



ST. THOMAS HIGH SCHOOL SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM

2016-2017

Class of 2020

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of the St. Thomas Christian Service Program is to answer the Gospel call to serve one another, especially those who are most vulnerable in our society. By serving others, every St. Thomas student will put into practice the principles of **Catholic Social Teaching**. **Every St. Thomas student participates in service!**

Overview:

In order to satisfy graduation requirements, every student at STH must complete a minimum number of hours of service in the community. **A student who does not meet the minimum service requirement will not receive a St. Thomas diploma until he satisfies the obligations of the service requirement.** The Director of Campus Ministry is the administrator of the STH Service Learning Program.

While the service program is an obligation for each student, it is our hope the experience will be a rewarding one for you. The ideal is that you not view this as an obligation, but as a way to serve God's people and learn from your experience.

Freshman Year Requirement:

All St. Thomas freshmen will be required to complete a minimum of **20** hours of service during their freshman year or the summer prior to their freshman year (5 hours will be earned through the Freshman Fall Service Day on Sept. 9). Summer service hours will be accepted **as long as he can provide the necessary documentation and appropriate signatures**. Freshmen are free to do any type of service (out in the community, STH related service, service projects, etc.) as long as payment is not received, and it is service for someone other than a family member. Freshmen are also encouraged to join one of our STH service based clubs/organizations and to earn their hours through an STH club/organization.

Accountability and Documentation:

A St. Thomas ***freshman*** will be required to have on file in the Campus Ministry Office a **least one signed and completed** document (i.e. **service hour log**) or **equivalent documentation** (computer printout, letter, e-mail, etc.) upon completion of his service work. **Without the necessary documentation, the Office of Campus Ministry cannot confirm service hours and therefore the consequence(s) of incomplete service hours still apply.**

**** A student who completed his hours over this past summer should turn in his hour documentation sheet(s) to the Campus Ministry Office ASAP!***

- **Document #1** is the ***Service Hours Log***. This document is the student's documentation of how many hours, with whom, and when he has served with a particular agency or service project. The student must complete his hours log for ***any service***, regardless of whether the service is school related/sponsored or initiated by the student with an outside agency. **The completed service hours log is due to the Campus Ministry Office by Thursday, April 20, 2017 for Freshmen.**

For freshmen, a signed and completed service log (or equivalent documentation) must be turned in to the Campus Ministry Office in order to receive official credit for completion of the Freshman Year Service Program Requirement!!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS OF THE ST. THOMAS CHRISTIAN SERVICE PROGRAM:

1. **Does service to my parish meet the requirements of the STH service program?** Yes, in so far as you go beyond your Sunday obligation to be a full participant in the Eucharist/worship service. In other words, singing in the choir, serving as an altar server or usher, etc. cannot be "counted" unless your involvement goes beyond the Sunday obligation (i.e. you serve at an extra Mass that Sunday, have to arrive early for practice/ training, or you serve at a wedding or a weekday funeral and do not receive a stipend). You may count hours served in an organized practice, training, or training others to serve as a minister in the church. Serving as a

paid musician or any other position where you receive compensation cannot be counted as service.

2. May I “count” hours that I volunteered over the summer?

Yes, as long as those hours meet all of the criteria of our service program and you complete and turn in all of the service documentation (which includes receiving the necessary signatures and evaluations and/or letter from your volunteer supervisor).

3. May I use my Confirmation service hours or Scouting merit

hours? No! You cannot “double-dip” on service hours! However, if you have met the **minimum** number of hours required for Confirmation, Scouting, or for some other service organization **you may utilize additional service opportunities provided by the church, or scouts. In some cases, your parish/Church does accept our STH service hours to meet their requirement. Check with your parish/Church program to determine if they will accept the hours you are turning in to STH.**

4. Does free baby-sitting or taking care of Grandma’s lawn constitute as service?

Baby-sitting younger siblings, cousins, friends of the family or taking care of the needs of an elderly relative is a **family obligation**. You do these things because you are a good son. This is not service to the community. There may be a unique circumstance when serving as a mentor for a neighbor’s child, or buying groceries/ taking care of the lawn for an elderly neighbor who is physically unable to do so and cannot afford the help may indeed be counted as service. If you are unsure of which category your service idea falls under, see Mr. Matulia immediately before you begin (and count) your service hours.

5. May I volunteer for more than one service project or volunteer for more than one service agency?

Yes, but make sure you keep track of your hours, and receive the required signatures.

6. How do I begin? Where do I get information for the various types of volunteer opportunities out in the community?

Campus Ministry has a list of phone numbers, addresses, and information on a wide variety of service opportunities (there is also a list of great service opportunities that you will receive with this service packet). You may want to begin by checking with Campus Ministry for volunteer ideas and contact numbers. Going on-line is another route to take. Calling your parish secretary or Youth Minister is another possible avenue. Asking your parents for assistance is acceptable but **remember this is your service project, not your parents’ service project!!**

Consequences of late or incomplete service work!

Successful completion of the service assignment means that you have the appropriate signed and completed form(s) all turned into the Office of Campus Ministry **by the appropriate deadline!** **If you do not turn in completed and documented 20 hours of service (a minimum of 15 hours) by the April 20th deadline, and notation of “Incomplete Service” will appear on your final freshmen year report card.**

The service requirement for each semester and the *deadlines* are listed below.

STH SERVICE LEARNING DUE DATES: (PLEASE POST THE DUE DATES AS A REMINDER!)

1st semester assignment:

Service commitment form and parent acknowledgement of service:
Thursday, September 8, 2016

2nd semester assignment:

Service Hours and Service Log: **Thursday, April 20, 2017**

Students will be reminded throughout the year of the upcoming due dates. It is a good idea for students to turn in to the Campus Ministry Office hour sheets/ and other forms upon immediate completion of the hours. A “Service Learning” file is maintained in the Campus Ministry Office for every STH student.