Dwight Hall at Yale is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that was founded by undergraduates in 1886 and has operated continuously since then as a student-led entity. As the Center for Public Service and Social Justice, Dwight Hall reflects a diverse Yale student body and a strong history of social justice work in New Haven and beyond. Dwight Hall at Yale is an independent, nonsectarian umbrella organization, and the largest campus-based student-run service organization in the country.

Dwight Hall recognizes that long-term solutions to the world’s problems come from focusing on developing passionate, innovative leaders. Dwight Hall exists as a place to cultivate student leaders invested in ethical productivity, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Dwight Hall promotes a culture of action and reflection that encourages student leaders to share best practices, learn from successful leaders, and collaborate on solving societal challenges.

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ESTABLISHING YOUR WHY

Participating in a Day of Service is an opportunity for individuals and groups to establish relationships with the local community, build on the strengths of the community, expose volunteers to opportunities to listen, strengthen the volunteers’ awareness of organizations’ mission’s, and is a practice of selfless giving. Through service, one can engage in small acts of generosity with may lead to a continual shift toward a mindset of inspired contribution. Service is a gift each person can give to the world.

“In that sense, service doesn’t start when we have something to give – it blossoms naturally when we have nothing left to take. And that is a powerful place to be.”

Realizing the connections of one’s work, individuals and groups come together to make a difference that benefit us all. It is through partnerships and collaborative efforts that communities build trust and that change can be experienced. Change in the work we do, the communities we serve, and change in the people we work alongside. Through service, positive, lasting change can be made.

Everyone possesses talents that have made, can make and will continue to make a difference; no matter how big or small ones’ role may seem at the time. Through service, participants contribute their all to the promise of a better community and making a difference.

“Privilege can affect how volunteers relate to one another and to the clients they serve.”

Prior to serving, one should be aware of their own privileges and consider how those experiences might impact their relationship with those they may be serving. As a Yale student or staff member, it is important to recognize your privilege. Dwight Hall developed New Haven Is Not Our Playground, a training which provides an introduction to equity-centered engagement, and provides useful tools for engaging with the local communities outside of Yale, a historical representation of New Haven, and encourages exploration and reflection on privilege, power and social capital. Dwight Hall provides this training upon request.

Being asked to identify our own privileges compared to others can often be uncomfortable. Without acknowledging that privilege exists, we’re less likely to identify how unequal access to rights and rewards affects our relationships with members of the communities we serve.

“When you serve, you discover that often the most important things you have to offer are not things at all.”

Determining the “why” is an important step is assessing intent vs impact. Participating in or facilitating a Day of Service is a springboard toward continued service activity.
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Things all Yale students should know before doing work in New Haven

1. Learn – But do not expect to be taught.

2. Listen – With the intent of learning, not responding.

3. Ask why – Be critical of your action and the space you take.

4. Ally is a verb – Not a badge of honor. It works in the present.

5. Understand that you have power and know when to use it.

6. Take an asset-based approach – value local knowledge and experience.

7. Know that Yale is a center of knowledge, not the center of knowledge.

8. Own impact – Hold yourself accountable, welcome criticism.

9. Change – Be your own change.

10. Consider Yale’s role – in constructing and supporting systems create and perpetuate inequality.

Dwight Hall
Center for Public Service and Social Justice
founded by undergraduates in 1886

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A Day of Service takes a significant amount of planning and coordination to ensure it runs smoothly. Coordinators should understand the different elements of running a successful day and prepare themselves for all the work involved. We estimate roughly ten weeks of planning with a significant amount of work each week.

Additionally, Coordinators should prepare for an exhaustive day. Below is a rough timeline of key elements for a great day.

**Timeline for the Day**

- **8:00 am**: Coordinators convene to begin set-up
- **8:30 am**: Food is picked up and organized at headquarters
- **9:00 am**: Registration begins and participants pack bag lunches
- **10:00 am**: Volunteers arrive at host sites
- **2:00 pm**: Volunteers conclude service
OUTREACH TO NONPROFITS

The mark of a good Day of Service is in the projects volunteers can experience. Dwight Hall believes in equity-centered community engagement, and to be truly equity-centered Coordinators must value the relationships that are being built with local partners. As you begin to reach out to area partners, remember to value the relationships that are being formed. Often, Dwight Hall is more than willing to be the bridge between Yale folks and community partners, but Coordinators should be prepared to engage with community partners to plan your day of service.

Timeline

1. The initial invitation email for potential service partners should be sent six to seven weeks in advance of the scheduled event.
2. The initial follow-up email for potential service partners should be sent five to six weeks prior to the event if no response has been received.
3. The 2nd follow-up email, if needed, for potential service partners should be sent three weeks prior to the event if no response has been received.
4. Call potential service partners two weeks prior to the event if no response has been received.
5. Final confirmation of sites - Friday of the week preceding the event (8 days in advance). Twelve sites are usually sufficient, depending on the number of volunteers

Information required from partner sites upon confirmation of Day of Service participation

1. What is the project?
2. How many volunteers can the site/project accommodate? (minimum and maximum)
3. Where is project located? (address)
4. Contact person and contact information? Will they be available on the day of service?
SAMPLE INVITATION EMAIL FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Greetings,

On behalf of <Dwight Hall at Yale>, I hope you’re having a wonderful day! We admire <name of organization> for your work with <specific project/project/cause/population>. The work you are doing is something we would be thrilled to be a part of.

We are hosting a Day of Service on <date> from <duration start> until <duration end> and we’d like to volunteer at your organization.

Participating in a Day of Service is an opportunity for individuals and groups to establish relationships with the local community and is a practice of selfless giving. Service is a gift each person can give to the world.

<Volunteers/students> have a variety skills and experience that we think can directly benefit your organization, and we would love to be of service!

We would love to speak with you further to discuss the opportunity in your organization. Working with your organization would be amazing, and it would be amazing to utilize the skills of the volunteers to further your efforts to <projects etc.>.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
<Dwight Hall at Yale>

PROJECT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Upon confirmation of Service Partner sites, consider the following to most effectively contribute to anticipated projects.

1. Can the project be substantially completed in the allotted time with nonprofessional workers, allowing time for set-up, break down, agency briefing, and lunch?
2. Is the size and complexity of the project appropriate considering the volunteers’ skills and allotted time?
3. What is the manpower requirement (considering space limitations)?
4. Does the project require specific skill levels? For example, would you need an electrician, skilled carpenter, or project manager?
5. What is the need vs. availability of tools and equipment, including those provided by the agency and by the volunteers? What tools can you provide, and what tools do you need the volunteers to provide?
6. Is the project too hazardous for volunteers? Does the work require climbing a tall ladder? Is an outdoor work area close to a heavily trafficked street without protective barriers? Is there a potential fire hazard, e.g., use of propane torch? (Consider potential liability exposure.)
7. Can someone be available to organize and/or oversee the work being performed? (It is essential that the host agency designate at least one point of contact that is available for the day, even if the designated person does not work with the volunteers all the time. NOTE: larger projects or projects spread out over a large space will require more than one point of contact.)
8. Does the agency have the ability to accomplish the necessary prep work in advance of The Day of Service?
9. Are there smaller projects for volunteers if they finish the primary project early?
10. Are there alternative plans in the event of inclement weather?

PROJECTS TO BE AVOIDED

- Projects that need technical designs, unless the agency or a volunteer leader can provide designs. Design-as-you-go approach often wastes time and materials and results in less than satisfactory end products.
- Projects that may be unsafe for the volunteers, e.g., having to work on tall ladders, in too close proximity of vehicular traffic, lift very heavy objects, etc. Remember, agencies could be held liable if reasonable safety precautions were not considered.
- Projects that require complex or time consuming preparatory work such as obtaining multiple permits, building concrete foundations, scraping old paint, clearing a field, etc. (unless such preparatory work is the Day of Service project).
- Projects that cost more to make than it would to purchase.
- Projects that will not provide a sense of accomplishment for the volunteers (i.e. a painting project that is too large to complete in one day, cleaning an attic or cellar, etc.)
ORGANIZING VOLUNTEER SITES

Create a spreadsheet which includes the service partner, project description and number of volunteers that are needed. The format depends on the Coordinator and their comfort level. While not perfect, we often use Google Sheets because many students have familiarity and is very easy to share. (Click this section to view the spreadsheet to copy and edit)

COORDINATING VOLUNTEERS

Outreach

If you are contacting us to create a Day of Service, then chances are that you already have a pool of volunteers in mind. If not, then there are many groups housed on campus who have an interest in volunteering. Dwight Hall houses over 70 **member groups** who can be contacted directly about service opportunities. Yale Connect (OrgSync) is also a resource for group volunteer recruitment. ROTC, Fraternities/Sororities, First Years in Service, Cultural Houses, and many other organizations can be contacted regarding sending a group of volunteers from their organization to volunteer together at one site. Volunteer recruitment should begin at least three weeks prior to the event.

The key to any volunteer outreach is to generate excitement about the event far enough in advance so that people can plan to be there. This will take the form of email blasts, targeted outreach, flyering etc. Keep in mind your “customer” and be sure you are meeting their needs as you create the event.

SAMPLE INVITATION EMAIL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Greetings,

Welcome to **Dwight Hall at Yale**. We are inviting you to join us as a volunteer during our annual Day of Service on **date**. Participating in a Day of Service is an opportunity for individuals and groups to establish relationships with the local community and is a practice of selfless giving. Service is a gift each person can give to the world.

We anticipate you will be with us/ volunteering from **duration start** until **duration end**. Anticipated volunteer projects include:

**description of services/activities**.

Sign up here! **Online link to signup**

Sincerely,

**Dwight Hall at Yale**
A form must be created that allows volunteers to sign up for the DoS. This can easily be created as a Google Doc. The doc should request; Participant name, Residential College, SID # (if requesting meals through Yale Dining), email. (Click this section to view the spreadsheet to copy and edit)

**VOLUNTEERING AT SITES**

Each site should have a Site Leader. Site Leaders oversee the operations during the Day of Service activity and help to ensure the project is done safely, on time and within established expectations. Site Leaders are chosen from the DoS organizers or called upon from the volunteer pool.

The day before the event, print off information about each site for Site Leaders, and assign site leaders to sites. The following information should be included on a Site Leaders’ sheet:

1. Name of service organization
2. Address of site
3. Name of contact person and their phone number
4. Schedule for day (arrival time, lunch time, end time)
5. Your contact information (phone and email)

**TRANSPORTATION**

It is important to consider the accessibility of project sites when selecting potential services partners. Things to consider:

Is the site walkable?
Is the site accessible via public transportation?
Is a vehicle needed for access?

If a vehicle is needed, there are several options in place. In many cases, ridesharing programs like Uber or Lyft can be legitimate options for transporting small groups of volunteers efficiently.

Before using this method, you will want to decide about payment methods (i.e. will you ask Coordinators to bear expense and be reimbursed?).

Yale does have a unique partnership with Zipcar at reduced rates, which can be useful options if you plan on driving for most of the day. Please note, you would want to make sure that if you choose to transport people, you would want to think through any liability before transporting others.
SPACE

Designate a headquarters as a meeting space for Day of Service activities, Dwight Hall can be reserved through the reservation system three weeks in advance if a space is needed. Equipment such as tables, speakers and microphones can be used reserves for use on the day of the event. Suggest arrival on the morning of a Day of Service event is 8am to ensure setup and on time site arrival.

MEALS

Breakfast and lunch are provided on the day of the service event. An option includes food provided through Yale Dining. For this option, you would want to coordinate with a dining hall and its manager.

Food Outreach Timeline:
1. Email the Dining Hall Manager two weeks prior to the service event.
2. Follow up in person if there is no response within three days of the initial email.
3. Confirmation from the dining hall should be obtained no later than the Monday prior to the event.
4. Send SIDs to the Dining Hall Manager, which should be requested by the manager, however should the SIDs should be provided to the Dining Hall Manager at least a day in advance.

Day of DoS Food Logistics:
Pick food up - 8:30 am
Set-up - 8:45 am

Example Food Options
Breakfast
Coffee
Bagels
Cream Cheese
Orange Juice

Lunch
Bulk delivery of
Assorted sandwiches (including vegetarian)
Cases of water with 24 bottles in each
Cookies
Sea Salt Potato Chips
Macintosh Apples
Bags for stuffing

*Set up tables at the headquarters and have volunteers bag their own lunches and grab breakfast.
SAMPLE EMAIL TO DINING HALL MANAGER

Hello <Dining Hall Manager>,

I hope you are doing well. <Dwight Hall> is hosting a Day of Service on <date>. You’ve catered amazing events in the past, and we’d love to work with you for our event. Your help would be instrumental in making our Day of Service a success.

It is our hope that <Dining Hall> can prepare both breakfast and lunch. We are estimating that we will need between 100-130 lunches, and breakfast for the same number based anticipated volunteer turnout.

We would like the following items, however are also open to suggestions:

Breakfast
<Items>

Lunch
<Items>

Ideally, these items would be picked up by <Dwight Hall> at 8:30 am on <date>. Please let us know by <date> of you can accommodate this request.

Best,
<Dwight Hall>

MARKETING YOUR EVENT

Three weeks prior to the event, aggressive marketing should begin. Communication that that should occur.

- Email all FroCos (contact information is housed on the College’s websites)
- Facebook Marketing:
  - Create a Facebook group on the sponsoring organizations website.
  - Include a PHOTO alongside the post to make it more eye-catching. Have alternate people post in the FB group every day of the week leading up to the event.
  - Create a Facebook event and share it everywhere.
  - Make cover photos and ask campus partners and friends to promote.
- Submit your event for announcement for Dwight Halls weekly newsletter and for publication on the Dwight Hall website.
- Include the service event in the sponsoring organizations newsletter.
- Residential colleges are great places to post flyers and promote events.
- YCC – YCC will often agree to send out emails to the entire school or to the first years to help spread the word. Ask them to send out an email the Monday before the event and another one the last day of sign ups.
- OrgSync – get the event added to the calendar of events on OrgSync a month in advance of the DOS.
GENERAL GUIDELINES

GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

We recognize the potential for serious injury and liability problems associated with a Day of Service, just as we do each time any volunteer offers his/her services. To help avoid the potential pitfalls and hazards that can occur during any event of this nature, please review the safety guidelines below to help ensure that a Day of Service is both a rewarding and safe experience for everyone involved.

Below are some actions to think about if an accident does happen:

• Prior to any work being done, ensure that you have emergency contacts for every volunteer. NOTE: This information can be added to the day’s volunteer sign-in sheet.

• Stay calm. Have all the other volunteers stop working if there is any reason to believe that the work is unsafe, or if the volunteers simply cannot focus sufficiently on the project’s task. Be sensitive to the mood and needs of the volunteers.

• If a volunteer is injured, designate someone else to oversee the other volunteers so that you can focus on the injured volunteer.

• Try to determine the seriousness of the injury/accident. Ask if there is a volunteer that may have some training to assist the injured individual (i.e., a doctor, nurse or EMT).

• If the person has a serious injury call 911 immediately.

• If the person has a minor cut or scrape, administer first aid and then fill out an accident report.

• Ensure that all appropriate agency representatives are aware of the injury/accident.
**SIMPLE SAFETY SUGGESTIONS**

To help avoid safety incidents, the below chart suggests safety plans that you may want to communicate to your volunteers prior to a Day of Service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Potential Hazards</th>
<th>Safety Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Landscaping</strong></td>
<td>Foot (cuts, abrasions) Hands (cuts, abrasions) Legs (cuts, abrasions) Sunburn Bug bites</td>
<td>Boots, closed-toe shoes Work gloves Long pants Wear sunscreen Bring bug spray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Painting</strong></td>
<td>Eyes Hands Ladder use (Use scaffolding if necessary)</td>
<td>Safety glasses Gloves (Latex or Work) Waist below top of ladder Never reach past arm length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carpentry/Renovation</strong></td>
<td>Eyes Foot Hands Falls *Power Tools</td>
<td>Safety glasses, goggles Hard-toed boot Gloves Approved ladders/scaffolding All guards in place Extension cords with GFCI's</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Clean-up projects (trash and waste removal, general housekeeping):**

___Volunteers will be encouraged to use gloves; watch for sharp items, biohazards, puncture hazards, etc.
___Volunteers will be supervised to ensure safe operation of power equipment.
___Only experienced volunteers will operate power equipment.
___Personal safety equipment will be available for use by all volunteers.
___Proper gloves will be used.
___Lightning safety will be practiced in the event of thunderstorms.

**Painting and Preparation:**

___Potential hazard exposure determined by reading safety data and warning labels on all paints, solvents and thinners.
___Water-based paints used wherever possible.
___Dust masks and respirators are available and will be used by volunteers involved in sanding, scraping, or in areas of poor ventilation.
___Ladder and scaffolding safety will be practiced.
___Ensure safe use of any electrical painting equipment.

**Construction:**

___Ground fault protection used for tools outside or wet areas (bathrooms).
___Safety glasses and hearing protection will be available and used.
___Volunteers will wear proper footwear (no athletic shoes).
**RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

The following risk assessment checklist will help ensure that your Day of Caring project, staff, and volunteers will be as safe as possible. The checklist should be reviewed for each project and/or project site.

**Overall Safety**

___ Adequate liquids are available to volunteers to ensure proper hydration to eliminate heat stress exposure.

___ Adequate breaks will be made part of any projects, especially in very warm conditions.

___ Fully stocked first-aid kit is available and readily accessible at all project sites.

___ Agency personnel and volunteers know the location(s) of first-aid kit.

___ Individual trained in first-aid/CPR available at each work site.

___ List of emergency numbers is available and readily accessible at each work site.

___ Working phone is available at each work site.

___ No volunteer will work alone at sites where mentally or physically challenged persons, recovering alcoholics, or drug addicts reside or are enrolled on-site.

___ Volunteers will work in larger groups in areas identified by law enforcement as high crime areas or will be provided with local security.

___ Power tools/equipment will be checked for safety by a qualified trades-person prior to use by volunteers.

___ No volunteer will operate power tools or equipment without prior authorization.

___ Volunteers will be assessed to ascertain particular allergies to plants, insect bites, respiratory sensitivity, sensitivity to chemical vapors and other personal health issues prior to beginning project.

___ Personal protective equipment is available for each task, as applicable. (i.e. safety glasses, hearing protection, gloves, hard hats, etc.)

___ Staff will ensure that volunteers are properly dressed for the task prior to the start of activities.
SEVERE WEATHER PLANS

A Day of Service is not cancelled due to bad weather. You may need to alter your project plans. Each volunteer site is responsible for making its own plans in case of inclement weather on the Day of Caring. There is no rain date.

Agencies that are planning outdoor projects should have an alternate indoor project or projects in case of inclement weather, e.g. cleaning, compiling a mailing, making centerpieces for an upcoming event, straightening out storage rooms, etc.

Agency representatives will need to describe bad weather plans when registering projects on-line. It is imperative that you communicate your bad weather plans to volunteers ahead of time.

On the actual day of Day of Caring, it is the responsibility of the agency representative and company coordinator(s) to communicate directly with each other regarding any changes in plans.
APPENDIX

PROJECT IDEAS

At times host sites have many needs that will benefit both the organization and the surrounding community. If the site is interested in partnering, however are unsure of the capacity in which they’d like to partner, the following project ideas can be suggested or used as a guide. However, LISTEN to the organization.

- Organize a community blood drive
- Help deliver meals and gifts to patients at a local hospital
- Collect baby clothes and supplies to donate to new parents
- Organize a Special Olympics event for children and teenagers
- Sponsor a bike-a-thon and give away bike safety gear, like helmets and knee pads, as prizes
- Collect used sports equipment to donate to families and after-school programs
- Organize a reading hour for children at a local school or library
- Donate used children’s books to a school library
- Work with the local health department to set up an immunization day or clinic to immunize children against childhood diseases
- Tutor children during or after school
- Read to residents at a nursing home
- Deliver groceries and meals to elderly neighbors
- Teach computer skills to the elderly
- Drive seniors to doctor appointments
- Mow an elderly neighbor’s lawn
- Host a bingo night for nursing home residents
- Help elderly neighbors clean their homes and organize their belongings
- Rake leaves, shovel snow, or wash windows for a senior citizen
- Deliver cookies to a homebound senior citizen
- Sponsor a recycling contest
- Help create a new walking trail at a nature center or park
- Participate in the cleanup of a local river, pond, or lake
- Plant native flowers or plants in the community
- Help build a house with Habitat for Humanity
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen
- Donate non-perishable food to a food bank
- Donate blankets to a homeless shelter
- Make “care kits” with shampoo, toothbrushes, combs, etc. to donate to homeless shelters
- Prepare a home-cooked meal for the residents of a nearby homeless shelter
- Help repair or paint a local homeless shelter
- Donate art supplies to kids in a homeless shelter
- Help organize and sort donations at a homeless shelter
- Build flower boxes for Habitat for Humanity houses
- Organize a winter clothes drive to collect coats, hats, scarves, and gloves to be donated
- Make first aid kits for homeless shelters
- Paint over graffiti in the community
- Paint park benches
- Repaint community fences
- Plant flowers in bare public areas
- Clean up vacant lot
- Take care of cats and dogs at an animal shelter
- Clean up a local park
PRE- REFLECTION QUESTIONS
Reflection is an important aspect of maximizing your Day of Service. These are simply suggestions, but we hope that you continue to build relationships through the experience.

1. What experiences do you intend to obtain from this service opportunity?
2. What value do you intend to bring to the organization you’ll be serving?
3. What skills do you intend to develop or enhance through this service opportunity?
4. What previous experiences will this service opportunity built upon?
5. What do you think is (will be) the most valuable service you can offer at your site?

POST- REFLECTION QUESTIONS
1. Describe your overall experience of the service activity.
2. What were some of the initial challenges you faced?
3. How has this experience informed or shaped your idea of service?
4. Has the service activity encouraged you to work on anything within yourself?
5. In what ways do you plan to engage in service in the future?