



THE U-PROJECT

About the U-Project: Danny's Place Youth Services (DPYS) has created the U-Project to provide an opportunity for local high school youth to develop and execute original ideas through project based work in the community. As the project leaders of their own ideas, students will develop essential life skills, earn community service credits, gain experience for their resumes and college applications and make valuable connections to local leaders and peers while making a contribution to the future of their community. DPYS will grant project funding and provide work space and mentorship.

Project Purpose and Criteria: All project ideas should be community-focused and solve a problem through designing or improving a product, service or system in the community or by creating a unique community event. A project may not be a fundraiser. In other words, it may not be an effort that primarily collects money, even for a worthy charity.

Your U-Project Plan

How do I pick a project idea to pursue? Think about the things that are important to you and/or have had an impact on your life or on those close to you that you would like to improve or change. Ask issue experts, or those affected by the issue what they think of your ideas and ask yourself these questions:

- 1) Are you willing to commit time and skills to this project?
- 2) Will the project have a positive and visible outcome for your community?
- 3) Will you be able to measure and track the impact or results of your project?
- 4) Can you convince friends to join you? Can you promote the project as something that would attract them?
- 5) Is there enough time to plan and complete the project?
- 6) Will you need funds to do this project?
- 7) Do you know where, and how, you will be able to collect needed project supplies and materials?

If you answer 'Yes' to all these questions, you are ready to begin planning your project. If not, adjust or simplify your project idea as needed.

Common issues that youth address through service include:

Education: Mentoring/tutoring, literacy, dropout rate, school climate, access to education

Environment: Water, energy conservation, recycling, protecting wildlife, habitats, and endangered species, increasing green space

Health: Physical activity, healthy eating & nutrition, disease prevention, access to health care

Poverty, hunger, homelessness: Financial literacy, workforce readiness, emergency food provisions, affordable housing

Other human services & community renewal: Senior citizens, public safety, beautification, helping vulnerable groups (immigrants, refugees, etc.), animal welfare

Project Example				
Community Need +	Personal Assets +	Community Assets +	Type of Project =	Project Idea
Increasing the amount of paper our school recycles	Woodshop Class	Woodshop teacher, tools, materials	Service	Creating new recycling bin lids that have slots just for paper
More interaction of youth and seniors in the community	Art class, personal artwork, event planning	Art teacher, fellow art students, senior center volunteer staff	Event	Curate a student art show and reception for a regional Senior Center