

DOES ANYTHING YOU ALREADY DO IN YOUR LIFE COUNT TOWARDS THE CHALLENGE?

Yes. Some members of the Blake community are already actively involved in projects that give back. If you document the work you are doing, you may present it as proof you have fulfilled the challenge.

Examples of activities that would count: Scouts community service projects, Bar or Bat Mitzvah projects, FOY projects such as Soup to Go, or participating in a charity walk with your family.

Examples of things that would not count: Donating money or food or coats, buying a charity's rubber bracelet, and recycling your bottles at school or at home (you should be doing that anyway).

Any questions about this, please ask your teacher or guidance counselor.

Ten Good Reasons to Volunteer

1. Show that you can be responsible
2. Make a difference
3. Gain experience
4. Make new friends
5. See new places
6. Learn new skills
7. Have fun
8. Explore career options
9. Set an example
10. Educate others about causes you care about

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU HAVE FULFILLED THE CHALLENGE?

The symbol for our challenge is the starfish, as based on the story below. Once you have completed your service, the next step is to color a starfish (available from the main office or a home-room teacher) and write a few sentences at the bottom about your completed service. If you are so inspired, you may also share the feelings the project provoked in you. After you share the story of your starfish in homeroom, it will then be hung in the hallway. We are hoping to have all the hallways filled by the time we leave in June.

The Starfish Story

Original Story by: Loren Eisley

One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean.

Approaching the boy, he asked, "What are you doing?"

The youth replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean.

The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die."

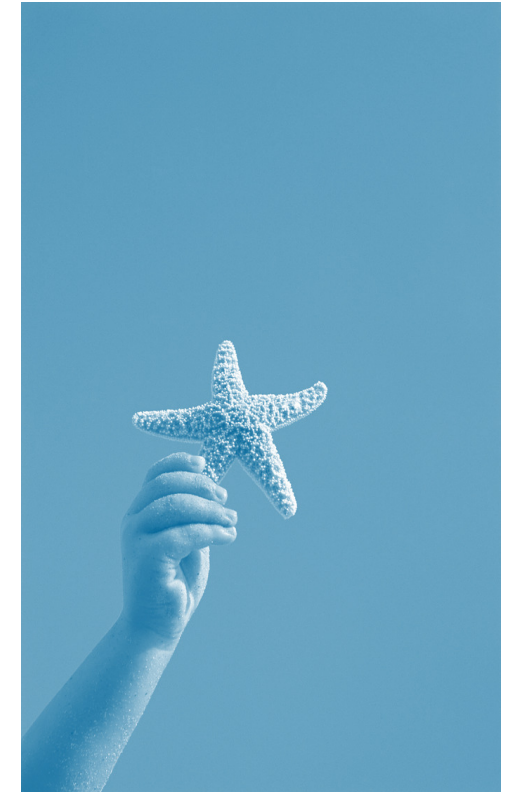
"Son," the man said, "don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish?"

You can't make a difference!"

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said..."

I made a difference for that one."

MAKE A DIFFERENCE CHALLENGE 2008-2009



A Guide to Giving Back

For students, staff and other members of the Blake community.

What is the Challenge?

Inspired by the selfless projects of staff and past students and driven by the belief that we can all make a difference, the staff of Blake Middle School is challenging itself and its students to find a way to have an impact on someone's life in a meaningful way.

We are hoping that in the process of fulfilling the challenge, you—student or staff member - identify issues that you care about and ways you can address those issues. The goal is to avoid doing numerous fundraisers for all the many causes. Each of us has a lot to offer. Share your time, give your energy, and use your skills to complete your project.

5 Easy Steps to A Community Service Project

1. Brainstorm
2. Plan
3. Do
4. Reflect



How Do I Get Started?



The easiest way to think about this challenge is to go back to our tried and true 4 R's:

Reflection—Think about what issues are affecting the planet and all the people on it. Next look at which of those issues have meaning for you.

Resourcefulness—What can you do to attack a problem that you see needs to be fixed? What skills / talents do you have that you can use to find a way to make a difference? Be creative.

Responsibility—Once you have come up with a game plan, make sure you follow it through. If you need help, there are plenty of adults with whom you can consult.

Respect—Make sure as you are planning and executing your project you show respect for yourself, those involved, the cause, and Blake Middle School.

Reflection—Once you have completed your service, make sure you take a minute to reflect on your good work, how much you accomplished, and the difference you made.

Ideas / Resources

ysa.org/planit/

www.kidscanmakeadifference.org/cando.htm

www.foundationcenter.org/yip/youth_getinvolved.html

www.kidscaring4kids.org/

www.bethecause.org/?gclid=CK6msJLp5ZUCFQikHgodgzWoeA

www.idealists.org/kt/ktorgsearch.html

dogood.boston.com/featured/causes

www.justgive.org/html/kidscorner/inspiringkids.html

www.charityfocus.org/new/vol.php

www.volunteermatch.org

www.cradlestocrayons.org

www.wecansolveit.org/

www.bostoncares.org/AboutUs/index.php/booyah/home.html

www.mcgruff.org/Advice/community.php?gclid=CKPN4OGw3ZMCFQx_HgodGAM9ZA

www.usaweekend.com/diffday/tools/guides/teachers_guide.html

If there is a specific cause to which you would like to give your time or way you would like to give back but do not know how to go about it, ask a teacher, a friend, or your parents. We can help direct you to websites, books, or people that can help you achieve your goal. Also look at the Make a Difference Challenge page on the Blake website for upcoming projects and other ideas.