

Silver Award: From Community Service to Take Action!

Congratulations on making the awesome decision to earn your Silver Award! We're so excited about all the ways you'll change the world throughout your life and we're super excited about how you'll change your community through this project. We know sometimes the difference between community service projects and Take Action projects is hard to get, so this quick guide will support you as you earn this highest award. So, what's the difference?

Community Service	Take Action	Say What?
Makes the community better for RIGHT NOW.	Makes the community better LONG-TERM.	Think about making a change that will last for years!
Addresses an immediate need.	Addresses either an immediate need or a long-standing need.	Immediate – a problem today and tomorrow, but probably not in a year. Long-standing – a problem that's been around for a while and will still be around for a long time if someone doesn't work at fixing it.
Solves problem FOR the community.	Solves problem WITH the community.	Doing something WITH the community means involving them in your project — asking their opinion and inviting them to help!
Might be measurable, might not be.	ALWAYS measurable!	You can figure out how many people you helped or how big a change you made.
Doesn't address root cause.	Addresses root cause of issue.	Root cause? Find the root cause of an issue by asking “why,” and then keep asking until you have the very bottom of your “why” list.

Want an example?

Issue	Community Service	Take Action	Result
Litter on a local beach.	Girl Scout troop spends a day cleaning up the beach.	Root Cause: Lack of education, lack of community interest. Amy tackles education by creating posters, pamphlets and YouTube videos about the effects litter can have on marine life. Her team member, Jo, creates a community beach clean-up guide that she prints and makes available at the library. The library agrees to promote the guide around Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Earth Day and the National Day of Service so people who are interested in service projects will see it. As a capstone, the girls plan and implement a community beach clean-up day which they promote at local schools, churches, libraries and businesses.	In this example, the long-term impact (sustainability) comes from the library promotions, YouTube videos and the guide created to help others host clean-up events in the future. Sharing the YouTube videos on the library, local school and volunteer group websites means the project will be even more sustainable. You can measure impact by how many people came to your clean-up day, how many views the videos get and how many times the guide is checked out of the library over the next year.
Not enough nut-free dessert options at annual community event.	Troop hosts a bake sale.	Amy has a nut allergy, and she knows first-hand that it's hard to find truly nut-free desserts. She chooses to educate the community about cross-contamination and the most common food allergens found in baked goods through a series of YouTube videos. She also creates a nut-free cookbook. Beth chooses to tackle the root cause of lack of knowledge. She creates and runs a series of baking workshops for local families, allowing them to learn how to change their baking practices in a hands-on environment.	Long-term impact is made by educating the community about cross-contamination, which is very important for allergies. YouTube videos will be available for a long time, and the cookbook can be made available as a PDF download at the end of the video, allowing people to make the recipes indefinitely. Baking workshops may happen over the course of a few months, but the skills people learn will always be available to them! You can measure the impact by counting video views and downloads, and by doing surveys before and after the workshops to find out what people have learned and how they plan to share their new skills.