

Community Service is a way for people to regain a sense of community. The Richmond Community High School (RCHS) Community Service Program has for many years provided students with the opportunity to involve themselves in a variety of enriching, useful and practical experiences, which serve the school and community. Through community service, students can learn new skills, assume responsibilities, become aware of the needs of others, and learn the importance of unselfish serving and giving. Community service links students to the wider community and exposes them to people and situations outside their previous experiences.

In order to graduate from RCHS, students are required to perform a **minimum of 150 hours** of community service between the last day of eighth grade and the last day of class as a senior. However, a student is not eligible for the National Honor Society until 100 hours of the community service requirement is fulfilled by the beginning of their junior year. The community service requirement may be satisfied by participation in a single activity or a combination of activities.

Guidelines of Acceptable Community Service Activities

A recognized community service activity by an RCHS student is one which:

- Is performed without compensation to the student.
- Has some institutional or organizational affiliation. Students may **NOT** receive hours for volunteer work in private homes due to safety and liability issues.
- In general, **service performed for profit-making organizations is NOT acceptable**, with the exception of hospitals, nursing homes, and newspapers. Non-profits qualify if all other guidelines are met.
- Involves delivery of a service **directly** to constituents of an organization or participation in a project sponsored by an organization, as opposed to participating in administrative work or maintenance of an organization. (don't work in the office)
- A person other than the student's relative must supervise the service.
- Is separate from a service activity for which the student is already receiving school or organizational credit.
- Is not performed during school hours.
- Is not service mandated by a court.
- **Religious Institutions:** Service through religious organizations is only applicable if the activity is not associated with the rituals, services, or ceremonies of any specific religion, nor recruiting people to your faith or fund raising to support a specific religion or religious institution. Thus, participating in religious service (choir membership, altar service, reading from the Torah, etc.) while worthy endeavors will **NOT** be counted. However, educational activities and non-religious activities which benefit the religious community (in non-financial ways) or the community at large **ARE** acceptable (teaching Sunday school, babysitting during religious services, painting religious buildings, clothing drives, work in shelters, participation in church mission trips to Habitat for Humanity or Community Volunteers). Selling anything for the religious institution is only applicable if the proceeds are used for a specific charitable purpose and are **NOT** for the benefit/maintenance of the institution. Participation in youth groups is generally not applicable unless the groups are organizing and/or performing specific community service activities.
- **Charity walks** are assigned a specific number of hours for completing the walk, and are **only acceptable if the student raised money** for walking. A copy of their pledge sheet should be attached to the verification form.
- **Summer camps:** If other community service guidelines are met (related to compensation, type of organization, religious practices, etc.), counselor-in-training (cit) hours spent in the actual organization and performance of specific community service activities **ARE** applicable. Cit positions in **for-profit camps are NOT applicable**.
- **Traditional school-sponsored activities (student govt., band, theater, NHS, etc.)** are **NOT** acceptable unless the group is performing specific community service activities outside of school hours. Examples include: Salvation Army bell ringing, charity drives, helping the homeless, performances for raising money for non-profit organizations (performance time only), etc.
- **Boy Scouts:** Community service given only for working on someone else's Eagle Scout projects, not your own.
- **Blood/Hair donations:** 2 hours for blood, 3 for platelets, 5 for hair.

Documentation

In order to receive community service credit, all activities should be approved **in advance** to be sure the hours qualify.

If the activity takes more than one visit, **be sure that you or the supervisor is keeping a time sheet** and it is signed off at the end of the activity to verify the hours served. This time sheet should be attached to the community service form. The school will provide a blank time sheet if the company does not have one.

Upon completion of the activity, turn in the form (and timesheet if needed) with the appropriate signatures to the Community Service Coordinator. Simply performing service does not automatically provide credit. **It is the student's responsibility to see that the proper documentation is filled out and turned in.**

Exceptions to the Guidelines

Any exceptions to the guidelines **can only be made** with the knowledge and approval of the **Community Service Coordinator**. **When in doubt, ASK.**