

Pets Are Family, Too!

Learning Targets

- Discover organizations in your community that help pets
- Collaborate with peers to help meet needs for an organization

Standards

- UN SDG 15 – life on land
- NFTE Entrepreneurial Mindsets – Critical Thinking; Communication & Collaboration

Age Range

- 2nd grade and up

Time Commitment

- 20 minutes
- Additional time to execute



Not all pets like dogs or cats have a home. Some animals are mistreated or abandoned. Often people don't realize the responsibility of taking on a pet, so they send them back to shelters or abandon them. According ASPCA, approximately 7.6 million companion animals enter animal shelters nationwide every year. Of those, approximately 3.9 million are dogs and 3.4 million are cats. That is a lot of animals who need homes! Many nonprofit organizations like your local Humane Society or another animal rescue organization are committed to helping solve these problems.

Your Challenge

Most animal shelters or rescues would like monetary donations, but there is often much more you can do to help them with your time and talents.

What animal focused nonprofits operate in your area? Which animal issues are they helping to impact? What do they need to help maintain their services? Could you spend time with animals up for adoption; read to them, walk them? Can you use your talents to help get the word out about their campaigns or clean the kennels? Are there things you can do or make from home or school, like collecting pet food donations or making toys, blankets, etc.?

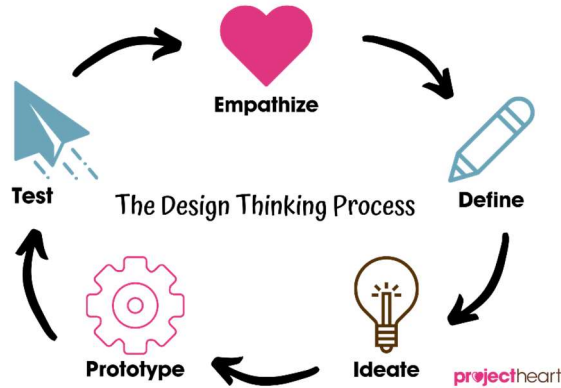
Why do you think animals are abandoned or lost? What can be done to help prevent animals from being abandoned or lost? What more can be done? Can you and your friends devise a campaign to spread the word about the work of the shelter or spay/neutering (think social media and viral TikToks)? Can you run an event to get more people involved?

Helpful websites could be

- <https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-animal-homelessness>
- <https://www.humanesociety.org/all-our-fights>
- <https://www.aspca.org/>
- <https://anticruelty.org/diy>
- https://academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Viral_marketing
- Search “animal rescue” or “animal shelter” in your local area

Getting Started

To effectively create change, you need to follow a plan of action. We use the Design Thinking Process to help us better understand the problem we see and walk us through steps to creating a plan to make a difference!



The Design Thinking Process



Empathize

To **empathize** means to understand and share the feelings of another. As it relates to the design thinking process and [Project Heart](#), to empathize specifically means to learn about the audience or group that you wish to impact.



Define

Define means to share your problem statement with others. As it relates to Project Heart, the define stage of design thinking means you've thought about your personal passions and how to apply the 3Ts of your group to make a greater social impact. The define stage helps you clearly state the need or problem so others can understand.



Ideate

To **ideate** means to form an idea, thought or concept. As it relates to the design thinking process, to ideate specifically means to brainstorm ideas based on what you have learned about your target audience and the point of view or problem statement you have defined. Related to Project Heart, your ideas should also incorporate the specific time, talent and/or treasure that you wish to contribute.



Prototype

To **prototype** means to model or create an example. As it relates to Project Heart, to prototype specifically means to plan out in detail one of your impact project ideas.



Test

To **test** means to check the quality, reliability or performance of something. As it relates to the design thinking process, to test specifically means to gain feedback on your prototype from your target population. As it relates to Project Heart, testing means implementing your plan and reflecting on your success and failures.

Activity

Use the spaces below to work through the design thinking process.

Tips: To build empathy, do some research and potentially interview experts in the field. Discover the problems and then ask what you can do aside from donating money.

When you've decided on your prototype idea, remember to access the Illumination Fund for materials funding or a matching donation. Remember, donations can be matched to fundraising dollars, but you can also assign a monetary value to items you collect.

<https://myprojectheart.org/illumination-fund>



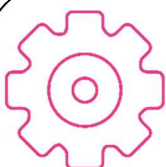
Empathize



Define



Ideate



Prototype



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Reflect