

# *Community Service Program Overview*

## *Fall, 2011*

### *Why does Mercy High School Have a Community Service Program?*

Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, dedicated her life to working with those less fortunate than her. In honor and emulation of her, the program at Mercy:

- Seeks to have students “go out into the community,” as Catherine McAuley did, to help those who are in need: children, the poor, the elderly, the abused, the homeless, those whose rights have been compromised, etc.;
- Believes that community service is a fundamental part of being a Christian, and it is deeply rooted in the Gospel tradition; and
- Encourages students to make volunteerism part of their ongoing lifestyle, not only because it transforms society, but because it enriches and nourishes our spirits.

### *What are the Community Service Requirements?*

Students may begin fulfilling their community service requirement after they have begun the new school year in August, 2011. The graduation requirement is two-fold: 1) at least 50 hours of volunteer work with a non-profit organization; and 2) a culminating service project. Service hours must be documented and submitted to the Community Service Office (using the forms available through the Community Service Office.)

- Prior to sophomore year, students must complete at least 20 service hours in a non-profit organization.
- Before junior year, they must have completed a total of at least 50 service hours in a non-profit organization.
- During their junior year, they will begin developing their “senior culminating project.” Students implement their projects 2<sup>nd</sup> semester junior year, in the summer between their junior and senior years, or (in rare circumstances) their first semester senior year.
- During the senior year, students write a 10-paragraph reflection paper on their culminating service project, and they create a 3-5 minute electronic display of their project.

**\*Transfer Students:** Only hours completed after a student has entered Mercy High School count toward the graduation requirement. For this reason, the hours are pro-rated.

- Students who transfer in at the beginning of their sophomore year are expected to complete at least 30 volunteer hours before their junior year begins, and a culminating service project before their senior year begins.
- Students who transfer in at the beginning of their junior year are expected to complete a culminating service project before their senior year begins.
- Students who transfer in at the beginning of their senior year are not expected to complete community service as a graduation requirement.