Titles for Exploring Service Learning & Civic Engagement

Picture Books

**Sam Johnson and the Blue Ribbon Quilt**
Lisa Campbell Ernst
*Ages 6-10*

Farmer Sam Johnson accidentally falls in love with quilting, but is surprised to find that his local quilting circle doesn’t welcome men. He starts his own community quilting group, and prepares a quilt for the local fair. When circumstances dictate that the two groups work together, they’re able to set aside their differences and collaborate for the common good.

**Tille and the Wall**
Leo Leonni
*Ages 5+*

Tillie’s mouse community has always lived next to a great wall, but until Tillie, no mouse has bothered to wonder what lies beyond. Driven by curiosity, determination, and fascination for the place in which she lives, Tillie works tirelessly to explore the space beyond. Tillie makes an important discovery, her hard work benefiting her own community greatly. Tillie’s story illustrates the role that vision and determination play in authentic civic engagement, and the benefits that these qualities can have for entire communities.

**Fireboat**
Maira Kalman
*Ages 8+*

Owned by a curious group of friends, the retired fireboat John J. Harvey is little more than creative entertainment. When the Twin Towers are attacked, however, the crew of the John J. Harvey is called upon to help to fight the fire. The group rises to the occasion, showing selfless service to their urban community.
Nobody Particular: One Woman’s Fight to Save the Bays
Molly Bang
Ages 14+
Diane Wilson lived a simple and traditional Texas coast life: she was a hardworking shrimper and a mother. After learning that she lived in one of the most polluted counties in the entire country, Diane dove into activism and fought against a major petrochemical company to protect the local environment.

Chapter Books

Crunch
Leslie Connor
Ages 11+
At a time in the not-so-far-away future, gas pumps nationwide have run dry, leaving people stranded - including Dewey Marriss’ parents. Dewey and his family are relied upon as local bike mechanics, and their services become even more previous during the so-called crunch, when traditional vehicles are impossible to use. Dewey puts his skills to use and helps his community stay afloat during uncertain times, and his service to his community even allows him to help solve a crime!

My Brigadista Year
Katherine Paterson
Ages 11+
Thirteen-year-old Lora has just seen Fidel Castro become the new leader of her country, Cuba. Castro has promised to bring literacy to the entire country in just twelve months, and Lora feels called to help make it happen. She becomes a brigadista, a member of an army of volunteers prepared to bring literacy to members of rural communities across Cuba. Lora’s work is risky and filled with danger, yet she doesn’t let this keep her from working tirelessly to fulfill her duties as a brigadista.
Nonfiction

The Kid’s Guide to Social Action
Barbara A. Lewis
Adult

This guide for facilitating social action work with youth includes a variety of resources. Read stories of real kids who are changing their own communities, use step-by-step guides to social action to carry out projects, and get inspired by templates for social action tools. The resources included in this text can be used to facilitate civic engagement with all ages.

Rad American Women A-Z
Kate Schatz, Miriam Klein Stahl
Ages 10+

This alphabet book isn’t for babies - it’s filled with 26 incredible women whose work is notable in a wide variety of fields. These inspiring women accomplished big things through civic engagement, and dedicated their lives to making change and - often - serving others. Use to learn about what civic engagement can accomplish, or utilize as a source of inspiration for your own community work.