

# Seven Steps to Success

Burlington 4-H Club  
Presentation for 4-H Conference  
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There are seven steps to successfully completing a community service project. These seven steps can be tailored to any project, and help to identify needs, goals, and priorities. As we talk about the seven steps you may see some similarities between the steps and some of the projects you have done in the past. **The seven steps begin with establishing a group.** This group may already be established like a 4-H club, or youth group or you may form a group of like minded people, who are interested in bettering their community. **The second step is identifying the issue.** Your group will want to collaborate and brainstorm on the most important needs in your community, and decide on those needs that you would like to work on. Once you have determined what is the most important need in your community the **third step is to identify a goal.** Figure out what you can do to provide an answer to the issue or need in your community. Set a goal that is reasonable and that the entire group can get on board and participate in. **Step four is to engage the community.** Identify who in your community can help you reach your goal. Who holds the power to influence the most change and create a positive outlook on your project? Ask for help!!! Don't assume there is no one else who is interested in helping. It is likely that the same things you have seen lacking in your community, or areas you think could be improved, are areas everyone else has thought about fixing at one time or another. Once you have acquired all the necessary support **step five comes in, plan a way to reach your goal.** This is called creating an action plan. Layout the steps you will need to take to finish the project, and delegate responsibilities. Everyone will have their own niche in a project like this. Someone might have the skills to keep the groups records in order, and another might be good at public relations. There is almost always a way to use everyone's skills in community service projects. **Step six is to strategize for success.** This step is a very important aspect of the seven steps. As you are doing your project you will come across some set

backs, or maybe a few things that just don't work the way you planned. In order to successfully complete your project, you have to work through these problems, and continue to encourage the group. Don't let your group loose heart at this stage in the game!!! Making sure you let everyone know how much they are appreciated, and giving simple complements will do a lot for group moral. **Step seven is to celebrate your success!** If you have done a project that means something to you, don't keep it to yourself, reflect on the experience, and share it with others. Celebrate your new project, and keep up the good work!

I will share with you my experience implementing these steps in my own home town. **My mother and I formed a small after school 4-H program in our town for the children of the community.** There were no after school activities, and the club was a huge success in that of itself. **The children had a great thirst for learning and seeing new things.** I held animal classes at my farm where they could experience what they were learning with real animals. Their curiosity wasn't satisfied; however, and many of them invested in their own animals and learned how to care for them. At this point I desperately wanted to give the children a way to share their experiences, and give them a sense of pride in their accomplishments. Since they all wanted to learn more about our town's farming heritage, and wanted to show off their projects I needed a unique way to combine the two interests. **We decided to find a way to fill in that gap.** If we could find a way to build a barn or some type of building where they could share their animals with the community at the town's annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration it would bring everyone together. **We petitioned area businesses and organizations** for their aid in helping us build our barn. We received overwhelming support, and in under a month, had commitments of money or supplies totaling over \$3,000.00! We asked the local historical society if our barn could be built on their land in order to tie it in with the local history of the town. The area we sought was the previous location of the old livery stable in town, so the historical society loved the idea. **We began sketching layouts for the barn, and** decided to delegate a man in the community the responsibility of being our foreman for the project. He

had the most experience with buildings of this sort, and was generous with his time as well as his contacts with area lumber mills. Another person in the community was willing to lend us his time to run the excavator to break ground. Still another volunteered to build us a beautiful sign to put on the front of the show ring to accent the barn, and to publicize 4-H. We had an entire "barn crew" working nearly every night for five weeks on different parts of the barn. **We broke ground just 6 weeks before we had planned our first activity in the barn.** We weren't sure we were going to get everything finished by the time the annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration was held but decided to get as far as we could. The weather was a major problem. Out of the five weekends, only two were dry and sunny. Afternoons and evenings were filled with either thunderstorms or rain showers, but we worked through them without any complaints, and we kept a positive attitude throughout the project. We had several women in the area who brought coffee, homemade doughnuts and lunches. As soon as the roof was on the barn, these same women continued to provide picnic lunches under the shade of the barn for all the "barn crew". **The fourth of July came, and we were excited to open our barn to the public.** We had finished in time, and the entire day was a celebration of all we had accomplished. We were able to share our animals with everyone in the community, and we learned a lot from everyone who came to see our animals. We were excited to share our project with the local media, to a state wide magazine that asked us for our story, and to many others. We can look back on the project as a lot of hard work, but it was also, and will continue to be, an encouragement to the entire community for years to come.

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Included as a reference in Social Capital Toolkit II 2021 and on the NCANR website: [https://ucanr.edu/sites/Social\\_Capital\\_Multi-State/Research/](https://ucanr.edu/sites/Social_Capital_Multi-State/Research/)