



CONNECTING THE DOTS
HEALTH AS ART

Connecting Art & The Community

An art-based social-emotional health activity for service-based learning.



What is service-based learning?

Service-based learning encourages the application of social-emotional skills through civic engagement and social responsibility. It helps us develop a sense of self-efficacy and critical thinking skills, practice teamwork, build relationships with others, and exposes us to new environments. It helps us contribute to the world around us while empowering us to engage with our community in an impactful way!



Connecting the Dots

Finding ways to collaborate with peers and give back to your community in a meaningful way helps you to develop skills in leadership, communication, and more. The arts can also help us to build connections with others through different perspectives, creativity, and new ideas. Reflecting on our own individual social responsibilities helps us to develop a deeper understanding of our position in the world and how we can affect change in our communities.





Connecting Art & The Community

There are many ways to bridge art and community - whether it be in your school, neighborhood, or beyond. Discover how activities such as art-pals (a spin on pen-pals), virtual art class or art clubs, and more can create a space where creativity and connection collide. Read on to learn how to plan activities such as these as a service project or as a fun classroom or home-based project!

Art Pals

Take the idea of pen-pals to the next level! Pen-pals are two people who write letters to one another, typically from the different places they call home. Art-pals are similar, but instead of writing letters, they share art - such as drawings doodles, paintings, etc. Art-pals can be completed with friends and family, across schools in a district or community, or by connecting with local organizations such as a Boys and Girls Club, youth center, children's hospital, etc.



Virtual Art Club

Make the most of screen time with a virtual art club or art class. Connect with peers, friends, and family via free online platforms such as Zoom, Google Hangout, or a mobile device or tablet. Pick an activity and share out materials needed (or substitute materials from household items) or host it as an open space to create and connect. Share your masterpieces and reflect on how different pieces make you feel or what they represent.



Art Kits

Another way to connect the arts and the community is through the creation of art kits. Collect art materials as part of a donation drive such as paper, paints, crayons, markers, modeling clay, stickers, notebooks, etc. Create art kits to donate to local organizations such as children's hospitals, youth centers, after-school programs, etc. You can also create kits to swap with friends or family members and upcycle materials that are no longer used or to try out something new.





Planning as a Service Project

If planning as a service project, create space for everyone to play a role. Think about who is needed to coordinate the project and what leadership and support roles match the many different strengths and skills of your group. Think about what project you want to focus on and identify the organization or community you want to support or connect with. Lastly, discover ways to create a meaningful partnership and seek out opportunities to build long-lasting relationships.



Planning as a Class or Home Project

If planning for a class or home project, many of the same instructions apply. Think about the who, the what, and the how, but within the context of your classroom or school, house or extended family, neighborhood, or teams. Find ways to connect with peers, friends, and loved ones through art projects no matter how far the distance between you.



Reflective Wrap-Up

Whether completed as a service project or for an art project in the classroom or home, reflect on the different stages of the process.

- What was the planning process like? What was the easiest part? What was the most challenging?
- What did you learn from this process?

Then spend time reflecting on the project(s):

- What did you like most about the project you chose?
- What is one thing you learned from another person during this project?
- What are some other ways you can play a role in building community?