

Support to Community Helpers

make cards for servicemen and women

make a lunch or dinner for local firefighters or police officers

placed American flags on veteran graves for veteran's day

A 'simple' one that Daisies or young Brownies (or anyone!) can do during part of a meeting or before a meeting officially starts is to color pictures from <http://www.colorasmile.org>. You can download coloring sheets from their site or use your own... mail them in and they turn around and mail the pictures out to people they're aware of who can 'use a smile' such as senior citizens and other recipients.

we collect quarters at each meeting(part of our dues) in a little habitat for humanity bank to donate at the end of the year

Teddy bear drive at local roller skating rink... part of admission price is a new teddy bear to be given to local police and fire stations

Adopt a fire station or police station (take them treats monthly or bimonthly or for the holidays)

Food Drive/Feed the Hungry

volunteer to serve at a soup kitchen

making tray favors for meals on wheels

food drive for thanksgiving

gleaned fields and orchards for Society of St. Andrews (SoSA)

Ask each girl to bring one item with them to each meeting (if they can) for a certain number of weeks. Then, when you are done, ask a representative from a local food pantry (or if you meet at a church they may have a pantry) to come so the girls can give it themselves. I did this last year with my Daisy troop of 12 girls. We were able to give over 100 items. A rep. from the Salvation Army came and it went great!

delivering meals to the elderly (we made tray favors i.e. napkin rings and decorated brown paper bags for the sandwiches then delivered them to addresses given to us by our local meals on wheels office),

Food pantries are in need of donations all year long but their needs usually get publicized the most at this time of year. If you don't think you can fit something in for the upcoming holiday season & would still like to tie it in with a holiday, consider doing some sort of 'Give From the Heart' or "Giving With Love' theme around Valentine's Day or something similar around another spring or summer holiday on the calendar.

Animal Shelters

drive to collect animal/pet things to donate to a local animal shelter too. They LOVE to receive kitty litter, cat/dog food, toys, newspapers, etc.

made dog biscuits for our local animal shelter

Birthday Boxes

'Birthday-in-a-Box' service projects can be done for people of different ages. Troops tend to make them for kids receiving service from family shelters or food pantries and also for low-income senior centers. It's quite a concept for young Girl Scouts to realize that some people don't have a fun birthday celebration and they usually love doing this service project.

Our Council has some guidelines for this project and I've also kept note of what other troops have told me they've done:

Some troop make Birthday Boxes that will provide for 6-8 people, others say they aim for 12 people. Troops can vote on a favorite theme (like a Barbie or Spiderman party, etc) and go with that or make something more generic. If a troop does more than one Birthday Box, maybe patrols could each choose a theme and gather all the necessary supplies for each theme.

Items a troop might include in a Birthday Box, depending on their budget and ideas for a good party:

Box of cake mix (Some use the type that comes w/pan & frosting and just needs water added)
Disposable cake pan (if not using a box cake that comes with it's own pan)
Can of frosting
Decorative sprinkles
Tube of icing to write birthday name on cake with
Birthday candles
Matches (?)
Balloons
Crepe paper streamers
Noisemakers or similar party toys
Paper tablecloth
Party hats
Loot bags
Loot to put in loot bags!
Container of Kool-Aid or a package of 10 juice boxes
Paper goods (plates, cups, napkins, forks, etc)
Candy
Party games such as pin-the-tail on the donkey (might include a new bandanna w/that game)
Maybe print rules for 2-3 simple party games that need no special equipment (like Fruit Basket, etc)
Small unwrapped birthday gifts such as Beanie baby, new book

Tissue paper or gift wrap

Have the girls decorate a shoebox (or similar) and make a birthday card. The girls can wrap the box with bright birthday paper. (wrap the lid separately) A list of contents attached to the outside of the box would be very helpful. Take the boxes to a food pantry, family crisis shelter, senior center. If the troop has decided to make a box for a particular gender or age range (maybe for a girl their age, etc), note on the outside of the box those details. Also note how many people the party box can serve. (most party good supplies are sold in sets of 8)

For a senior citizen Birthday-in-a-Box, obviously you can probably leave out the pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey game. :) Those boxes might include the cake supplies, paper goods, streamers, and a small gift.

Some troops ask families to donate various supplies, others decide on a theme and use troop funds to shop for the supplies together. Some troops ask families for cash donations especially for this project. One troop leader has said her troop asks families to donate the amount of money that a girl would've paid for a particular field trip that troop funds are actually being used for. Some troops use a troop Christmas party as an occasion to collect donated unwrapped gifts to use in these boxes.

Children's/Women's Shelters

collect toys and clothes for women's shelter

coloring packets or activity box type things. (crayons, paper, etc.)

Recycle some film canisters into mini beading kits. Put some beads & gimp lace into a film canister & give some to family shelters, children's hospitals (those kids get bored too), etc. (not meant for small children!!)

a neat thing i saw on the net which i would like to try in the future was the project linus, where you make blankets or quilts and donate them(i can't remember if it's to sick children or homeless)

GREAT list of suggested items for Women/Family shelter donations:

<http://www.womensshelter.org/Donate.htm>

Last year we made valentine boxes and gave them to a local homeless shelter for the children there. We included a heart lollipop made into a flower, a pack of little lifesavers made into a bee, a pencil, small notepad, stickers, they laced a little heart pouch together (think back to lacing cards when we were little, just put two hearts together punched holes around except at the top and then tied a little handle at the top and decorated these and then put little heart chocolate foiled covered candy in there, and we put a coupon from Burger King in for a free hamburger that Burger King donated to us). These were fun for the girls to make. One idea I have done for my girls where I know they have to learn to do service projects for other people, but sometimes I think this age it is hard for them to do these things (especially the candy, how tempting is that) and then give them away, so what my policy usually is with things like this is that each girl makes up 2 or 3

items they get to keep one and give the other(s) away. With the valentine boxes they each made three of the flowers, bee, and heart and then they got to pick which they wanted for their boxes and we added the other things to theirs as well! Then we set to work as a group and made the boxes for the shelter. We gave 20 valentine boxes to the shelter! We had 8 girls (equals 16) and then my co and I each made up two boxes! We were really proud of this and it was well received at the shelter. It was relatively inexpensive too. I purchased the lollipops, lifesavers, pencils, notepads, stickers and chocolate candy at the Dollar Store (\$10-12 at most) and the other things were donated like the Burger King coupons and we got the 2-piece chicken boxes from KFC donated and then the rest was basically troop things we already had tissue paper to line the inside of boxes, construction paper to make the valentines, cardboard for the hearts and yarn for them too, so I thought that's relatively inexpensive so that's only about 30-40 cents a piece for each one.

Another idea we are looking at right now is donating toiletry items and things like toothbrushes and stuff to a local women's shelter as many of these women flee in the middle of the night with only the clothes on their backs and nothing more. There are a lot of simple things the girls can do to help in the community.

Offer to have the girls spend an hour w/ the kids in a daycare or Headstart--the little ones LOVE to play w/older kids.

One of the troops in our SU just organized a "baby shower" for a home for unwed mothers. (Some mixed feelings on this, but not the place for it.) Several troops supported it including mine. We did not take money from troop funds. In the monthly newsletter and our troop web page I asked parents to give their daughters some "jobs" so they could earn a few bucks towards buying something for the project. When all was said and totaled, it was \$261.00 from our troop alone.

Homeless

Tooth care for homeless (toothpaste toothbrush disposable cup wrapped up in a cellophane baggie--you can get them at odd/big lots for seasonal goodie bags)

Collection Projects

Collection projects are good for younger Scouts who are still trying to grasp the idea of 'service.' They can see their collection of items grow & often deliver the items in person. They can collect:

books,
tabs for Ronald McDonald's Houses, We have had an ongoing service project going where we collect soda tabs for the Ronald McDonald House in Hershey. We are going to do this until next year and then we are going to deliver them to the house and have a tour etc. My all first grade troop decided this last year as a 3-yr endeavor to see just how many pounds of tabs we can collect! They are doing very well with this!!!

brand new socks/underwear/mittens for homeless or shelter families (none of us would want used items in this category!),
canned goods for food pantries,
pet supplies/food for animal shelters,
gently-used coats for shelters/homeless,
new clothes/books/toys to a foster children's group,
babycare items for a foster parenting organization (foster parents might get a call in the middle of the night asking them to take in a baby with little or no supplies or baby furniture on hand & they'll need to gather some quickly)
*school supplies to fill some backpacks for kids who need it
*items for Salvation Army or goodwill
*baby items for local pregnancy crisis center
*books/toys for headstart
*mittens and caps for less fortunate

Half Price Bookstores have something on their site at <http://www.halfpricebooks.com> that tells you how to get involved with them in collecting books for children's hospitals. Most kids love books and also love the idea of collecting them and making them available for hospitalized children to use to fill up their time. If you don't have a Half Price Books in your area... borrow the idea anyway for your own local hospital or some other similar facility. :)

The girls did a book drive last year and donated the books to the local school libraries.

Hospitals/Children's Illness

Collect baby blankets for local hospital
Make get well cards for Children's Hospital

Help out a childrens charity ie. www.makeachildsmile.org (they deal with very sick children who have life threatening illnesses)the girls can stuff animals, tie quilts, send cards and letters.

Adopt a childrens unit of a hospital. Your premeeting activies that you have the girls do would be great to send to the hospital to cheer up the kids. They love cheerful pictures.

Also, here is another one someone sent me for an organization that collects cards for children with life threatening illnesses:
<http://www.keikicards.org/>

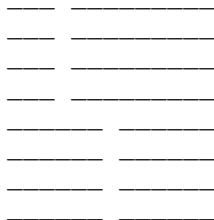
Senior Centers

singing in a rest home

making cards for rest home residents

delivery of meals for elderly

Another thing we did around Memorial Day was made flags out of popsicle sticks. They painted the popsicles (we used the full-sized ones and the mini ones) to look like this



If that can give you some idea?? Four small ones were painted blue. Two small ones were white and two small ones were red. The large ones six were painted white and six red. I think that's right, these were laid out on a graph I had made with paper showing them where to glue them to make them look like a flag. This probably sounds more complicated than it is. You just lay the sticks out to form a flag. Anyway, they first glued their paper to a piece of cardboard and then glued the sticks on top of that. I then had printed off paper strips that said Happy Memorial Day!!!! and From Brownie Troop #1677 in red, white, and blue letters. We put a magnetic strip at the top and the bottom. Then we donated them to the Senior Center. The people there really liked these. Oh, forgot we also attached gold sequin stars in the blue field!

We color and send holiday pictures to a local nursing home and are going to deliver our valentines.

we color pictures for every major holiday and send them to our local nursinghome

made centerpieces for a nursing home

They visit the nursing home on a regular basis.

Christmas caroling at a local nursing home and/or deliver small crafts to the residents

Adopt an older person as a "grandma or grandpa" send them cards, bake cookies for them, spend time w/them;

Another thing I was thinking was to take the girls to a Senior Center to play bingo with them.

We are also going to put on a Fashion show/Caroling at a Elder Care Home in December.

Spread the News about Girl Scouts

Gift baskets to the first female baby born on JGL's birthday or GS birthday -- sounds like they make up a typical baby shower basket with all girlie things (one had even found a bib or had someone make a bib that said When I Grow Up I'm Going to be a GS) and then they give it to the hospital to give to that family. Some had even gotten responses back from the family and were going to send a 1st birthday card, etc.

donated a baby basket to the first baby girl born on March 12, GS birthday

Christmas

we collected gifts and adopted a salvation army christmas angel

One troop sponsored a Christmas Cards 2000 last year and we are doing it again this year. GS from all over our SU made cards that were given to the local VA hospital. Although they only wanted 2,000, we went WAY over that expectation. My troop of Daisies last year made 50 cards that we contributed. We did another 50 that we gave to a nursing home in our city.

Community Beautification

we plant spring flowers and fall bulbs in front of our school.

pick up trash at school or park (we adopted our school and local park and pick up trash 1x a month)

-Camp caring day--Ranger came up with a project for the girls (cleaning and beautifying the main cabin at camp)

decorate the bush in front of our school

Planting flowers (we did it at a local fire station)

Plant trees at a school or church.