



## The Freedom Project

Weekly Reader and Champions of Hope will encourage schools across America to organize volunteer projects called "Freedom Projects" to honor the brave men and women in our military. Schools will perform service projects:

1. To let the military know America's children appreciate their sacrifice.
2. To turn their appreciation into action and strengthen America.
3. To teach young people that what they do makes a difference.

## Freedom Lives

Plant a Red, White and Blue garden! We will encourage students to get permission to plant flowers at local libraries, for families of those serving overseas, at VFW Centers and at schools. We will also encourage classrooms to involve veterans in this project.

### All You'll Need

- Access to water
- Plants, seedlings, trees
- Bucket
- Fertilizer
- Garden hose
- Gardening gloves
- Hammer
- Mulch
- Soil
- Shovel
- Stakes (to help the tree stand up straight)
- American flags
- Yellow ribbons

## Start It Up

1. Register your project with Champions of Hope online at [www.championsofhope.org](http://www.championsofhope.org).
2. Recruit your friends, family and classmates for your team;. Share the Freedom Lives message.
3. Get the help of an adult mentor. This could be a teacher, school administrator, parent or other trusted community member.
4. Ask your mentor to help spread the word to others in the community, including local radio, television and newspapers.
5. Select the right type of garden for your climate by visiting [www.kidsgardening.com](http://www.kidsgardening.com). At this site, you will find all the tools and resources you need to plant a great garden!
6. Make a timeline of everything you need to do.
7. Ask your mentor to help find a location to plant the garden. Things to consider include: Does your school have a plan for planting or landscaping? Is there plenty of room for the roots to grow? Are there underground utility lines?
8. Get permission to plant at the location that has been selected, paying attention to land use ordinances and underground wires.
9. Ask your mentor or parent to take you to your local Home Depot or Wal-Mart. Ask to speak with the store manager. Explain to the store manager what you're doing and invite them to be a part of your project by contributing supplies. Tell the store manager that his or her store will be recognized as the sponsoring store in all the media coverage and at the event.
10. Contact the media before the event. Encourage them to cover the event. It'll make a great photo opportunity, after all. Go to the Spirit of America front page for our Public Relations Tip Sheet.
11. Have a "Plan B" in case of bad weather.

## Get the Word Out

1. Put up posters and hand out flyers.
2. Include day, time and place of the event.
3. Explain that you're part of Weekly Reader and Champions of Hope.
4. Describe your group and why the event is so important.
5. Explain how the event works.

## The Day Before the Event

1. Make a list of all your recruits, along with their shifts and the supplies they will bring.
2. Remind everyone where to show up, shift times and supplies.

## The Day of Freedom Lives

1. Call the team members together for a quick meeting. Remind them why what they are doing is important. Make sure that everyone knows what to do.
2. Tell them when you want the project to end and when you will all meet up again.
3. Distribute necessary supplies.
4. When new volunteers join the effort or relieve others, make sure that they understand their new job assignment. Don't forget to thank volunteers who have to leave early.
5. Make sure that participants thank each person who contributes to this cause.

## When You're Done

1. Clean up the Freedom Lives site. Return all extra supplies.
2. Celebrate your accomplishment and congratulate everyone for making a difference.
4. Tell the media about your success.
5. Type "Freedom Lives" on the subject line and email Champions of Hope at [oneteam@championsofhope.org](mailto:oneteam@championsofhope.org).

Tell us about your Red, White, and Blue garden. We want to share your success story on our website. Feel free to send pictures and other information about your project so we can share your success with military families and troops overseas!