K-Kids Service Learning Project Ideas

* Buddy/Friendship bench (yearlong project)
  + Determine location of bench and seek approval from the administration/owner.
  + Determine what type of bench and how to obtain the bench (build, seek donation, purchase).
  + Explain the purpose of the bench (to provide a safe place for a child to go when needing a friend or someone to play with on a playground).
  + Select Buddy Bench.
  + Brainstorm and develop ideas for bench design/decoration.
  + Vote on design, if desired.
  + Prepare bench (may take several weeks, depending on the need to sand, prime, paint, decorate, etc.).
  + If bench is to be placed outdoors, seal bench with water resistant sealant.
  + Install bench (anchor to ground if needed), train K-Kids on the use of the bench.
  + Materials: bench, paper and pencils for design, paint, sealant, anchors if necessary
* Read to/with seniors
  + Connect with a local senior center or assisted living/retirement facility. Coordinate with the activities director for a date, time, and location. Ideally, you’ll want 1 or 2-1 (child to adult) for this activity.
  + Materials: books, magazines
* Pick up trash
  + Determine the area of need (school, neighborhood, community park). Direct the K-Kids and set parameters for trash pick-up (remind members not to touch objects that appear sharp or dangerous).
  + Materials: gloves, trash bags
* Create safety videos – playground, park, stranger danger, etc.
  + Contact a local school, recreation department, police department, etc. to see where there is a need for a safety video. Assign or allow K-Kids to pick a specific area to focus. Have members create a draft of their video with a map, illustrations, words, etc. before filming.
  + Materials: paper, markers, video camera, location of choice, computer and software for editing
* Assist local organizations (Kiwanis) with projects
  + Materials: may vary
* Organize/assist with food drive
  + Can be done in conjunction with an already planned food drive, or can be created from scratch. Contact local food pantry (or baby pantry) to determine needs. K-Kids can advertise the drive, help organize collection, and package items for delivery.
  + Materials: advertising (posters, video, intercom announcement at school), collection (large boxes or containers), packaging (boxes, paper grocery bags, etc.)
* Mitten, sock, coat, etc. drive
  + Contact local homeless shelters, police stations, churches, etc. to determine the need.
  + K-Kids can create advertisements, collection stations, and organize items.
  + Take it one step further and stuff the pockets of coat, socks, or mittens/gloves with nonperishable snack items.
  + Materials: advertising (posters, video, intercom announcement at school), collection (large boxes or containers), packaging (boxes, paper grocery bags, etc.)
* Gardening
  + Determine project type (maintain an existing garden, plant a new garden, assist seniors with gardening).
  + Materials need: gloves, hand shovels, rakes, other garden tools, seeds, seedlings, watering can/hose, access to water
* Work collaboratively with Builders Club or Key Club on projects
  + Projects and materials will vary
* Assist at senior centers
  + Contact the program or activities coordinator to see the area of need.
  + Materials: may vary
* School projects
  + Check with school administrators for needs.
    - Possible needs: Painting, making signs, cleaning the playground
  + Examples from GES K-Kids: planted a daffodil garden, assisting with planting a fruit and vegetable garden, created a playground/recess safety video, picked up trash on school grounds, plan to make “street” signs for hallway names
  + Materials: will vary
* Bake and write notes to local fire and police departments
  + Bake a special treat for local emergency services.
  + Create cards or notes thanking them for their service.
  + Materials: ingredients and kitchen tools for baked goods (depending on type), paper, crayons, markers, etc.
* Collect books, games, art supplies for children in the hospital
  + Check with local emergency department or children’s hospital for area of need.
  + Organize the drive in a way similar to the food or coat drive listed above.
  + Materials: will vary
* Send “Smile Grams” to children in the hospital
  + Check with local children’s hospital for details.
  + Can often be done online, if not, have members create notes and cards for the patients.
  + Materials: computer and internet service; paper, crayons, markers, stickers, etc.
* Write notes to teachers and community members
  + Can be done near teacher appreciation day (May), or any other time.
  + Notes can be written to teachers/school staff members or other influential community members (librarian, coach, etc.).
  + One step further, add a sweet treat to the note.
  + Materials: paper, coloring tools, small wrapped sweet treat, if desired
* Volunteer at local humane society
  + Contact the humane society or animal shelter to find out opportunities are available for K-Kids members (cleaning, organizing, playing with animals, walking animals; be sure tasks are age appropriate for K-Kids members).
  + Materials: may vary
* Collect goods or make pet toys for local humane society
  + Contact local humane society for needs.
  + Collect requested items (such as kitty litter, paper towels, blankets, cat/dog food, etc.).
  + Make dog toys using old t-shirts (directions can be found by searching online).
  + Materials: may vary; for t-shirt toys: 2 clean, older t-shirts per toy, scissors
* Organize a recycling program at school
  + Determine what items can be collected for recycling and the drop-off/pick-up location for items. Contact the school district’s maintenance/custodial department for information.
  + Create signs and determine what type of collection tubs will be used (plastic bins, cardboard boxes, etc.).
  + Advertise the recycling program to staff members and fellow students (handouts, posters, video or audio announcement).
  + Materials: collection tubs, craft supplies for signs, audio/video recording equipment
* Make and distribute holiday cards
  + Holiday cards can be made for local senior citizens, emergency services, homeless shelters, etc.
  + Veteran’s Day cards can be mailed to local veterans (check the veterans commission for details).
  + Materials: craft supplies: paper, coloring tools, stickers, ink and stamps, etc.
* Rake leaves/shovel snow for a neighbor in need
  + Can be done individually as “homework” or in a small group.
  + Materials: shovel, rake, leaf bags
* Host a book drive and donate books to shelters or others in need
  + Determine the area of need and type of books desired to collect.
  + Create announcements and collection containers.
  + Materials: collection containers, craft supplies for announcements, audio/visual recording equipment for announcements
* Send letters to those in the armed forces
  + Write letters and/or holiday cards to members of our armed forces.
  + Several organizations are available online to help collect letters. For example, Operation Gratitude seeks handwritten letters. Several other organizations provide online templates for letter submissions.
  + Materials: paper, writing tools, envelopes, stamps
* Adopt a family through local organization (such as Salvation Army)
  + Contact local organization, such as Salvation Army for information about adopting a family for the holidays.
  + The organization will provide a specific list of desired items and ages of children, along with instructions.
  + Seek donations for the items (either by purchasing the items or gathering donations).
  + Materials: desired items, wrapping paper (if requested), collection containers and written announcements if gathering donations
* Reading buddies with other students at school
  + Determine the area of need. For example, our school is K-3 and we are planning on 3rd grade members reading with kindergarten students.
  + “Train” the older readers on posing prediction questions, wait time, and basic questions to ask for discussion after reading.
  + Create a sign-up for the teachers of younger students (either paper posted in the staff lounge or workroom, or online such as SignUpGenius).
  + Materials: age-appropriate books (many books lists can be found online)
* Assist with local 5k run/walk for charity
  + Contact local organizations or race officials.
  + Determine the areas K-Kids can help (cheering on participants, helping at the registration table, passing out water, etc.)
  + Materials: may vary