



On Your Mark, Get Set, Go:

Utah Youth Service Marathon selects 26 projects for State-wide youth-led effort

Second graders in Hurricane are making blankets for children who are in long term care at Dixie Regional Medical Center. 4-H youth will stock the Central Utah Food Share. In Logan, Utah State University students are developing a public awareness campaign on issues of domestic violence and volunteering at a women's shelter. Middle schoolers in Duchesne are restoring a 1906 cemetery and learning about the history of their town through those who are buried there. Seniors in West Valley City are embarking on a school year of service and social projects planned for them by Granger High students. In Salt Lake City, Westminster College students are befriending Sudanese refugees and developing a series of educational and political events to highlight the genocide in Darfur.

These are just a sampling of the 26 (think: Marathon miles) projects, starting now and culminating on April 25, 2009 – Global Youth Service Day – All part of the largest youth service initiative in Utah history: The Utah Youth Service Marathon.

"It's both humbling and energizing to see so many Utah youth fired up about service," says Judy Zone, Executive Director of YouthLINC, a local and international youth service program which is the lead partner for the UYSM. Projects were selected in early November by a committee of all UYSM partners, an impressive group of Utah's most effective youth service advocates: Utah State Office of Education, Utah Commission on Volunteers, Utah Campus Compact, Association of Youth Councils, Utah Federation for Youth, and the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Center for Community of Caring.

"We are excited to partner to provide more opportunities for youth to develop citizenship and leadership," says Stan Guy, Director of the Association of Youth Councils in Utah. All partners will promote the projects through an on-going Call for Volunteers to their distribution lists and on the web site www.servicemarathon.org

"We looked at each project submitted in light of the need met, the number of young people involved and the learning that they would do as part of the project," says Emily Brown, UYSM Chair. Thanks to generous corporate and community sponsors, each accepted project receives up to \$1000 towards its expenses. "In a tough economy, community needs increase," says Brown. "The funding will allow youth and their mentors State-wide to do so much more."

Some of the other needs addressed through the UYSM in other communities: Health and fitness at Mountain View Elementary on Salt Lake's west side, beautification and community integration of a skate board park in St. George, needs of newborns and preemies in Price, construction projects on the Navajo Reservation near Bluff, recycling at Wasatch H.S. and in Heber, early childhood reading in Ogden.

Another key element for a project's selection into the UYSM was partnership with community organizations. As a result, well over 100 organizations are partnering with thousands of Utah youth – elementary through graduate school -- this school year to accomplish impactful service projects State-wide.

For more information about the Utah Youth Service Marathon, contact Emily Brown emily@youthlinc.org 801-652-4844 or visit www.servicemarathon.org

[A complete list of project summaries and contact info for project leaders is available.](#)