



Youth Leadership Academy Community Service Learning

YLA utilizes the 5-Step Service Learning Model to provide our cadets with a framework for understanding their talents and interests as well as how to leverage them to help address community needs. The primary purpose of Service Learning in the YLA is to offer a structured setting in which the cadets can practice and improve their leadership skills. In addition to building the next generation of community leaders, Service Learning is an intentional way in which young people can inherit important philanthropic values. Some of these values include volunteering and building foundational relationships with organizations that address issues in which they are particularly passionate.

In short, we are putting our cadets into our communities to actually solve our big issues. We are harnessing their passions to apply their achieved skills to working with community leaders directly to solve problems. By doing so, YLA will increase the value it provides to our cadets (enhanced skills) and the community (enhanced services).

The five steps of Service Learning are:

Investigation – learning more about the core issue under the need for service
(7th - 8th Grade)

Planning and Preparation – working as a group to do something to address the core need in their community
(9th Grade - 10th Grade)

Action – implementing the project, which can be a direct or indirect form of impacting the community
(11th Grade)

Reflection – intentionally facilitated group time to articulate what was learned from the overall experience
(12th Grade)

Demonstration – presenting to other groups what was accomplished and why, with the goal of inspiring others to do the same or more in the future
(12th Grade)

After students spend the first 2 years exploring issues, they are ready upon entering high school to choose a problem in their community that they can collectively put ideas, resources, and energy behind to solve. In the last year, cadets conclude their experience by analyzing and reflecting on results, and then packaging their takeaways into a celebrated presentation left behind as a framework for others to follow.