

Global Youth Service Day gets young people involved in volunteering

Posted by [mneff](#) April 22, 2009 11:25AM



Lisa DeJong/The Plain DealerMax

Ozimek, 14, with some of the 7,000 books he has collected to start a library in the Ugandan village of Obia-Zeu, an outgrowth of his school science project about solar cookers. Max, an eighth-grader, has organized about 30 of his classmates at Incarnate Word Academy in Parma Heights to catalog and glue library-card pockets in the books as a 2009 Global Youth Service Day project.

For information about 2010 Global Youth Service Day Cleveland, or volunteerism in Cleveland, contact Erika Haskell at Business Volunteers Unlimited, 216-736-7711 or by [e-mail](#).

Eighth-grader Max Ozimek and 30 of his Incarnate Word Academy classmates will spend Friday and Saturday cataloging 7,000 books he has collected to start a library in a Ugandan village.

Alexa Magyari and 24 other Hathaway Brown School students will host a formal dance Friday night for clients of Hattie Larlham, a Mantua nonprofit organization that cares for people with disabilities.

Max and Alexa's efforts, and those of about 900 other young people who will paint playground equipment and clean up litter along with other volunteer jobs, are Greater Cleveland's contribution to [Global Youth Service Day](#), a time devoted to doing good Friday and Saturday.

It's Cleveland's first year to be part of the 9-year-old international event. Originally called National Youth Service Day 21 years ago, the service day went international two years ago.

If you think 900 is an amazing number of Cleveland-area children and teenagers (and, in some cases, their parents) who said yes to a day or two of free labor, just wait until next year, said Erika Haskell, the volunteer center director at Cleveland-based Business Volunteers Unlimited who organized the local effort.

Instead of recruiting 15 nonprofit organizations to rally their youth to volunteer for 17 projects as she did this year, she plans to market 2010's Global Youth Service Day to the public.

"Just imagine what the response will be then," said Haskell, who thought she'd only get 600 youthful helpers, ages 6 to 25, during Cleveland's first year of involvement. Instead she topped her estimate by half.

That shows that young people are eager to give back once they are given the chance, she said.

"It makes me feel good to know I'm helping someone that needs help," said Fred Alexander, 15, a member of Heights Boys & Girls Club who will help deliver clothing to homeless shelters on Friday. About 90 members of three Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland will deliver clothes or will pick up litter in the neighborhoods around the Mount Pleasant and West Side clubs.

The list of jobs that volunteers will take on is impressive. To name a few:

Hawken School students will sort and package food at the Cleveland Foodbank for distribution to hunger centers. Students at Cleveland School of Science and Medicine will sort medical donations for a humanitarian aid shipment. City Year Cleveland members will host a neighborhood clean-up and party for residents in the Slavic Village neighborhood. Youth groups from Church of the Saviour United Methodist in Cleveland Heights will play with children at a swim and gym day at Mentor's Broadmoor School.

Like most youth who will give their time during the weekend, four boys from Berea Children's Home and Family Services will gain confidence from their voluntary remodeling chore, their supervisor said. They'll help install a drop ceiling in a church office, a Nehemiah Mission of Cleveland project.

"It builds character to go out into the community to give rather than receive," said Ted Buehl, a treatment specialist at the children's home.

Alexa Magyari, 15, the Hathaway-Brown School sophomore, is looking forward to serving punch, taking photos and dancing with clients at the Hattie Larlham formal. "This is a way we can share our love of learning and of having fun," she said.

Alexa, who makes quilts for hospital patients and who wrote and assembled resource booklets for Cleveland's Global Youth Service Day participating agencies, also hopes that this won't be a one-time-only experience for youthful volunteers across the area.

"That Global Youth Service Day gives a taste of service is great," she said, "but a lifetime of service is even better."

Categories: [Breaking News](#), [Education](#), [Giving](#), [Real Time News](#)