

# Planning for Service Learning

**Group/Class:** Community Organization    **Topic:** Park cleanup, Community impact

## Prepare

**Essential Purpose or Question for Service:**

How do we help our communities have cleaner parks?

**Service Need to Community or Others:**

Families in our communities would spend time in their local parks if they were cleaner.

<b>Service Idea: Clean up neighborhood parks</b> Plan, promote, and facilitate neighborhood park cleanups.
<b>Investigation of the Need:</b> Evaluate current conditions of parks in 3-4 neighborhoods to determine which ones have the greatest needs. Talk to a member of the City of Des Moines Park Management office on current park maintenance. Investigate potential barriers such as liability and supplies needed.
<b>Preparation and Planning:</b> Determine 2-3 neighborhood parks that have the greatest needs and evaluate current conditions through a walk-about. Hear guest speakers from city on how to best facilitate a park cleanup. Create a wish list for potential cleanup tasks; make top selections, schedule days and times to cleanup, recruit volunteers in the parks community to assist with cleanup.
<b>Action:</b> Clean up parks. Take before and after pictures. Share photos with City of Des Moines Park Management Office and discuss sustainability.
<b>Reflection:</b> Predict the impact the cleanup will have. Reflect on how simple acts, such as cleaning a neighborhood park, can impact families in the community.
<b>Demonstration to Others:</b> Celebrate community efforts by organizing and implementing a "Park Day" for families in the neighborhoods. Promote this through flyers to homes and postings in the park. Provide a story to the local newspaper.

## Organize

**Service Learning Project Parameters:**

Discuss supply needs with City Park Management to get understanding of financial impact. See if they will be able to donate necessary supplies. If not, see what other partners (potential local business or corporation) they provide donations.

**Duration/Timeframe of Service Learning Project:**

This is a spring project with a month put into the investigation and preparation and planning process. Park cleanup will be scheduled for a Saturday. Reflection and celebration will occur the following month.

# Facilitator Reflections

## Skills Developed

### **Experiencing and Exploring Diversity:**

Participating in a park cleanup provided an opportunity to discuss the quality of access individuals of different socio-economic statuses have depending on their residential location in the city. Seeing the varying needs of different parks added another level of understanding diversity.

### **Involvement with Project Management:**

Planning, promoting, and facilitating a Saturday cleanup and “Park Day” provided various opportunities for project management.

### **Learning About Careers:**

Hearing from City of Des Moines Park Management provided an opportunity to learn about careers in park maintenance, city management and development, and allocation of city resources.

### **Strengthening Social, Emotional, and Character Traits:**

Participants were given the opportunity to connect with community members and families both during cleanup and the “Park Day” celebration.

### **Making Global Connections:**

The connection between various neighborhood resources provided individuals with a unique perspective of capitol and opportunity.

### **Developing Leadership:**

Participants worked diligently on organizational skills, which are definite traits of leaders. They planned the park cleanup process and highest needs, organized work, and put together a “Park Day” celebration.

## Additional Attributes

### **Public Awareness or Presentation:**

The “Park Day” provided community members to be involved in their neighborhood park and show their investment. Taking pictures allowed community members to reflect on the service’s impact.

### **Other:**

Consider how this project can be sustained from year to year, or as a joint community project.