



Reflecting on Service During Social Distancing

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Spring is here, and while we're practicing social distancing, we can continue to join one another in celebrating the steps we're taking with community engagement and move forward to new opportunities. We express gratitude for all of you who have extended yourselves by volunteering to assist tornado victims, assembling and delivering food boxes, sharing resources, and generally, just taking care of our neighbors. We continue to demonstrate the meaning of being the "Volunteer State."

As we move through these difficult days and weeks ahead, let's learn from some of those who have demonstrated excellence in service. [Volunteer Tennessee's March newsletter](#) named the sixteen schools across Tennessee who had earned the Award of Excellence for their service during the 2018-19 school year. Among these, [Middle Tennessee Christian School](#) (Murfreesboro, TN) held a special Candle Wishes Birthday Party for 60 children and their families with students planning, fund-raising, and implementing the event, in addition to their annual mission trips and school-wide drives and activities. [Jackson Central-Merry Early College High School](#) (Jackson, TN) students took their affinity for art to heart by painting murals at the Juvenile Detention Center, painting cartoon characters on classroom doors at a newly renovated elementary school and giving original artwork to residents at a nursing home.



Students painted murals at the local Juvenile Detention Center.

Although most of us can't be out and about in the community right now, Volunteer Tennessee urges schools to let us know what you've done this year. The application for the Award of Excellence for service during the 2019-20 school year will be available in May, so begin now to compile your information and be ready to share the wonderful ways your students are involved in serving others.

Meanwhile, if you have the chance, continue to engage your students in service through an online resource, [Students Rebuild](#), a free "ready-made adventure in global learning for K-12 students that calls on their thinking, creativity and compassion." Visit www.studentsrebuild.org/ for informative, practical information about global issues and ways students can encourage others across the world through art, note-writing, and fund-raising.

While we have limited mobility right now, let's continue to plan ahead, grasp the opportunities available to us, and look toward the future. Volunteer Tennessee is here to support you and to celebrate with you.

[Volunteer Tennessee](#) is a 25 member bipartisan board appointed by the Governor to encourage volunteerism and community service. Volunteer Tennessee pursues its mission through administration of AmeriCorps grants, training and collaborations and coalitions with public and private organizations interested in volunteerism and service. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).