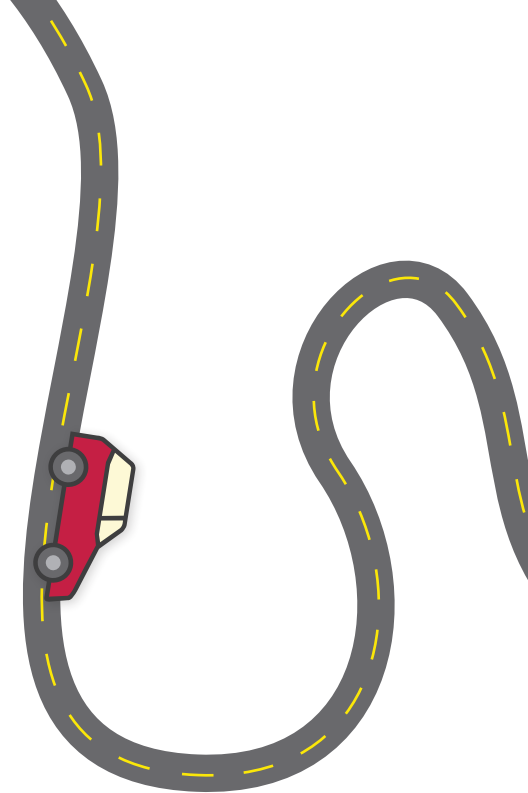
Name of person _____

Organization _____

Phone number _____

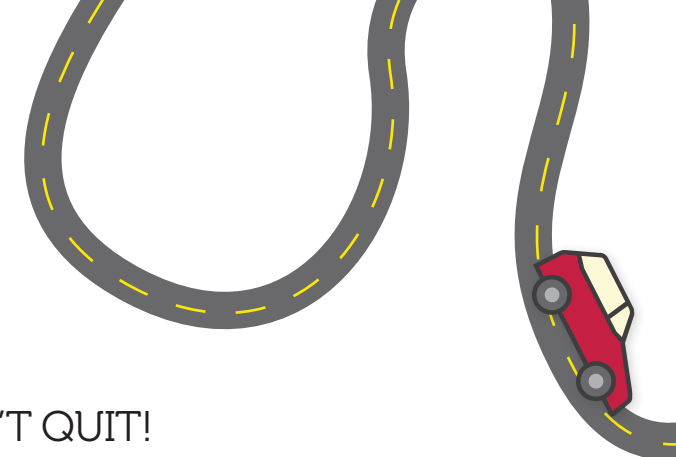
When can you meet or talk with them? _____

How can you help them? _____



4

YOUR IDEA



Once you decide you are going to do something to help others, **DON'T QUIT!**

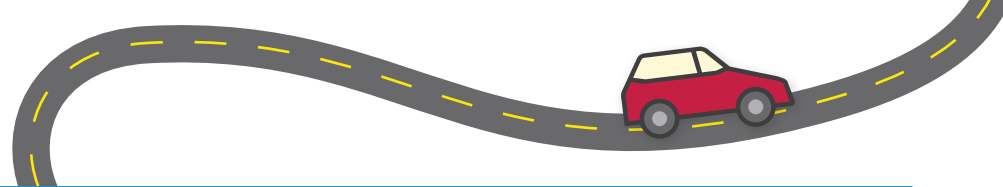
You have made a commitment or a promise to your idea. You may need to change things as you go along and that is OK. But don't give up and finish what you start!

Make sure you are not doing too many things. You have to think about school, sports, what your family needs you to do, and other activities you are involved in. Write down what you have to do, like go to school. Write down what you want to do, like sports. Then decide when you have time to do your community project. Here is an example:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8am – 12pm	School (11:30-12:00 recess)	School (11:30-12:00 recess)	School (11:30-12:00 recess)	School (11:30-12:00 recess)	School (11:30-12:00 recess)	Art class	
12pm – 3pm	school and homework	school and homework	school and homework	school and homework	school and homework		
3pm – 5pm	My turn to walk the dog	My community project		My community project			Soccer games
5pm – 8pm			soccer practice				

In the example above, the kid found time to do the project on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the afternoon, and also during recess on Monday mornings.

Now it's your turn!



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8am – 12pm							
12pm – 3pm							
3pm – 5pm							
5pm – 8pm							

When do you have the time to do your community project? _____

Can you combine any of the things you have to do and want to do? For example, could you make cards and take them to a nursing home as part of a school project for Grandparents' Day or Veteran's Day?

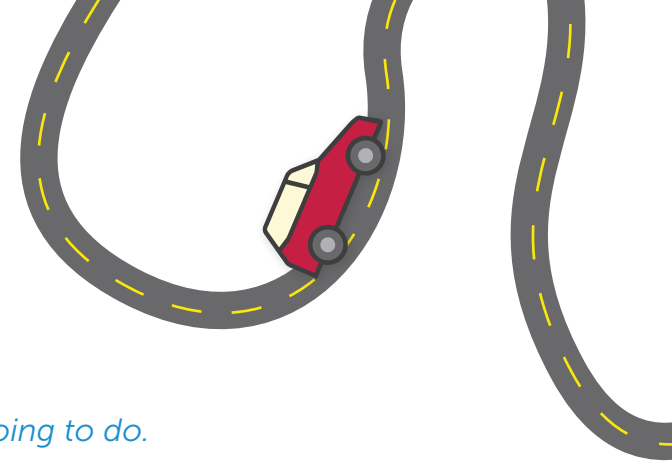
After you act as a detective to see if you can do your project, it's time to answer some questions and make decisions. Write down your answers and go over them with the adult that is helping you.

- Do I do my own thing or should I join a project that is already happening? _____
- Who or what do I want to help? _____
- Do they need the project I'm thinking about? _____
- Who can I invite to do this with me? It is more fun to do the project with others and you get a lot more done too! Think about asking people you might not normally talk to, or people who are different from you.

- You decided on a project! Now give it a name! _____

OK! SO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO...NOW WHAT?

YOUR PLAN

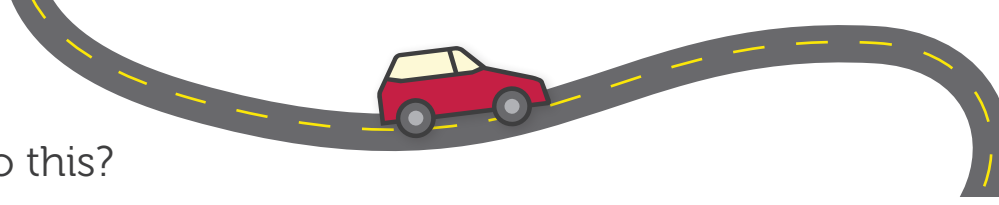


What is your project? *Describe it so other people will understand what you are going to do.*

Who will help you?

For example:

Name	Phone	When they can help	What they are going to do
Joseph (Kim's dad)	555-1212	Mondays 6 to 7 pm	Drive us to food pantry in his van
Ms. Campbell	555-1213	At the project	Take pictures
My mom		All the time	Help me call people and places
Rob, Ayana and Alex	We meet at school	All the time	Post flyers in the neighborhood
Miguel and the other kids in my soccer team	We meet at soccer practice	When we do our project	Help at the food pantry



When are you going to do this?

Is there a special community day? Remember that **Global Youth Service Day** is celebrated every year in April in more than 100 countries! Imagine millions of kids around the world making a difference in their communities at the same time! **Global Youth Service Day** is a great event to let the world know about your project because news reporters and community leaders are paying attention! Check it out at www.GYSD.org. You will find lots of ideas and things you can use.

Plan when you will do each part you need for your project. This is called a **Timeline**.

What do you have to do 3 months before?

What do you have to do 2 months before?

What do you have to do 1 month before?

What do you do the week before?

What do you do the night before?

What do you do the day of your project?

Where are you going to do this?



Think lots of people, think safety, think photos! Your location has to be easy to get to and be safe for everyone.

What do you need? This is the big one...

Make a list of things and money you need for your project. Think of **every** part of your project. Remember to take a comb, brush, and wipes to clean up...It's okay to look like you are working but you want to look good in the pictures too!

Money-how much do things cost: copies, materials, phone calls, gas for the adult driving you around. This is called a **Budget**.

[Don't forget water, food, and a camera. Also, bring trash bags and anything you need to clean up]

Here are some examples:

Item	How many?	Cost each	Total	Who can help us pay for this?
Soil, seeds	5 bags	\$10	\$50	Check out YSA grants! (www.ysa.org/grants)
Blank books	12	\$3	\$36	Ask store manager if they can donate
Pencils	12	\$0.50	\$6	Ask the store manager if they can give us the pencils
Flyers	50	\$0.35	\$17.50	The principal at our school said we can make the copies at school and not have to pay for them
Food	1 big bag of fruit	\$6.00	\$6.00	Check out YSA grants! (www.ysa.org/grants)



6

YOU ARE READY!

Go through your plans, check you have everything, and make your project happen!

Do your best, take lots of pictures and... have FUN as you help others!

7

YOU DID IT! HOW DID IT GO?

When your project is over, get together with your friends to talk about:

- What do you think about the difference you made?
- What did the people you helped think about your project?
- What was great about your project? What was not so great?
- Did you forget to do something or will you do something differently next time?
- Who will send Thank You cards to the people that helped?
- Where will you send or post the photos you took during the project?
- How will you let other kids, neighbors and community leaders know about the change you made?
- VERY IMPORTANT! How will you keep making a difference after this project?



8

CELEBRATE!



You worked hard to help your community and you deserve to celebrate with your friends and the adults who helped you!

You can give out stickers or thank you cards to your team members, get together for a day of sports and games, and begin to plan your next project.

Congratulations! You and your friends made a big change!

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