

## **A Year of Service Ideas**

Service is a key part of the Guiding program at all levels. When working with younger girls, or living in remote locations it can sometimes be difficult to find suitable ideas. Not all of the ideas on this list will be possible in every situation, but hopefully there are one or two for everyone. If your unit has created a new service opportunity – don't forget to share it! Helping others is something we can all be proud of.

**September** – Babysitting service. Have Pathfinders and older Guides run a babysitting service at a registration day, fall fair, or other community event. Provide games, toys, simple crafts, and a basic snack (depending on the time of day). A nominal fee can be charged, and the money donated to charity (such as UNICEF) if you wish.

**October** – UNICEF collection. October 31 is officially "UNICEF Day" in Canada. Many girls receive UNICEF collection boxes through school. Encourage all your girls to collect for UNICEF while they are trick-or-treating. Remind them to ask people for a donation, not just candy! Older girls who no longer trick-or-treat can go door-to-door for an hour or two collecting donations on Halloween or collect money from family and friends. Check out <http://www.unicef.ca> to order boxes and download resource material designed for teachers.

**November** – Remembrance Day. Contact your local legion to volunteer to assist with Remembrance Day services. Younger girls can make posters to advertise the ceremony and help hand out poppies or programs. Guides and Pathfinders can act as ushers or lay wreaths on behalf of organizations that don't have representatives present. Older girls can also handle jobs like carrying flags, reading a poem during the service, or serving coffee after the program. Encourage all members to attend – in uniform!

**December** – Christmas food hampers. Collect donations of food for your local food bank. In many communities there are no permanent food banks, in this case, check with local churches, social services, and organizations such as Santa's Anonymous to see if they are organizing any food or clothing drives during the holiday season.

**January** – Visit seniors. Elders receive a lot of attention during the Christmas season, and a visit during the slower time after Christmas is always appreciated. Make some paper flowers or pictures to brighten their rooms and practise a few songs or a skit to present. Encourage girls to spend time visiting and talking one-on-one with the seniors. Hold a regular weekly meeting at a senior's centre.

**February** – Collect money for the Canadian World Friendship Fund. This is the traditional Thinking Day pennies project within Guiding. Ask your girls to bring a few pennies each week all year long. Near Thinking Day empty your jar, count,

and roll your money. Pathfinders and Senior Branch girls may like to organise a community wide penny drive and collect funds door to door. Send your donations to: Girl Guides of Canada – Guides du Canada 50 Merton Street, Toronto, ON M4S 1A3. Be sure to indicate that your money is for the CWFF.

**March** – Blanket / Toy Drive. Collect clean, used blankets and stuffed toys for your local fire department or women's shelter. Check with the recipient organization first to see what they need most.

**April** - Easter cards and tray favours. Make cards or small crafts (such as Easter baskets) for hospital patients or wheels on meals recipients. Bake and decorate cookies to include with your cards.

**May** – Flowers for seniors. Decorate clay flowerpots with tempera paint (add a coat of clear varnish to finish) or decorate any container such as old milk cartons or plastic cups. Plant some marigold seeds in each one. Deliver them to seniors in your community. Practise a few spring songs such as "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head" and "You are My Sunshine" to sing during your visit.

**June** – Litter chase. When the snow melts, an entire winter's worth of trash is exposed. Purchase disposable plastic gloves and garbage bags (or ask a local business to donate them). Choose an area to clean up such as a schoolyard, park, or main street. Award prizes for things like the most bags filled, messiest garbage, smelliest, etc. Everyone from Sparks to adults can participate. Be sure to emphasize safety with respect to traffic and what not to pick up (glass, needles, etc.) Designate an adult "dangerous goods collector" to pick these up.