

Service-Learning Program Requirements

Becoming a Woman of Compassionate Service:

The purpose of Mercy's Service-Learning Program is to help you become a woman of compassionate service. Inspired by Catherine McAuley's own service to the poor and marginalized, Mercy High School desires for you to find and orient your own gifts, passions, and dreams towards the generous service of those in need.

The best way for your life to become one of compassionate service is to practice—to get involved with the needs and people of our community and let yourself be changed, even as you change others. Towards that end, we are asking you to do at least 20 hours of service in the community each year at Mercy—not simply for recognition or for grades, but to open yourself to the possibility of transformation.

What is expected of me?

Minimum of 20 hours each year to be completed at 501c3 Non-Profit Organization(s), senior centers, or hospitals

- Core Hours: 10 hours must be in Direct Service with a marginalized population
- Supplemental Hours: 10 hours of Direct or Indirect Service beyond your Core Hours
- Reflections in your Religion Classes

The most important requirement is that you enter these service experiences with an open heart, open mind, and reverential respect of the people you will meet. So much goodness awaits you and the people you will serve!



CORE HOURS

10 Hours

Must be with 501c3 Non-Profit Organizations, senior centers, or hospitals

Must be Direct Service with a marginalized population

Examples: Serving with organizations that put you in contact with children from low-income backgrounds, people with physical or developmental disabilities, elderly, sick, homeless.



SUPPLEMENTAL HOURS

10 Hours

Must be with 501c3 Non-Profit Organizations, senior centers, or hospitals

These hours are more flexible—you can continue with Direct Service, or branch out with other kinds of service.

Examples: More Direct Service, Mercy Hours with Ambassador's Club, SPCA, Environmental Conservation, Food Banks, Leading Church Retreats or Religious Education.



- Examples of activities that do not qualify for Service-Learning Hours: Required service hours for Honor Societies, Mercy leadership positions, tutoring peers, donations, working for a business, babysitting, paid service, political campaigning, or participation in religious worship (e.g. altar serving or lecturing).
- If you have questions about whether or not a Service site qualifies, ask your Religion Teacher or the Service-Learning Coordinator *before* engaging in the activity.

Frequently Asked Questions

"To connect the rich to the poor, the healthy to the sick, the educated and the skilled to the uninstructed, the influential to those forgotten, and the powerful to the weak...to do the work of God on Earth. "

~Catherine McAuley

What do you mean by service to “marginalized populations”?

Marginalized populations are those that are excluded or pushed to the edge of society and therefore have a harder time gaining access to housing, employment, food, education, health, or acceptance. Some populations that are often excluded or devalued in our society are people with physical or developmental disabilities, immigrants, women and children from low-income backgrounds, elderly, homeless, people who are or have been incarcerated, and victims of domestic violence. While society may push some people to the edge, Jesus in the Gospels invites us to go directly to the margins to accompany people whose lives and situations are more vulnerable and challenging. We are called to be God’s Mercy on the margins.

Where can I look for Service opportunities?

www.volunteermatch.org

Volunteer Match does exactly that—you can put in key words such as “hunger,” “people with disabilities,” and it will match you with organizations in your area that need your help. It also shows which places are good fits for teens.

www.volunteerinfo.org

Volunteer Info is a website that provides direct links to many community service organizations throughout the Bay Area. You can browse these organizations according to Name and Geographic Location.

www.handsonbayarea.org

Hands On Bay Area organizes volunteer events throughout the Bay Area according to your age, your interests, and your availability. You can serve on your own and meet others, or you can go with friends and family too.

[Mercy’s Website](#)

Mercy’s website lists a number of organizations that students can volunteer with. They are organized according to the type of service: to youth, environment, homeless, etc.

What is a 501c3 Non-Profit Organization, and why is it important?

A 501c3 is an organization whose primary concern is serving the community without concern for profit or political gain. By having you serve at Non-Profit Organizations (rather than “for-profit businesses”), we hope you will find yourself connecting with the people and organizations who are most in need throughout our community. The only “for-profit” organizations that you may serve at are senior centers and hospitals, because they serve such vulnerable populations who need extra comfort and companionship.

How do I know if an organization is a 501c3 Non-Profit?

In addition to simply asking the organization itself, you can search their website. Most religious organizations and charitable organizations have 501c3 status. You can also check here for a fairly comprehensive list of Non-Profits in the Bay Area:

www.volunteerinfo.org/comprehensive-non-profit-list

When can I start counting hours?

Freshmen can count their hours once they start at Mercy. After freshmen year, you can start counting your hours for the next year once summer starts.

When do I need to complete my hours, and how are they graded?

To receive an “A” on your report card, you must turn in your hours by Monday, May 16th, 2013. You will receive a “B” if handed in by Thursday, May 30th, and an “F” if you do not complete your hours. Your Religion Teachers may give you deadlines for your Core Hours throughout the year so that you can participate in individual and class reflections. This will also help keep you on track for your final May 16th deadline!

How do I document my hours during the year?

Pick up and return Service Forms to your Religion Teacher. Make sure to take the form to your service site and have your volunteer supervisor sign it. The Service Form is also available on Mercy’s website.