CHS Community Service Involvement (CSI) Requirement
General Definitions & Guidelines

Community service activities are those which students perform to benefit at least one other unrelated person and for which they receive no compensation or academic credit. In most cases students will be working under the auspices of an organization-town government, school, non-profit organization, hospital, nursing home, or newspaper. Service to benefit for-profit businesses is NOT applied to the requirement.

Community service may be performed at any time during students' high school careers, from the summer before freshman year until the last day of classes their senior year. This includes free blocks at school as well as all non-school times and vacations within the freshman-to-senior time frame. Students are strongly encouraged to complete at least 20 hours of service by the end of the sophomore year, and senior privileges (second semester senior year) are dependent, in part, on completion of the community service requirement.

Activity format is flexible. Students may elect to engage in a single activity or many, over an extended or concentrated period of time.

The 40-hour requirement will be prorated for students entering Cambridge High School after the freshman year; 10 hours of service will be required for each year at CHS.

Specific Guidelines

Service for academic credit. Community service for which students receive academic credit is NOT applied toward the 40-hour requirement. This includes activities performed through independent studies and the community service course.

Service through the judicial system. Community service which is court-assigned is NOT applied toward the 40-hour requirement.

Organization-based service. In general, service performed for profit-making organizations is NOT applicable, with the exception of hospitals, nursing homes, and newspapers. Service performed for individuals should be performed under the umbrella of an organization (e.g., tutoring a student through a school, helping the elderly through the Council on Aging). Activities to help a friend or neighbor typically do NOT count toward the requirement.

Service through religious organizations. In order to be applicable, an activity may not be associated with the rituals, services, or ceremonies of any specific religion, proselytizing, or fund raising to support a specific religion or religious institution.

Thus, participation in religious services (e.g., choir membership, altar service, reading from the Torah), while worthy endeavors, is NOT counted. However, educational activities and non-religious activities which benefit the religious community (in non-financial ways) or the community at large ARE applicable.

Examples of applicable religious-sponsored service activities include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Teaching Sunday school or CCD
- Baby-sitting during religious services
- Painting church or synagogue buildings and classrooms
- Clothing drives
- Work in shelters
- Church mission trips to Habitat for Humanity or Community Volunteers

Selling Christmas trees/wreaths or helping with church or synagogue rummage sales is applicable only if the proceeds are used for charitable purposes and are not for the benefit of the sponsoring religious institution.

Participation (as members or officers) in religious youth groups is NOT generally applicable unless the groups are organizing and/or performing specific community service activities.

Traditional school-sponsored activities. Activities performed which are traditional after-school activities are NOT applicable. Thus, participation (as officers or as members) in student government, marching band, National Honor Society, and clubs and teams are NOT applicable unless the groups are organizing and/or performing specific community service activities. Managing athletic teams falls under this traditional after-school activity category and is NOT applicable.

Examples of applicable traditional school-sponsored activities include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- National Honor Society service activities (e.g canned food drive)
- Student Senate charity drives
- Cambridge Community Service Club activities

Summer Camps. If other community service guidelines are met (related to compensation, type of organization, religious practices) CSI hours spent in the actual organization and performance of specific community service activities ARE applicable. **NOTE:** Traditional counselor-in-training positions in for-profit camps are NOT applicable.

Charity Walks. Each charity walk is assigned a specific number of service hours for completing the walk, provided the student solicits pledges. Walking in solidarity without raising money for the cause will not earn hours. In addition, extra hours may be earned by fundraising; for every 10 pledges or $100 (whichever works more to the student's benefit) raised, a student earns an extra half-hour of service. Copies of the pledge sheets will serve as verification.

Activities Not Eligible for Service Credit (Recap)

- Service for which academic credit is earned
- Court-ordered service
- Service for individuals (e.g. friends, neighbors) without an umbrella organization
- Service at for-profit businesses (e.g., law firms, landscape companies)
- Participation in religious rites, services or ceremonies (e.g. , altar service, choir, Torah reading)
- Proselytizing
- Fundraising to support religious institutions (e.g., most rummage sales)
- Traditional after-school activities, unless service activities are performed
- CSI positions at for-profit camps and/or where CSI's pay reduced fees to attend

Notes

Documenting your hours. In order to receive community service credit, verification forms (signed by supervisor and parent) MUST be turned in to the Community Service Coordinator, preferably within 2 weeks of completion of the service. Any summer hours must be turned in the 1st week of school. (This applies to EVERY service activity, even if organized by the Coordinator!) SIMPLY PERFORMING SERVICE DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY PROVIDE CREDIT!!

Forms are available in the main office, from the CSI Coordinator, as well as online.

Exceptions to guidelines. Any exceptions to the definitions and guidelines can only be made with the knowledge and approval of the Community Service Coordinator.

President's Student Service Challenge Awards. Any student may earn this national award by completing at least 100 hours of verified community service according to the following schedule:

- **Freshmen:** Service must be performed between June 18, 2008 and April 30, 2009.
- **Upperclassmen:** Service must be performed between May 1, 2008 and April 30, 2009.

Examples of activities

Cultural & Historical
- Museum Guide/Aide
- Historical Park Guide
- State House Guide
- Charitable Theatrical & Musical Performances

Education
- Tutor
- Library or Office Assistant

Environment
- Recycling Projects
- Conservation Projects
- Habitat Preservation
- Maintenance & Cleanup Projects
- Park Service Work

Social & Civic Action
- Elections
- Charitable Fund Raising or Collection Drives
- Soup Kitchen or Shelter Volunteer
- Political Action Groups
- Charitable Walk-a-thons or Road Races
- Food/Clothing Drives

Recreation
- Team Coach or Referee
- Activity Instructor

Health & Social
- Hospital Aide
- Handicapped Aide
- Nursing Home Assistant
- Senior Citizen Activities

Cambridge City Schools
- Middle & Elementary School Tutoring
- Audio-Visual Aide
- Peer Tutoring
- Library Aide

Cambridge
- Health Department
- Fire Department
- Library
- Guernsey County Historical Society
- Salvation Army Food Pantry
- Southeast Ohio Regional Medical Center
- Police Department
- Recreation/Parks Department
- Council on Aging
- Humane Society
- Dog Pound (Pound Partners)
- Grace Pantry

Why do it?

Service-learning has a positive effect on the personal development of public school youth.

- Middle and high school students who engaged in quality service-learning programs showed increases in measures of personal and social responsibility, communication and sense of educational competence (Weiler, et. al., 1998).
- Students who engaged in service-learning ranked responsibility as a more important value and reported a higher sense of responsibility to their school than comparison groups (Leming, 1998).
- Students perceive themselves to be more socially competent after engaging in service-learning (Scales and Blyth, 1997; O'Bannon, 1999; Morgan and Streb, 1999).
- Students who engaged in service-learning were more likely to treat each other kindly, help each other and care about doing their best (Berkas, 1997).
- Students who engaged in service-learning were more likely to increase their sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy (Shaffer, 1993).

Service-learning provides opportunities for students to become active, positive contributors to society.

- High school students who participated in service-learning and service are more likely to be engaged in a community organization and to vote 15 years after their participation in the program than those who did not participate (Youniss, et. al., 1997; Yates and Youniss, 1998).
- High school students from five states who participated in high quality service-learning programs increased their political attentiveness, political knowledge and desire to become more politically active (Morgan and Streb, 1999).
- Students who engage in service-learning feel that they can "make a difference" (O'Bannon, 1999; Cairn, 1999).
- Over 80 percent of participants in high quality service-learning programs felt that they had made a positive contribution to the community (Melchior, 1999; Billig and Conrad, 1997; Scales and Blyth, 1997).

Service-learning helps students acquire academic skills and knowledge.

- Students in over half of the high quality service-learning schools studied showed moderate to strong positive gains on student achievement tests in language arts and/or reading, engagement in school, sense of educational accomplishment and homework completion (Weiler, et. al., 1998).
- Service-learning participation was associated with higher scores on the state test of basic skills (Anderson, et. al., 1991) and higher grades (Shumer, 1994; Shaffer, 1993; Dean and Murdock, 1992; O'Bannon, 1999).
- Eighty-three percent of schools with service-learning programs reported that grade point averages of participating service-learning students improved 76 percent of the time (Follman, 1999).
- Middle and high school students who participated in service-learning tutoring programs increased their grade point averages and test scores in reading/language arts and math and were less likely to drop out of school (Supik, 1996; Rolzinski, 1990).

Psychological Benefits:

Overall, sources indicate that students have shown increases in positive feelings and mental health, and decreases in depression and stress.

Less Stress & Depression, and More Life Satisfaction

- From their analysis of collected data, Peggy Thoits and Lyndi Hewitt (2001) assert that "voluntary association membership contributes to decreased psychological distress and buffers the negative consequences of stressors (Rietschlin 1998); it increases life satisfaction and decreases depression (Van Willigen 1998)."

That "Feel Good" Feeling

- According to an article in Current Health 1 magazine, "[i]n a recent survey by Prudential Insurance Company, the number-one reason that young people named for volunteering was that it made them feel good. Eighty-nine percent said so."

Improved Mental Health
- Steven Smith (1999) indicates that "[v]olunteering appears to be related to longer life spans and improved mental health," although he also notes that "...the type of volunteering is likely to make a big difference in the effects on mental health."

Social Benefits:

By participating in service projects, students forge bonds with each other, as well as other members of the community. These bonds enhance their interpersonal skills and increase their social network. Additionally, volunteerism can lead to increased care for others and a desire to cooperate and get involved in positive ways, even among those who had previously exhibited antisocial tendencies (Smith 1999). Another major benefit of volunteering is the feeling of social connectedness that appears to be waning in our increasingly segmented society. Many students have reported an increased sense of social responsibility, and a subsequent desire to "give back" to the communities from which they have come.

Trust, Cooperation, and Citizenship
- According to Steven Smith (1999), "[v]olunteering by teenagers... appears to modestly inhibit antisocial behaviors." He also indicates that, in addition to reducing negative inclinations such as mistrust and lack of concern for others, volunteering can create positive forces. "Volunteerism can create social capital-- that is, social networks of trust and cooperation-- that can then promote greater political involvement in public affairs." (Smith 1999)

Improved Communication Skills
- In a 1991 article by Marty Brewster et al., various students offer their testimonials which link increased volunteerism to increased communication skills. Additionally, Matthew Nelson of the University of Michigan attests to similar gains in his personal reflection on past volunteering experiences.

Positive Opportunities for At-Risk Youth
- Many sources indicate, and indeed many organizations have been set up on the premise, that community service projects help redirect energies of at-risk youth to more positive social activities. "For example, City Year, is a largely volunteer program that brings together young people from diverse backgrounds to work on community projects. It is hoped that participation in City Year activities will... offer youths more direction and hope for the future, and provide a learning experience on serious social problems." (Smith 1999)

Cognitive Benefits:

There is a common saying that "you learn something new everyday." This definitely holds true for volunteering. With each new experience, old skills are developed as new ones are learned. New information is integrated with past experience, and one's knowledge base grows. Additionally, the lessons learned from volunteering frequently support and enrich understandings of how the community is set up to function. Furthermore, when students reflect upon and share their experiences, they experience great cognitive gains. Diane Hedin (1989) says that:
- "One of the best supported findings of research about community service is that students learn most (knowledge about the people for whom they volunteer, attitudes about being responsible, and being active citizens, and problem solving skills) when they are in programs that have regular opportunities to process and talk about their direct experiences."

These cognitive gains are a large part of the reason for incorporating volunteering and community service into various curricula and requirements.

Political and Civic Awareness
- An article by Steven Smith (1999) states that "[t]hrough participation in voluntary associations, individuals will develop a keener appreciation for civic affairs and understand more completely their obligations to participate in the political process." Indeed, people learn about the politics of their civic systems by experiencing and observing the effects of the policies on their communities.

Exposure to Diversity, Multiculturalism, and Different Ways of Thinking

- Sandra LeSourd (1997) states that "[p]erspective taking is the intellectual ability that is germane to affirmation of differences for clarification of the public good." This means that it is necessary to take the perspectives of others in order to truly understand the benefits that come out of differences. By becoming involved in various aspects of community life, facets which students would be unlikely to involve themselves otherwise, students gain new information to consider and new ways to think about things. Frequently, they learn a lot from conversing with those whom they help or work with, as they may encounter new points of view. According to LeSourd (1997), this is beneficial because the "ideals of democratic life cannot encompass all members of the national community until people of different traditions listen to the voices of others."

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills

- According to Diane Hedin (1989), "[t]he situations in which young people learn most are ones in which they have the opportunity to determine what needs to be done at developmentally appropriate levels of responsibility." When students are given the opportunities and responsibilities of decision making in a task that is interesting and important to them, they tend to think more deeply about the issues at hand and "use their most complex thinking skills" (Hedin 1989) to solve the problem.

Source: http://sitemaker.umich.edu/356.black/benefits_of_participation_in_service