

Service Project Ideas
By Dave Kelly, *America's Student Leadership Trainer*

DaveKelly@GonzoSpeaks.com
www.DaveGonzoKelly.com
770-552-6592

Thank you for asking for service project ideas! I love talking about service so this is fun for me. Here are some ideas that I like:

1) Doggie Tug Toys: I mentioned these in the group chat and I posted a how-to video. A great way to use old t-shirts, which everyone has at home. Just in case, though here is the link to the video <https://youtu.be/olHFu5QETxE>, I also attached pdf instructions.

2) Also for shelter animals is a project collecting empty toilet paper and paper towel rolls. And another video to explain it: <https://youtu.be/Vd4IT18jFIU>

3) Virtual story reading is an opportunity right now. Encourage your students to tape themselves reading children's stories and then share those videos and/or You Tube links with kids in hospitals or through local elementary schools. Here is one I did: <https://youtu.be/dNubEneug>. I have researched the copyright concerns that people may have and I found an article by the Public Policy Director of the American Library Association and her opinion is that this type of activity, with proper attribution to the author, is fair use if there is no charge for the storytime.

4) Flat Stanleys: This is a project that supports military people. I have permission from the author and publisher to use 4 of the characters (attached) to support military service people. Students can color these (also great for those students with kids) and then you can give them to a local veteran's hospital, USO at the airport, National Guard post, or send them to <http://www.OperationGratitude.com> and they will distribute them with care packages they send overseas. Email me if you would like the templates. Here is a link to some sample pictures <https://davegonzokelly.com/wp-content/uploads/Flat-Stanley-and-Info-Slides.pptx>

5) I have a couple of projects for senior citizens, things that can be given to nursing homes, Meals on Wheels, senior centers, etc. But, you may want to check-in to make sure you have a place to donate them right now since they may be skittish taking in outside items given that the virus affects seniors more than others.

First, utensil rolls. These can also be donated to homeless shelters, food programs, food banks, etc. I buy the supplies at Sam's Club. I get a large pack of utensils (120 each of plastic forks, spoons, and knives, cost \$10-12 for the 360 piece pack) and then a pack of napkins (usually 110 in a pack, 6 packs in the sleeve, cost \$8-10 for 660 napkins). We create utensil roll-ups just like restaurants use and then tie them together with a nice bow made from yarn or ribbon. I like to use theme colors, like red around Valentine's Day or tie it into something local, such as one time I was at a school near Pittsburgh and we did these and tied them with black and gold yarn (Steeler's colors) and gave them to the food bank.

Another project for seniors that I love is Hugging Hands. Take a piece of construction paper, fold it in half, then trace your hand. Cut out the hand (which will give you two hands since the paper was folded), hole punch each hand, cut a length of yarn equal to your wingspan and put the yarn through the hole and tie a knot on the back side to hold it in place. **DO NOT TIE IT IN A LOOP!** (I have seen students do that). You can write a positive message and put your name and school on it, or just leave the paper blank. Attach the "Hugging Hands Poem" (template attached to this email) that explains that these are hugging hands sending a hug from the student to the senior. Here is a link to a sample to give you an idea of what they look like. I have some at home still to be donated, so let me know if you want some other samples and I will take pictures and send them to you. <https://thepartyevent.wordpress.com/2012/02/05/valentines-crafts-for-kids-a-long-distance-hug-a-beautiful-present-for-someone-special-diy/>

6) Here are a couple for kids. Again, make sure the school, children's hospital, or day care will accept the donation before doing the projects. My all-time favorite is to make boo-boo bunnies from wash cloths. You fold the wash cloth in such a way to make it look like a bunny with ears and then decorate it with googly eyes, a little puff ball nose, and a larger puff ball tail. Then thread a ribbon through it and attach the bunny card (full instructions and card attached).

Another project for kids is caterpillar pencils. You will need some #2 pencils, pipe cleaners, craft glue, and googly eyes. Take the pencil and wrap a pipe cleaner around it, finishing near the eraser. Glue two eyes on at the top and it is a fun school supply for young kids.

I hope that helps you get started! Please let me know if you need any other service ideas - I have lots! These can all be done remotely, but let me know if you need some hands-on projects when you get back to campus. Have fun and stay safe!