



# Idea Guide

## **DOWNRIVER**

### **Pregnancy Center**

1760 Fort St Lincoln Park, MI 48146  
(313) 386-4005

Volunteer to help with organizing, knit hats or booties for infants or connect to help with other needs

### **Downriver Foster Closet**

12431 Reeck Southgate, MI  
(734) 288-3698

[downriverfostercloset@gmail.com](mailto:downriverfostercloset@gmail.com)

Volunteer to help sort donations or serve at special events.

### **Golden Key Camp**

(313) 363-8610

[goldenkeycamp@yahoo.com](mailto:goldenkeycamp@yahoo.com)

Golden Key, which is a non-profit based out of Taylor, MI, helps send families on make-a-wish vacations. Gather your SmallGroup to help raise funds or donate funds for this local charity.

### **Hope Not Handcuffs**

(576) 438-8500

[fan@familiesagainstnarcotics.org](mailto:fan@familiesagainstnarcotics.org)

<https://www.familiesagainstnarcotics.org/hopenothandcuffs>

Volunteer to make care packages for young adults arrested due to narcotic use. Young adults are transitioned from jail to a drug rehab center with nothing but the clothes on their back. Get your Small Group together to help make care kits (toothbrushes, soap, socks, etc.) to help them get on their feet.

### **Little Dresses for Africa**

17830 Telegraph Rd. Brownstown, MI 48174  
(734) 637-9064

Help is always needed for LD4A! Bring your SmallGroup to help package boxes for shipping!

### **Methodist Children's Home Society**

26645 W 6 Mile Redford, MI 48240

(313) 531-4060

Orphanage in Redford, MI – housing boys ages 7-18); outreach opportunities consist of going on campus and hosting a game night, playing organized sports with the boys, hosting a donation for needed items (i.e school supplies, clothes, summer toys, etc.)

## **WASHTENAW**

### **(AWOL) All Worthy of Love anti-trafficking– Lunch Donations**

Group lunch donation of: 1 drink, 1 bag of chips, and 3 additional individually packaged non-perishable item. Drop off on Tuesday evenings at 7 pm at either the Ypsilanti & Brightmoore locations. Any number of lunches accepted with an overall goal of 200 per location. Cards of encouragement are always welcome. To contribute email [info@allworthoflove.org](mailto:info@allworthoflove.org).

### **Hope Clinic**

518 Harriet St. Ypsilanti, MI 48197

(734) 484-2989

Schedule a day to volunteer to help the staff/clinic - could be serving meals or helping to stock items. Fill out a volunteer application at <https://thehopeclinic.org/serve-with-hope> and then contact them to schedule a serve day.

### **Parkridge Community Center**

(734) 483-7700

591 Armstrong Dr, Ypsilanti MI 48197

### **Cross St. Village**

(734) 483-8300

210 W Cross St Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Cross St. Village are senior apartments for residence ages 55+. There is an activity center in the basement that is available to use to host fun events for the seniors. There is also a really nice outdoor patio where events could be hosted like a dance night.

## **UCC INTERNAL SERVE IDEAS**

**Date Night** - Offer date night out for church members; host home economics night for teens/tweens - teach how to cook something or do a craft (open your home)

**Switch it Up** - Rotate serving several widows or widowers in your church with once-a-month opportunities such as a housing project, providing small freezable meals or a seasonal need such as snow removal or grass cutting.

**Seasonal Work** - Once springtime brings warm weather, get a list of seniors who could use help mowing lawns, pulling weeds, fixing/cleaning gutters, pruning shrubs or other outside chores and have your group commit to a few of these projects. When the snows hit, be sure to reach out with snow removal or offer to salt stairs and sidewalks. Indoor chores like changing light bulbs, rides to medical procedures.

**Care Packages for Graduates** - Ask your youth pastor for a current list of high school graduates and send each a care package with an encouraging message, a devotional book and a gift card for necessities (even upperclassmen from your congregation will love this one). **Genius Tip:** Check out these [college care package tips and ideas](#) for inspiration.

**Summer Outreach** - If your small group takes a break for the summer, consider a once-a-season outreach to the community. Cover water bottles with promotional sleeves for your church's VBS or service times and hand them out at your local baseball field or swim meet.

## SENIORS & WIDOWS

**Snuggles for Singles** - Have your small group collect or create soft blankets, socks or pillowcases for widows and widowers in your congregation and deliver them with a warm meal and a hug. Your group can also do this for anyone in need of extra encouragement such as single parents, a family in crisis or children in foster care.

**Adopt a Nursing Home** - Connect with the activity director at a local nursing home and ask how you can support their residents. You can arrange visits from community members and families, or for the holidays you may provide a simple gift such as wrapped body wash or toiletries.

**Teach Computer Skills to Seniors** - You can help older community members understand how to communicate with their families, order items they may need, search for events and more through technology. Show them how to set up their email, use FaceTime or create social media accounts if they wish!

## OFFICERS & ARMED FORCES

**Appreciate Officers** - If you know an officer who works during services at your church (with traffic or safety duties) or a local school, take their name down and have your small group write a note of appreciation (an email is great too, and be sure to copy in the chief).

**Support First Responders** - Call the fire and police department to ask about volunteer opportunities at local outreach events like car seat safety (offer to help get the word out)

or toy drives for traumatized children they may encounter at the scene of an accident or house fire.

**Birthday Bags** - Create celebration kits for military service members in your congregation including a balloon, paper hat, confetti and card. Be sure to mail them in time for the service member's birthday.

## SCHOOLS

**Appreciation Gifts** - Give goody bags to the maintenance staff, special needs teachers and administrators at your local school. Include a reusable insulated coffee cup, sanitizing wipes, facial tissues and a small gift certificate to a local coffee or convenience store.

**Revive a Space** - Another excellent serving idea for schools is to spruce up the teacher's lounge of a struggling school or plant perennial flowers around the outside of the school. Contact the administration for permission and ideas.

**The Gift of Reading** - Have your small group be on the lookout throughout the year for discounted or free books for children, then funnel them to underserved schools or after-school tutoring programs who would be blessed by these resources. Write in the cover: Given with love from UCC! Great way to let people know about your congregation!

**Provide Classroom Supplies** - Though back-to-school supplies are great, things start getting thin by the first of the year and by May, supplies are really running low. Take the opportunity to grab pencils, lined paper, sanitizing wipes and tissues when they are on sale and drop of them off at a nearby school. You will become a local hero.

## MEDICAL

**Gifts for Children** - Do you have a local children's hospital? Consider a holiday-specific service project such as flags with a small flower for the 4th of July for each child on a specific floor, a stuffed animal as a special New Year's buddy or tiny costumes for preemies in the NICU ward for their first Halloween.

**Chemo Kits** - Contact a local oncology unit's volunteer director and ask for specific suggestions for assembling kits that would be helpful to their patients undergoing chemo. These can be kits for children or adults and contain comforting items such as candies to suck on, tissues, hand wipes, soft socks, coloring books and pens or crayons.

## MISC COMMUNITY SERVE IDEAS

**Corner Health Virtual Baby Showers**- be involved in a virtual baby shower for single moms in need <https://www.cornerhealth.org/>

**Gather Your Community** - Invite other small groups for a Saturday afternoon outreach to the neighborhood around your church. Advertise ahead of time with fliers put on front doors with washi tape. Have small group members bring games, set up tables around the gym or large meeting space, and invite families from the neighborhood.

**Letters to Missionaries** - Who doesn't love mail? Have your small group take an evening once a month to write letters of encouragement to missionaries your church supports.

**Christmas Cards for Missionaries** - Round up holiday photo cards or Christmas letters from anyone in your congregation who plans to send them out and mail copies to the missionaries in your church. Get enough for all those living overseas (families and singles) and save on postage by mailing them in one large bunch. What a meaningful gift for those living far away from home at the holidays!

**Sharing Resources** - Have small group members sell one item (or more) and give the proceeds to a local charity, mission trip or a church ministry. Dedicate a small group meeting to talk about the experience and study Acts 2:43-47.

**Blessing Baskets** - Your small group can adopt someone, either from your church or in the community, who receives chemotherapy and deliver a once-a-month or biweekly blessing basket to their front step with things like fresh fruit, gift cards for local smoothie shops, crackers, canned soups and hard candy. These don't need to be extravagant to be meaningful.

**Easter Egg Hunt** - Coordinate with the community center in a subsidized housing area to host an Easter egg hunt for children. Distribute fliers inviting everyone to your church's VBS or upcoming outreach event.

**Special Skills Outreach** - Does someone in your small group have a helpful skill such as art, music, cooking or maintenance skills (car or house upkeep)? Host a free pop-up class for the community. Have small group members help with organizing, hosting and welcoming participants from the community. **Genius Tip:** Post fliers with a [link for registration to a SignUpGenius page](#) so that you can put a cap on class attendance.

**House Helpers** - Find ways to help foster families in your community by offering Saturday house helpers (the foster parents are home, but you are there to entertain kids so they can nap, shower or take a break). Plan to assemble gift baskets that are ready for delivery when they get a call for a new foster child (diapers and baby supplies or toiletry needs and games for older children) or surprise them with a front porch drop off of kid-friendly snacks (individual popcorn bags, juice boxes, fruit).

**Resources for Refugees** - If your small group is passionate about helping underserved communities, look for ongoing serving opportunities with local refugees and offer to provide meals and transportation on an ongoing basis. Alternatively, share conversation

over coffee to help refugees practice speaking English while you learn about their culture as well.

**Free Childcare** - Your small group can provide Saturday morning childcare free-of-charge (ask your church if you can use the nursery or large rooms for play) once a month for single parents in your community for shopping or catching up on their to-do list.

**Compile Ideas** - Create a “Let’s Go Serve!” binder for your small group and start collecting service ideas. Talk to the senior pastor or member care staff at your church for ideas of congregants or community organizations who might appreciate help with one-time projects or have ongoing needs. This binder can be your jumping-off point for serving and is great to share with other small groups who are inspired by your generosity.

**Partner with Parks and Rec** - Parks and Recreation departments offer lots of service opportunities for one-time beautification projects, plus special events like dances for seniors, community festivals and seasonal events.

**Deck the Halls with Tiny Trees** – Decorating mini trees can be a fun service project to do as a group and then deliver to family shelters, group homes or a veterans hospitals.

**Help Animals Get Adopted** - Your local chapter of The Humane Society probably hosts one-time adoption events and needs volunteers to help fill out paperwork for adoptions and clean up after the event.

**Create Birthday Parties in a Box** - Make “Birthday Boxes” that include balloons, a cake mix (just add water), mug, birthday hats, candles and streamers. Donate to a family shelter so when a birthday comes up, they have an instant party available.

**Create Goodie Bags** - Gather neighborhood friends and put together care packs to keep in your car to serve the needy you see on the street. Include a granola bar, water and basic toiletries inside a Ziploc bag.

**Collect Humane Society Wish List Items** - A good way to involve younger volunteers, collect items off your local animal shelter’s wish list — such as toys, treats, old towels or blankets — to help take care of the animals.

**Give a Basket Baby Shower** - Throw a baby (or big kid) shower for a foster family by packing commonly needed items in baskets. Get names from a local family services organization and drop off the baskets so they can pass them on to the families.

**Meet Critical Needs** - Host a “critical needs” drive for the Red Cross or a local shelter, collecting new items such as socks, underwear, diapers and toiletries.

**Give the Gift of Hugs** - Loving Hugs and Stuffed Animals for Emergencies are nonprofit organizations that give stuffed toys to kids in crisis situations. Host a stuffed animal drive at your church or school to help serve these great charities.

**Tutor Future Leaders** - If you have a high-poverty school in your area (most school districts have a list of Title 1 schools) and have time during the day, offer to tutor, proctor tests or read tests aloud to students. This makes a huge difference in student success.

**'Tis the Season for Service** - Look for seasonal opportunities to help process donations for organizations such as Toys for Tots or Operation Christmas Child. Make sure donations fit the guidelines for the charity.

**Spread Cheer through Song** - Gather your school choir or college a cappella group (or any group that loves music) and sing at a retirement community or homeless shelter. Whether you're belting out carols during the holidays or classics that everyone loves year-round, the simple gift of music can serve others by bringing joy.

**Get Bookish** - Search your local public library's website for shelving and organizing opportunities or special events where an extra set of volunteer hands are needed.

**Write Encouraging Notes** - Organize a holiday card-making party and write encouraging notes to those in the hospital, nursing homes or for your local heroes such as firefighters and police officers.

**Girls Just Wanna Have Fun (While Making a Difference)** - Gather your women's book club, Bible study or girls' night out group and plan a service project "for the ladies." Family and women's shelters always need women's feminine products, so host a night of fun and collect donations for an organization in your community.

**Welcome Newcomers** - Create "Welcome to (your school, church or community)" baskets or bags that include a map, list of interesting facts or organizations and something to show your school or community spirit — like a printed pencil or water bottle sticker. Distribute to newcomers and become a self-designated welcome wagon!

**Stuff Envelopes** - This might not sound glamorous, but many nonprofits need helping hands to stuff envelopes with fundraising mailers or thank you notes. Set aside an hour or two and get to work!

**Volunteer at a Local Race** - Is there a local 5K raising money for a cause that's important to you? Consider supporting the race by working at registration, clean-up or at a water station along the way.

**Organize an Angel Tree** - Get your business, church or group involved in a great cause by adopting local families during the holidays and providing presents and other important basic necessities. **Genius Tip:** Get ideas for [organizing a holiday angel tree program](#).

**Make Hospital Hope Kits** - Create these kits and leave for residents at a local Ronald McDonald house or similar group. You can also contact a nearby emergency room and see if they will accept these types of care packages. Include donated magazines, granola bars, bottled waters, lip balm, mints, etc.

**Lead Through Reading** - Organize a summer reading program at a community center. Offer to read aloud to younger students or arrange summer reading tutoring for elementary-age students. Ask the community center director to see if older children in the community could join your effort and mentor younger students as well. **Genius Tip:** Get tips for setting up a [summer reading program](#).

**Pack Weekend Lunches** - Find — or start — a local program that packs nonperishable items for weekend lunches for low-income school children. This extra nourishment can be invaluable.

**Love Your Neighbors** - Use a social networking site to let neighbors know you'd like to do seasonal yard work like raking leaves, shoveling snow, putting up outdoor holiday lights or light yard work for any senior citizens in the area.