

# SERVICE LEARNING

## What do you need to complete in order to graduate from a Frederick County high school?



### Service Learning in Frederick County

Frederick County's service learning plan has two aspects to it. First, Frederick County has infused service learning activities throughout the elementary, middle and high school classroom curriculums. If a student successfully completes the Frederick County curriculum, he/she has fulfilled the state requirement for high school graduation. Individual student service learning projects outside the classroom are not required.

### Meritorious Service Learning

The second aspect of the FCPS plan is Meritorious Service Learning. This is an extension of the requirement and goes *beyond* the state mandate. Students who volunteer their time outside the school day to non-profit service organizations may work towards a Meritorious Service Award. College admission boards and future employers often look for students who have extended their learning experiences outside the classroom. Students who have volunteered 75 or more hours outside the school day earn the award. The objective of this extension is to instill in FCPS students a spirit of community activism and involvement that will continue after high school.

### What counts?

- Services that meet a recognized need in the community.
  - *Direct Service*: students have face-to-face contact with the service recipients... tutoring other students (i.e. peer tutoring), serving meals at a homeless shelter, working with the elderly in a nursing home, etc.
  - *Indirect Service*: Students perform a service without having face-to-face contact with the recipient. Examples include food and clothing drives, marathons, or fundraisers, environmental projects, etc.
  - *Advocacy*: With the goal of eliminating the cause of a particular problem, students educate others about a particular issue. Examples include writing letters to legislators or editors, preparing and displaying posters to an identified audience, writing and performing informative plays or creating educational materials for other target groups, etc.
- Service activities which directly address human need in areas of health, education, environment, and public safety.
- Service activities which serve the greater good instead of being self-serving to a particular person or group.
- Services that are optional and not required as part of a class assignment.
- Service learning activities whose purposes are to collect food, clothing, or other items necessary to benefit others and meet human needs, even if done in conjunction with a faith-based agency or institution, may be counted.

## **What doesn't count?**

- Any service learning whose chief purpose is to earn money for profit business.
- Any service learning that compensates a student with money, goods, or services.
- Any service with the purpose of converting others to a particular religious or spiritual view.
- Any service that is required of students for a class

## **When can I start earning a Meritorious Service Award?**

Students who wish to work towards a Meritorious Service Award may begin in middle school. Service learning must occur after school, on weekends or on school vacation days. The student volunteer work must be performed with a non-profit service organization. Students must complete a Meritorious Service Learning Form for each activity and turn into Kerri Cole, the service learning contact for TJ Middle. Forms are available from the main office, Mrs. Cole, the service learning bulletin board across from the media center, or can be downloaded from our school's website. Middle school students are allowed to earn up to, but no more than, 25 hours of the 75 required for the award.

## **Where can I find out about service learning opportunities?**

From time to time, we find out here at school of service learning opportunities. Information about these service learning opportunities will be posted on the service learning bulletin board across from the media center and announced on our morning announcements show. Other places you can learn about or complete service learning projects would be through Scouting, 4-H, religious organizations or by contacting a non-profit service group such as the *Volunteer Frederick!*

## **Questions?**

Contact Kerri Cole at 240-236-4933 or [kerri.cole@fcps.org](mailto:kerri.cole@fcps.org)