

## Here are a few suggestions on how to find a good Eagle Scout Service Project:

**First**, go to the public library. Do this on a day and time that you've got a LOT of time, don't try to do this in a rush! Stop and talk to the Reference Librarians—they are there to help you.

You're going to take a look through your community's newspapers, for at least TWO MONTHS prior to that day. Bring a pad and pen or pencil to write down the information or use their copier machine to photocopy the stories. Be sure to take enough money to make the copies!

Which stories: the ones that explain some problems, issue or lack of attention by the community. Look in the news section, in the editorials, in the sports section, and in the "community news sections". Write down the details, what is it that seems to be a problem, who's taking care of it or who's trying to take care of it, where is it and most important, its impact on young people? Things like road repair, new community buildings or fire protection doesn't really impact kids as much as truancy from schools, cracks in sidewalks, handicapped accessibility—be creative, use your imagination!

**Second**, set up interviews with your mayor or county judge-executive, with the community's fire chief and chief of police or other community leaders who can give you project ideas. Do each on separate days. During your interviews, stress that you must DEVELOP, PLAN, LEAD AND EVALUATE this project. This isn't their time to "put you in charge as a figurehead but they do all of the work". No buddy, YOU'VE got to do this stuff. Take their ideas, and DO NOT COMMIT to anything. You're still in the input stage.

**Third**, sit down with a group of your peers. Don't make it sound like "you're having a meeting", just ask them, "if you had all of the resources available in our town, what would YOU like to see different or changed or added?" You'll get a lot of suggestions ... write them ALL down. Even the ones that sound REALLY nutzoid (like "a brand new swimming pool" or "every Friday off from school"!)

**Fourth**, sit down with your Scoutmaster, your parents or a trusted adult friend. Explain the material you've collected and discuss how to use it to devise a project.

Keep this in mind. YOU are the final determination of what project YOU are to do, not the adult. The adult is there as a "sanity check", that's all. If the adult says that ALL of the projects are bogus, then you've got to go and find another project or seek another adult's input. Nowadays, some teens lead packs of boys and girls to terrorize people, destroy property, and cause fear among its citizenry. Surely YOU as a young adult can lead a pack of boys and girls to build, strengthen, and develop property and cause happiness among your citizenry. Keep that in mind!

**Fifth:** once you've settled on FOUR projects, then its time for you to do an outline of what it is that you like about those four. One or two will stand out from all of the others. That's your initial service project. Now, you're ready to meet with your Unit Committee. After the Unit Committee has agreed that you have a good project, then it must be approved by the District Advancement Committee which will provide you with the Life to Eagle Service Project package. If he or she turns down your project, don't be discouraged, go back, put together the second best idea, and try again. (Now you know why I said "four".)

EVERY community in America has problems or things that can be solved by the leadership and direction of a young person. Service projects DO NOT have to involve building or painting something, those are easy to find. Look for other ways to share what you've learned through Scouting with your community: a literacy program, a computer teaching program, an after-school workout program, an arts and crafts fair, a leadership development workshop. If your newspaper is complaining about the lack of salaried workers at community centers, how about setting up a volunteer program. If the papers are complaining about the lack of lighting downtown, come up with a plan to add more lighting and with your city planners, do it.

There's simply NOTHING that you as an Eagle Scout candidate cannot do to better your community. Don't limit it to just playground building, or painting walls or sitting and coaching younger kids. You're a LEADER, this is your time to PROVE it to your adults and to your fellow Scouts.

Take the time, don't rush it, and use your community's resources to assist you in finding a problem, researching the problem, and finding several solutions and pick the best one. Then SOLVE it.

**USE YOUR RESOURCES AND IMAGINATION!**