

VHS Community Service Guide

Recognising the value that service to others can provide for young adults, VHS students complete community service related to their interests and values. From practicing a new skill, to gaining a deeper understanding of a social problem, to putting on a community event, time devoted in service will be as powerful as you are willing to make it. You will find a direct connection between how much of yourself you invest and how much you get out of it. Even students who initially grumbled about the requirement tell us that time spent in service was enjoyable, rewarding and fun.

The basic plan

- ✧ Choose a non-profit organization that is seeking high school volunteers (see below).
- ✧ Work and log a minimum of 25 hours with the organization. Students are responsible for logging their time.
- ✧ Community Service must take place between 8th grade graduation and January of senior year.
- ✧ When finished, have your supervisor at the organization sign the VHS Community Service form.
- ✧ Turn in the completed Community Service form before the end of the 1st semester of senior year.

Getting started

Step 1: Consider & identify your priorities

Inspiration: What inspires you, provokes you? What do you care about, value? What needs fixing? The planet? Hungry families? Lonely elders? Diminishing forests and wildlife? Women's rights? Animal welfare?

Balance: Start early. Do not wait until your senior year. If you plan to take AP classes, play sports or have a job, your time is limited. Consider serving during the summers when you may have more free time.

Step 2: Finding an organization

- ❖ Check out [Community Service Opportunities](#) and [Class of 2023 Community Service](#).
- ❖ Visit the Community Service bulletin board upstairs at VHS.
- ❖ Attend the VHS Service Fair in the autumn.
- ❖ Ask family and friends about their experiences volunteering.
- ❖ Make an appointment to brainstorm with the Community Service Coordinator, Ms. Coe.

Step 3: Choosing the right service work

Consider choosing service work that challenges you or opens a door to something new. Put yourself out there. Meet new people. Continuing to do something you have already done likely fulfills the graduation requirement but not the intention.

Avoid service work that is self-serving. If your community service is participating in fundraising so that your sports team can purchase jerseys and you will be receiving one, that is a self-serving project with a personal benefit.

4: Move forward with purpose

You may need to reach out to more than one organization before you find something that works. Start with the organization's website. Many non-profit organizations have a volunteer application on their website. If not, you will need to make a phone call or send an email. Ask questions, especially about work schedules, job descriptions and expectations. Tell them something about your skills and what you can offer. Think of this as a job interview; both of you are looking for a good fit. Even though you will work without pay, organizations are not obliged to accept you as a volunteer just as you are not obliged to volunteer with that particular organization.

Be sure to attend training and work sessions on time. If you can't make it, call your supervisor to cancel. This is not only considerate, but an expectation at any work site whether paid or unpaid.

As you begin, log your hours on the [Community Service Form](#). It is your responsibility to track your hours.

When you have completed your service, ask your supervisor to approve and sign your log. Thank them for the opportunity. Ask them for feedback about your work. Consider sending a thank you note or email.

Reminders

Understand that working with a non-profit organization is different than doing any kind of work for free. If you have any questions about whether or not your service idea meets the requirements, ask Ms. Coe.

Many groups offer a significant education or training component in preparation for service. These hours do not qualify as service because it is an education you are receiving. Time spent in the community or direct service hours are counted as service.

A family member cannot serve as your supervisor.

The guidelines written here are just that....guides. If you are passionate about a project that seems to fall outside of the guidelines, make an appointment to discuss it with Ms. Coe.

**"If our hopes of building a better and safer world are to become more than wishful thinking,
we will need the engagement of volunteers more than ever." Kofi Annan**

*

**"When the story of these times gets written, we want it to say that we did all we could,
and it was more than anyone could have imagined." Bono**

*

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth." Muhammad Ali