

Class of 2013

Community Service Program

Why does Mercy High School Require Community Service?

Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, dedicated her life to helping those less fortunate than her. She required those working with her to perform service for others. In honor and emulation of her, the program at Mercy High School

- Believes that community service is a fundamental component of the mission of the High School, and it is deeply rooted in our tradition;
- Expects students to “go out into the community” to help those who are in need: children, the poor, the elderly, the abused, the homeless, those whose lives have been compromised, etc.; and
- Encourages students to make volunteerism part of their ongoing lifestyle because it transforms society, but because it develops their talents and builds up their spirits.

What are the components of the Service Requirement?

Mercy Service Hours

During freshman and sophomore years, students complete a specified number of “Mercy service hours” at non-profit organizations whose mission is dedicated to helping needy and/or disadvantaged people. These hours can be completed during the school year, vacation time, or summer months. Students work to directly support people in need (e.g., the homeless, the sick, the poor, the elderly, the disabled, or the disenfranchised).

- Before the beginning of sophomore year, a student must complete 20 Mercy hours.
- Before the beginning of junior year, a student must have completed a total of at least 50 Mercy hours (which include the 20 she did before her sophomore year.)
- Before the beginning of senior year, a student must have completed a total of at least 100 hours (50 of which are in direct contact with disadvantaged people) or a senior culminating project (see explanation below).

Senior Culminating Project

During their junior year, students are given the option of beginning to “senior culminating project.” This project calls upon upper-class women to take their interests and talents, and create projects that has realizable goals and serves the needs of disadvantaged people. Examples include: offering a cooking class to low-income citizens, teaching inner-city children how to ride bikes, making a play with disadvantaged people, etc. Students may work individually, in pairs or in small groups.

Senior culminating project expectations:

- Involvement of at least 14 hours in direct contact with people;
- Completion during the summer between junior and senior years, or during the first semester senior year; and
- A presentation of the project at an assembly early in the second semester senior year.

Where can Mercy students do their service?

Students must provide service which meets the following requirements:

- Service is voluntary;
- Service is offered in a federally recognized non-profit organization (“501(c)(3) organization”);
- Service is with an organization whose mission is dedicated to serving disadvantaged people; and
- Student volunteers in direct contact with the disadvantaged people.

Freshmen are given a list of dozens of sites for Mercy service hours which are pre-approved by the community service office. This list is also available on the community service link to Mercy’s web-page, and hard copies are available to students at the community service office. We encourage students to volunteer in direct contact with disadvantaged people at one of these pre-approved sites.

Students wishing to serve in an organization which does not appear on the list of pre-approved sites are strongly encouraged to seek approval from the community service coordinator prior to beginning service there. Service will be accepted to meet the requirements of the senior culminating project.