

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT VOLUNTEER SERVICE AT LFHS

How do you find volunteer opportunities at LFHS? Students can find volunteer opportunities not only through the numerous service-based clubs and extra-curricular activities at LFHS, but also throughout the community with not-for profit organizations or through churches. Information about the various LFHS service-based clubs is located on the LFHS website at http://www.lfhs.org/pdf/student_services/service_clubs.pdf. Volunteer opportunities throughout the community are also routinely posted on the website at <http://www.lfhs.org/services/volunteer.html> as they become available. Ms. Kathy O'Hara, Student and Community Service Coordinator, also emails students at their school account with the latest volunteer opportunities.

What is volunteer service? Volunteer service can mean different things to different people. Here at Lake Forest High School, volunteer service is defined as **any work done for the benefit of others without any direct financial, material, or personal compensation or gain**. Below are some guidelines to help you determine what qualifies as volunteer service at Lake Forest High School:

- Attendance at a regular service club organizational meeting does not count as volunteer hours unless the meeting is used to perform a community service. For example, meeting at the Open Lands to do environmental work is considered volunteer service.
- Volunteer work done to receive extra credit in a class does not count as community service. Likewise, students who belong to a non-service oriented club or team who are required to perform volunteer work in order to participate in that club or team cannot count those hours as volunteer service.
- Volunteer work that can be considered job training or done for the purposes of career development is not considered volunteer service. For example, an internship is not considered volunteer service. In addition, volunteering to direct or act in a play for a paying audience is not volunteer service.
- Training hours that are required for performing a volunteer position do not count as volunteer service. For example, the training required for Student to Student (STS) does not count as volunteer service.
- A student who participates in Madrigals, Bel Canto, or any other group that performs for the community must document each performance. Practice and rehearsal time and performances at country clubs or private parties do not count as volunteer service. In addition, students cannot receive extra credit in these classes and claim these performances as volunteer service.
- Being a Counselor in Training (CIT) is not volunteer service when being a CIT is a prerequisite for being hired as a Counselor in future years or if you receive the benefits of participating in the camp activities by serving as a CIT.
- Volunteer work for the benefit of a church is not considered community volunteer service because the people who benefit are strictly members of the church. For example, being an altar server, an acolyte, a Sunday school teacher, or performing music during a religious service does not count as volunteer service. However, participation in community outreach (soup kitchen, food drives, etc) sponsored by the church does constitute community volunteer service. Likewise, volunteer work performed on a church sponsored mission trip does count as volunteer service, but typically only counts for up to 8 hours a day of work. Travel time for a mission trip does not count as volunteer service.
- Volunteer work done as a requirement for a Boy Scout award of Girl Scout award or for rank advancement or for a badge does not count as volunteer service. For example, work hours spent on your own Eagle project does not count as volunteer service, but work hours spent helping a fellow Scout on his Eagle project does count.

- Volunteer hours spent for Tech Crew in support of a normal Lake Forest High School production do not count as volunteer service. However, hours spent to support the Talent Show, an APT fundraiser, do count as volunteer service. In addition, volunteer tech crew hours to support a meeting or event at the school, without any pay, do count as volunteer service.
- Hours spent planning or preparing for a community event do not count as volunteer service when they are done during attendance at a club meeting. Hours spent planning or preparing outside of a club meeting, however, do count.
- Volunteer work done for family members does not count as volunteer service. For example, shoveling snow for your family for free, or baby-sitting your cousins for free, or planning a birthday party for a grandparent does not count as volunteer service.
- Time spent traveling to perform volunteer service does not count as volunteer service hours. For example, if you volunteer at a food pantry in Chicago, the time spent working in the pantry counts as volunteer service, but the time spent driving to and from Chicago does not count.

Should students record volunteer hours? Yes, students should keep track of their time spent performing community service. They can do this by using the LFHS online service hour reporting form, which can be found on the LFHS website at http://www.lfhs.org/services/volunteer_hours_form.html. The Volunteer Service Office will keep track of a student's hours for their entire high school career and can print out a record whenever it is needed. It is important to record service hours because the Student Services Office frequently refers to the volunteer records of students when asked to suggest candidates for leadership seminars, conferences, scholarships, and national and local service awards. When filling out the online form, please note that only one date can be put in as the date for volunteer service. If the service was done throughout a period of time, just put in the most recent date of service and use the description portion of the form to state the period of time in which the service was performed. For example, if a church work trip was for an entire week in June, please list the last day of the trip as the date of service and then in the description section state when the trip started and how many days it lasted. It is **important** to fill in the name of the adult in charge as well as a contact number. The Volunteer Service Office does periodically check to verify the information.

What is the President's Volunteer Service Award? The President's Volunteer Service Award is a nationally recognized award presented by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. Students who complete at least 100 hours of service for their community within a year are eligible to earn this award. Our year at Lake Forest High School runs from March 16, 2011 to March 15, 2012. There are three levels of recognition: Bronze for 100 hours; Silver for 175 hours; and Gold for 250 hours or more. Parents and students are encouraged to learn more about this program by visiting www.presidentialserviceawards.gov.

Only students who have recorded their volunteer service hours with the Student and Community Service Office will be eligible to receive one of these awards. Students should record their volunteer hours on the LFHS website, www.lfhs.org/services/volunteer_hours_form.html.

Why should students volunteer? Volunteering promotes citizenship and community awareness. It also provides opportunities to develop leadership skills and exposes students to potential career or college interests. And, helping others usually makes a person feel good and is a great way to meet new friends! Volunteer service is a requirement for entrance into the LFHS chapter of the National Honor Society and can be a significant factor in college admittance.

More questions? Contact Kathy O'Hara, Student and Community Service Coordinator, at 847-582-7774 or kohara@lfschools.net.