



Student-Led Best Practices

Submitted by Bonner Congress Representatives

Name of Best Practice:

Day of Service

College/University Name and Contact Information:

Oberlin College

Oberlin College Center for Service and Learning

68 S. Professor Street, Oberlin, OH 44074

Name of Congress Representative(s) Preparing Report:

Anthony Miller

Background:

The campus-wide Day of Service, coordinated by various service organizations in the Oberlin College Center for Service and Learning, is held at the beginning of the school year prior to the start of classes. This event provides a pivotal opportunity for students across campus to participate together in a large-scale service opportunity, catalyzing future interest and forging relationships across individuals and organizations.

What Makes This Unique:

The Day of Service is a unique practice because it serves as community building activity for all students at Oberlin. It is open to all students regardless of major or any previous involvement in community service work at Oberlin College. Bonner Scholars and members of other service groups of campus take the initiative to plan the event.

How it Works:

- 1. Site Selection:** Bonner students actively seek out service sites that expose students to the special needs and interests of the community. They also serve as group leaders who educate participants about the site they will be working at, and they coordinate the work that is done by these participants to ensure that everyone is having fun and that the service they are doing is meaningful.
- 2. Advertise:** The Day of Service is advertised around campus using posters, emails, and is included in the first-year orientation schedule.

In addition, fall sports teams schedule their practices to allow athletes to participate.

- 3. Serve:** Participants are told to meet at a central location on campus at a particular time. Once there, they are split up into groups led by Bonner Scholars and leaders of other service groups on campus. They are given t-shirts and lunches, and head to their separate service sites, by foot or bus. On the way participants are informed about the site they will be working at, the service they will be doing, and how it ties into the special needs of the area. Participants serve for about 3 to 5 hours, and then return to campus.

Recommendations:

Build a coalition between the Bonner Program and other major student-led groups on campus in order to plan and implement a campus-wide service day. For example, engage the Greeks, ethnic centers, and student government.

For help on coalition-building, see the Civic Engagement Curriculum module "Building Coalitions":

http://www.bonner.org/resources/modules/modules_pdf/BonCurBldgCoalitions.pdf

Supplementary Documents:

Contact the Bonner Foundation (Ariane Hoy – ahoy@bonner.org) to get curriculum modules and help on service event planning.

Also consult Civic Engagement Curriculum modules like "Service-Based Reflection" and "Games, Games, Games" to help with programming for the day.