

# SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

## Why “Service Learning”?

This is a writing class; why do we have to do a service learning project? It’s a legitimate question, and here’s a legitimate answer: because you can. You are vital, capable, intelligent young adults who have talents and ideas to offer to others in your community. If you are going to write about this world, you need to engage in it. If you are going to be leaders in this world, you need to understand the needs and viewpoints of others who inhabit it with you. Your service learning project (SLP) will connect you with people in this community and challenge you to grow in how you think, what you know and who you are. It will provide material for your writing and your thinking.

***“I am one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.”***

**Helen Keller**

## What’s expected of me?

You do not have to find your own service learning connection. The Cal Poly Office of Student Life and Leadership has organizations already lined up that need volunteer support. They will come to class to give you an overview of the possibilities and to take sign-ups. You are asked to complete a total of 12 hours over a six-week period at your organization’s site (about 2 hours/week). Plan to spend at least two hours at each visit; less than that is not as productive. You are responsible for your own transportation. Please keep that in mind when you are selecting an organization (you may consider carpooling with someone in this class who is going to the same place.)

**Engage.** This project is more than just showing up to stuff envelopes or pick-up trash. The more you put into it, the more you will get out (and the more material you will have to write about!) You can make the most of your hours there by engaging in conversation with other volunteers, service recipients and staff members. Ask questions, be curious, be helpful, and most importantly – have a positive attitude!

**Be reliable.** Treat your volunteer time like class time. Show up promptly when you are scheduled to be there. People are relying on you, and you are representing the institution of Cal Poly.

**Be open to possibilities.** This may or may not be a life-altering experience for you. Each experience is different. Your positive attitude and willingness to try new things and meet new people open the door for a multitude of possibilities, but a negative attitude can make the whole experience feel tedious and worthless. It’s all up to you!

## Your SLP Journal:

You will keep a journal throughout your SLP experience. Write at least one entry per visit. In each entry, include a brief description of what you did on that visit. Then spend some time reflecting on your thoughts and experiences. Be observant. Did you see something, do something or hear something that got your gears turning? Are you having any particular mental or emotional reaction to your service experience? You will turn your journal in periodically for grading. You will be graded on completeness and ideas, not necessarily for perfect grammar (this is, after all, freewriting.)

## Reflection Essay:

At the end of your experience, you will write a 3-4 page essay based on your experience. You have great freedom with your approach and focus. More directions will follow as we near the end of the quarter.