

Whitinsville Christian High School

Service Hours Program

Why a Service program?

Service is an important part of a comprehensive Christian education. Service provides the opportunity to apply what has been learned in the home, at church, and in the classroom. Some of the inherent benefits include:

Obedience to God's Command

It is the Lord's command that we serve one another in love. "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: "love your neighbor as yourself." Gal. 5:13-14

Expression of Love for God

Service is an expression of our love for God as we love our neighbors. "Serve the Lord wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free." Ephesians 6:6-7

Development of Christian Maturity

Service opportunities help develop Christian maturity and provide venues for the Lord to teach us more about Himself and the Christian life. In the process of serving, we learn more about ourselves, our interests, and our strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge is critical if we are to develop into mature Christians seeking God's will and plan for our lives.

Sharing of Individual Gifts

In I Corinthians 12, the church is compared to a body, and each member has a different function or gift. These gifts are to be developed and used for the good of the body. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." I Peter 4:10

Encouragement of Leadership Skills

"Whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant: and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be a slave of all." Mark 10:43-44 Just as Christ came to serve, the effective Christian leader has the heart of a servant. Service opportunities lay a foundation for developing the servants' perspective of leadership.

Preparation for the Future

Students who have participated in service opportunities have a greater understanding of themselves and their roles in the church, community, and school community. They are better equipped to make realistic decisions about career goals and future plans. Students are more qualified candidates for employment, college admissions, scholarships and various types of financial aid.

GUIDELINES

1. Fifteen service hours are required by all high school students each year. Students must accumulate service hours from more than one activity each year. For example, a 40-hour mission trip does not satisfy the requirement. The student must do another service activity. Hours are recorded on a Service Hours form. Forms are in the office and also may be downloaded and printed from the school website.
2. Additional service hours over the required 15 hours are encouraged to be reported and will be noted on the academic transcript, provided they meet the requirements.
3. Deadlines: Eight service hours are due in early January. The remaining seven hours are due in early May. At the beginning and throughout the school year, students are frequently reminded about the requirement. Given the ample amount of time and opportunity to complete the required hours, all students who do not meet these deadlines will receive a detention once every two weeks after the due date until the requirement is met.
4. Students must complete service hours to be promoted to the next grade level. Completed service hours are a requirement for graduation.

What is service?

Service opportunities are those activities where the student volunteers their time with no compensation or tangible benefit to the student providing the service.

Types of Service

Church related activities includes service that directly benefits a church and its ministries. Church-related service includes voluntary commitments in Sunday school or children's ministry leadership (including helpers), choir or other musical contribution, youth leadership positions, mission trips initiated through a church, outreach activities, Vacation Bible School or similar program, work done for upkeep of the church building or grounds, or work done at related organizations for which membership is limited to a specific church or church(es).

For mission trips or similar service, a maximum of 8 hours of service will be given per day. For example, if the mission trip lasted 5 days (excluding travel time), students will be allowed to record a maximum of 40 service hours.

For participation in a church service, the time reported for service hours may include group practice time and the actual time spent in the activity during the church service.

Community related activities includes service directly in contact with your own community or the greater community. Opportunities include mentors, nursing home visitors (i.e., St. Camillus), food pantry volunteers, hospital volunteers, commons cleanup day activities, camp volunteers, and youth sports coaching. Opportunities may also include mission trips and programs such as Vacation Bible School.

For summer camp volunteers or similar service, a maximum of 8 hours of service will be given per day. For example, if the time spent at camp was 7 days (excluding travel time), students will be allowed to record a maximum of 56 service hours.

School related activities includes those opportunities that directly impact the students and community of WCS. Such activities might include peer tutoring, Crusader Outreach events, teacher/office aides (non credit), Parents' Organization volunteer, Auction volunteer, Magazine Drive counters, visitor hosts, custodial work. Note: Fundraising for a school activity that directly assists the student is not permitted as a service hour.

Where do I find opportunities to serve?

Opportunities to serve are abundant; you just need to be aware. If you see a need in your community, take the opportunity to fill it. Watch your church bulletins or announcements. Speak with your pastor. Serve in a ministry at church. Listen to school announcements for opportunities to help at school. Join Crusader Outreach (advisor is Mr. Vriesema) and participate in activities they coordinate including Operation Christmas Child, mentoring, nursing home visits, and others. Ask if the office or a teacher needs help.

What is not accepted towards the service hour requirement?

Helping someone in any manner is certainly encouraged by WCS. It shows a servant's heart, and is commendable. However, there are certain types of help that we have determined do not meet the goals of the service hour requirement at WCS. We have listed a few guidelines below of service that **typically will be denied** toward the service hour requirement.

- Helping immediate or extended family members at home or at their place of business. Helping your family is expected as being part of that family and will typically be denied toward the service hours requirement. Examples include raking, snow shoveling, driving ill members to appointments, or other help to family members. In addition, work done at a family-owned business even if the student is not paid does not count toward the requirement. Thirdly, helping a family member at their place of employment (even at a non-profit organization) will not be accepted unless the volunteer work completed decreases the amount of pay available to the family member.
- Work done for a for-profit organization in lieu of being paid does not count toward the requirement unless there are special circumstances approved by the administration.
- Travel time spent to get to the place where you will provide a service cannot be included in the service hours reported.

SUGGESTED SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

SCHOOL

Teacher/Office Aide - Set a schedule to be an aide to a specific teacher during a scheduled study hall time - Coordinated through Mr. Vriesema (Guidance Counselor) at the beginning of each semester. Although this opportunity was originally set up as an option to receive course credits, a student may choose to complete this service partly or in whole as service without course credit. Requires a one-semester commitment.

Treasures - Help at the thrift store in Grafton, which benefits all WCS students by contributing profits to tuition. Email schedule@valleytreasures.org.

Apple Pie Fundraiser - Annually in October - Volunteers are solicited through morning announcements, email, and the Newsletter.

Spring Auction - Typically in April - Volunteers are needed with set up, during the auction, and take-down. Volunteers are solicited through morning announcements, email, and the Newsletter in March/early April.

COMMUNITY

Vacation Bible School or similar summer Bible camp - Watch your church's announcements and community announcements to volunteer.

Community Harvest Project, Grafton - Help grow and cultivate vegetables for the needy in the Worcester area. March-October/November. Visit www.community-harvest.org for more information.

Community Clean-up Days - Many towns hold community clean-up days each spring and fall. Watch your newspapers and community bulletin boards for announcements.

Salvation Army - help in their thrift stores or ring bells during the holiday season. Contact Salvation Army for details.

Operation Christmas Child - Wrap boxes and pack them with school and health supplies for the needy. Help is solicited through morning announcements and Newsletter usually in October and early November each year. Coordinated through Crusader Outreach (Mr. Vriesema, advisor).

Visit the Elderly - Contact local nursing homes or assisted living facilities.

Fundraiser walks - Participate in walks such as the Cancer Walk, Walk for Hunger, or Crop Walk (many others occur throughout the year). Watch the Newsletter and/or announcements for groups set up through school.

Food Pantry - Help out at local food pantries.

CHURCH

Help out with children's programs, including nursery. Contact the person in charge of these ministries at your church.

Office aide - Contact the office administrator at your church to see if there is anything you can do to help.

Join the Choir or Praise Team to use your musical abilities in worship. Contact the Music Director at your church.